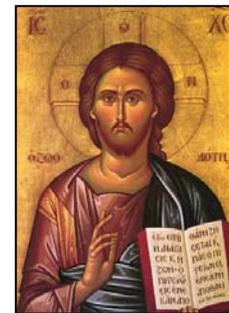




GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org
St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, March 17, 2019

ON THIS DAY, THE **FIRST** SUNDAY OF GREAT AND HOLY LENT WHICH WE REFER TO AS ***THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY***, WE CALL TO MIND THE RESTORATION OF THE BLESSED AND VENERABLE ICONS BY THE BLESSED EMPEROR OF CONSTANTINOPLE, MICHAEL, AND HIS MOTHER THEODORA, DURING THE REIGN OF THE PATRIARCH, ST. METHODIOS, THE CONFESSOR (***SEE TRIODION INSERT ON NEXT PAGE***). WE ALSO COMMEMORATE Alexios the Man of God; Patrick the Enlightener of Ireland; Marinos the Martyr; Theocteristos the Confessor; and Martyr Paul. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of

services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

TODAY'S Spiritual Theme From the Triodion:

On the **first Sunday of Great and Holy Lent** we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy by commemorating the end of the iconoclastic controversy and the restoration of the icons to our Church by the Empress Theodora in 843, on the first Sunday of Lent that year. It is also the celebration in honor of the martyrs and confessors who struggled for the faith, appropriate for Lent when we are striving to imitate the martyrs by means of our self-denial through fasting.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./3. Hymn Commemorating the Sunday of Orthodoxy – (Hymnal-pp.128-131):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance. Before Your most pure image we bow down, O Good One, entreating You to forgive our sins, Christ our God. For You willingly ascended the cross in the flesh to deliver from the enemy those whom You had made. For this we thank You and we cry to You, O Savior: By coming to save the world, You have filled all things with joy.

2. Resurrectional Hymn (First Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.98-101):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance: Although Your tomb was sealed with a stone, O Savior, and Your most pure body was guarded by the soldiers, You rose on the third day giving life to all the world. Therefore, O giver of life, the powers of heaven praise You: Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Your kingdom. Glory to Your saving wisdom, O only lover of mankind.

4. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing

the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

5. Kontakion sung for Sunday of Orthodoxy – (Hymnal-pp. 268-271):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Victorious Lady, mighty champion, defending us, we your servants now inscribe to you this hymn of thanks, for you rescued us from suffering and tribulation. Theotokos, with your power that can never fail, keep us safe from every danger our whole life long that we may cry to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

6. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301)::

On the first five Sundays of Great Lent when we use the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, a different hymn is sung instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

<p>The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– St. John Chrysostom</p>
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (John 20:19-31)

“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.’ When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in His side, I will not believe.’ A week later His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and

stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it in My side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in His name."

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40)

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (John 1:43-51)

The next day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him about Whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, He said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked Him,

“Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Liturgy of St. Basil Used Every Sunday during Great and Holy Lent:

The Liturgy of St. Basil was, until the twelfth century, the chief Liturgy of Constantinople. Its ‘Prayer of Consecration’ or *Anaphora* is probably the most eloquent of all liturgies, east and west. Powerful in its unity of thought, theological depth and rich biblical imagery, it was celebrated every Sunday and Great Feast Days. Now it is used only ten times during the year: on the five Sundays of Great and Holy Lent; on the Vigils of Pascha, Christmas and Epiphany; on Holy Thursday and on the Feast of St. Basil, January 1.

Icons Distributed for TODAY’S Celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy:

In commemoration of today’s celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the restoration of the use of icons in our worship services, *Fr. George* will distribute to every parishioner present pocket-sized laminated icons at the end of church services. *May the strength of the Holy Spirit guide us in all that we do, and may these icons serve to remind us to reflect the image and likeness of God in which we were created to everyone we encounter.*



THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

“ . . . follow Me.”

(John 1:43)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

During Great Lent, we are encouraged to seek to grow closer to God. During this period, there are many opportunities to do so, albeit they involve making personal sacrifices that makes a difference. When we focus on the Cross of our Lord and remind ourselves of His victory and what our Savior gave up for us, how might we

in turn, respond? Perhaps, we could consider voluntarily “giving up” a few things in anticipation of the joy of His Kingdom. *Let us consider . . . :*

GIVING UP grumbling! Instead, "In everything give thanks." Constructive criticism is OK, but "moaning, groaning, and complaining" are not Christian disciplines.

GIVING UP 10 to 15 minutes in bed each morning! Instead, use that time in prayer, Bible study and personal devotion. A few minutes in prayer WILL keep you focused.

GIVING UP looking at other people's worst attributes. Instead concentrate on their best points. We all have faults. It is a lot easier to have people overlook our shortcomings when we overlook theirs first.

GIVING UP speaking unkindly. Instead, let your speech be generous and understanding. It costs so little to say something kind and uplifting or to offer a smile. Why not check that sharp tongue at the door?

GIVING UP your hatred of anyone or anything! Instead, learn the discipline of love. "Love covers a multitude of sins."

GIVING UP your worries and anxieties! They're too heavy for you to carry anyway. Instead, trust God with them. Anxiety is spending emotional energy on something we can do nothing about: like tomorrow! Live today and let God's grace be sufficient.

GIVING UP TV one evening a week! Instead, visit someone who's lonely or sick. There are those who are isolated by illness or age. Why isolate yourself in front of the "tube?" Give someone a precious gift: your time!

GIVING UP buying anything but essentials for yourself! Instead, give the money to God. The money you would spend on the luxuries could help someone meet basic needs. We're called to be stewards of God's riches, not consumers.

