

The Cross the support of Christians”

So we see that the mystery of the Cross has an infinite length, height, width, depth. Writing it carefully upon our body we draw its grace, which is none other than the grace of the crucified Savior. We call Christ himself to help. The Cross becomes a geography of our horizons and orientates us. Like then when we were very little children, our teachers would take us in front of the map of Greece and as we would turn towards it, simultaneously doing our cross carefully we were saying that inimitable: “North, South, East, West, I was orientated”! This incalculable pedagogical method made us, without us understanding it naturally, surpass every type of fears and childhood insecurities.

With the Cross we surpass the daily grievous things. We surpass the distresses and afflictions which pressure us unbearably sometimes.

In the Divine Liturgy we par excellence live the mystery of the Cross. Everything reminds us of it and according to one viewpoint we ascend to the heavens with a hoisting machine being the Cross and the Holy Spirit the rope, where we also meet Christ

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY March 23 , 2014 Sunday of the Holy Cross, The Holy Righteous Martyr Nicon and His 199 Disciples, Anatolios & Protoleon the Martyrs converted by the martyrdom of St. George, Luke the New Martyr of Mytilene.

Tone Plagal of the Second Tone, Eothinon 6th. **Epistle** St. Paul's Letter Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6, **Gospel** Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

NEXT SUNDAY March 30 , 2014 Sunday of St. John Climacus, John Climacus the Righteous, author of The Divine Ladder of Ascent, Sosthenes Apollos, Cephas, Caesar, & Epaphroditos, the Apostles of the 70, Zacharias the New Martyr.

Epistle St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20,

Gospel Mark 9:17-31



62nd Year

March 23, 2014

Pamphlet #12 (3173)

THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS IN OUR LIFE

This Sunday, beloved brethren, the fast of Great Lent reaches its middle. Our holy Church places the Precious Cross precisely here, to comfort us, to give us rest. As a very shady tree the Cross of Christ, is an oasis in the desert of the fast. We are standing beneath its grace, “exhausted from the foot journey” and receiving strength to continue. Saint Gregory Palamas maintains that the mystery of the Cross acts already from the years of the Old Testament, in a way so that we can speak of the cross before the cross. An opening in the horizon is foreshadowed also in the vertical closing of the Red Sea by Moses (Exod. 14). In the copper snake also which he himself erected on the staff and which whoever gazed at it was healed from the poisonous bites of the poisonous snakes (Num. 21). Precisely as a copper snake is dead, thus dead is the body of the crucified Christ depicted, furthermore while it is also dead as regards sin.

Sunday of the Holy Cross

Gospel of Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Precisely as again the Israelites were healed from the sensorial wounds of the sensorial snakes by merely gazing at the copper snake, thus we also by merely gazing at the crucified dead body of Christ, we are healed from the noetic wounds of the noetic snakes, passions and demons. in other words. In Genesis also Jacob blesses crosswise the grandchildren of Ephraim and Manasse (ch. 48), whereas in Numbers again, the Israelite people in the desert is put into groups in four parts (ch. 2), crosswise. Seeing Moses elsewhere with his hands extended, the Israelites are inspired and defeat the Amalekites (Ex. 17).

Crucified love

Very rich in symbolisms is the shape of the Cross. Our Fathers speak of its two dimensions. The horizontal dimension upon which Christ stretches out his hands, as if he wants in a certain manner to "embrace" everyone, symbolizes love for neighbor, whereas the vertical dimension upon which the Precious Head, the trunk and the lower extremities are stretched, symbolizes God's love for man.

Our love in order to be healthy, must contain both of these dimensions. If the one dimension is missing, our love is neurotic, perverted, egotistical, false, hypocritical. If love for neighbor is missing man is trapped in a peculiar monophysitism, being occupied only with the "spiritual" things. If love for God is missing, man is secularized and his good work falls to work therapy so he can surpass his boredom or in order to enlarge his self idol.

Crucified love is that which sanctifies man because it makes him a partaker in the sufferings of Christ, and thus a partaker in his Resurrection. The Cross, burial and resurrection comprise a triple necessity of spiritual life: crucifixion of the senses, burial of the mind through heartfelt unwandering prayer and resurrection of the whole person, in other words his theosis from this very life.

Very important is whatever Saint Gregory Palamas tells us about the Precious Cross (in his 11th Homily). He speaks of the double mystery of the Cross, in other words the double crucifixion of each Christian. The departure of the Christian from the secular train of thought precedes as a first crucifixion, according to the "I am crucified to the world" of the Apostle Paul and in a second phase, the passions depart from man as a second crucifixion, according to the "and I to the world" of Paul (Gal. 6:14).