GIVING UP judging others by appearances and by the standard of the world! Instead, learn to give up yourself to God. There is only one Who has the right to judge, and it is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“World Watch List of 2019” – the 50 countries where it’s most dangerous to follow Jesus. May we offer prayers in support of their efforts and pray for God’s peace and good will to prevail!

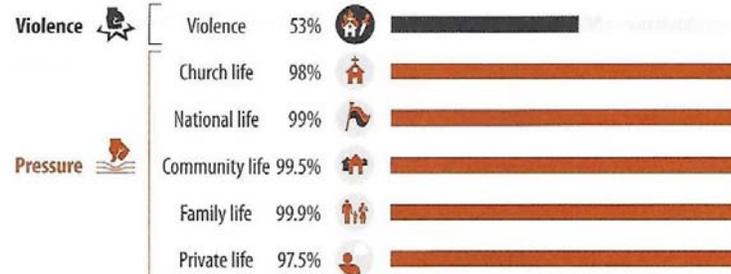


Somalia

Source of persecution Islamic oppression
Population 15,182,000
Christians A few hundred
Main religion Islam
Government Federal republic
Leader President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2019 data



A life of violence and isolation

Estimates suggest that 99 percent of Somalis are Muslims, and any minority religions are heavily persecuted. The Christian community is small and under constant threat of attack. Sharia law and Islam are enshrined in the country’s constitution, and the persecution of Christians almost always involves violence. Additionally, in many rural areas, Islamic militant groups like al-Shabab are *de facto* rulers.

Prayer points

- Somali Christians often must hide their faith to stay safe. Pray for the safety and discipleship opportunities for these isolated believers.
- Pray for Christians who convert from Islam, that they will be protected from violence and oppression.
- Pray for the government of Somalia, that its leaders will be open to the truth of the gospel.

“The First Sunday of Great Lent Prior To the 9th Century”

(cont. from Back Cover)

At the deepest level, the focus of Great Lent was (and should still be) the catechetical preparation of the catechumen for the Paschal Mystery of Baptism. Thus, the first and essential theme of the first Sunday of Great Lent is the proclamation that New Life in Christ comes after a long period of preparation. The Epistle and Gospel reading for Liturgy that day affirms — even promises — that the catechumens who are preparing themselves for Baptism at Pascha will behold great things: they will lay aside the Old Creation and embrace the New Creation; they will leave behind the Old Aeon and enter into the New Aeon; they will give up the temporal kingdom of this world, replacing it with the eternal Kingdom which the Old Testament Righteous, by faith, experienced only as a foreshadowing. The catechumens (and all the faithful) will experience these not in shadow but in truth. We are surrounded by the “cloud of witnesses” who urge us to throw off everything that clings to us and weighs us down. We will see the heavens open up and we will behold the Lord Jesus.

Now that most Orthodox Christians are baptized as infants, and Christianity has entered the mainstream, the time of Great Lent means something else. **Certainly**, the educational practice remains — it is, of course, always helpful to remind ourselves of the truths of our faith, because each time we encounter it, the more it penetrates our lives. But the themes have changed, now emphasizing different aspects of the Christian faith — as we find, for example, with the first Sunday of the Great Fast. Now the theme is the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and it celebrates the restoration of the icons in Hagia Sophia on February 19, 842, issued by the Synod of Constantinople on that date, which went on to declare that every First Sunday of Lent this event was to be remembered. It was seen as the triumph of the true faith over heresy, because the veneration of images was not only allowed, but proclaimed, and those who wanted to explain why the practice is in accord with the Christian faith could do so without fear of persecution. The veneration of the images became, itself, an image of Orthodoxy, for orthopraxis and orthodoxy are intricately linked: when one is rejected it entails a rejection of the other. The practice of forbidding the depiction and veneration of icons was fueled by non-Orthodox Christology and Soteriology. Rather, it sponsored a gnostic understanding, not only of the incarnation, but of the Christian life, because, by its dictates, the physical could no longer be seen as united with the spiritual.

No one could describe the Word of the Father; but when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, and restored the fallen image to its former beauty. We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images.
(Kontakion, Sunday of Orthodoxy)

1. The Epistle and Gospel readings are done at the point in the Divine Liturgy prior to the dismissal prayers for the catechumens. This ended the Liturgy of the Word in which the catechumens could participate, while the Liturgy of the Faithful was exclusively for the baptized Christians.

All Sundays in March: Holy Cross School of Theology

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts offers graduate programs leading to advanced degrees in Divinity and Theology.



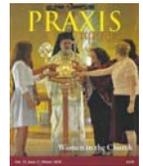
At Holy Cross, the only Greek Orthodox School of Theology in the United States, education is an **integration of learning and faith**. Its programs reflect the religious and cultural values of the **Hellenic Orthodox tradition**.

Holy Cross strives to fulfill the need to educate the **next generation of leaders, clergy, and laypersons** who will exemplify the values and spirit of Orthodox Christianity in their chosen professions. Learning, teaching, service, and worship activities develop the intellectual and spiritual potential of students. The School affords the faculty with **academic freedom** to pursue teaching and scholarship.

"Hands of Love", a ministry of our **Philoptochos Society** will be accepting **monetary donations** to benefit the School.

Today's Adult Religious Education Class

March 17, 2019: "Strength Through Faith" (pp. 28 - 29). Fr. George will conclude teaching this lesson today... come and join us!



On this the 747th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE (CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)

Sunday, March 17th (1st Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Orthodoxy):

- 7:45 am Orthros Service
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Procession of Icons
- 10:45 am Coffee Fellowship Reception
- 11:15 am Religious Education Classes (*for all ages*)
- 6:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers at Annunciation Cathedral

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!