

Israel, Abraham had placed a tithing tax. While because the Holy Scripture, in a strange manner does not speak about his descent and the years of his life, he is presented as unborn and immortal, in order to end up a prophetic pre-image of Christ in the understanding of people. So Melchizedek is “fatherless”, “motherless”, “without genealogy”, in other words an unbegun, eternal, unending high priest, with a priesthood higher than the Levitical one, since the forefather of the Levites paid a tax of honor to him.

The apparent qualities which are rendered to Melchizedek, due to the expressions of the Old Testament, end up a real in the person of Christ. “Fatherless”, since as a human he was born of the Virgin. “Motherless”, since as the Son and Word of God he was born only of the Father. “Without genealogy”, as unbegun God. “A high priest unto the ages”, since he offered for all the delivering sacrifice on Golgotha, where we are all led to, through the Divine Liturgy, in order to commune his Body and his Blood. But also because he did not receive the high priesthood from a human, acting in an inconceivable manner from a human consideration of matters.

Today’s day is an oasis because the power of the Cross indicates and underlines the uniqueness of the person of Christ as Son of God, who with all that he did, opened the heavens for us also awaiting us in his Kingdom. Consequently, we are struggling with safety, with assurance, but the only truth upon the earth which is called Christ!

Archim. I. N.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2015 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS, *Agapius the Martyr & His Companions, Manuel the New Martyr of Crete, Holy Apostle Aristobulos of the Seventy, Bishop of Britain.*

TONE OF THE WEEK: Grave Tone, **Eothinon** 7th Eothinon

EPISTLE *St. Paul’s First Letter to Hebrews* 4:14-16; 5:1-6

GOSPEL *Mark* 8:34-38; 9:1

NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 22 2015 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS,

Basil the Holy Martyr of Ancyra, Kalliniki & Vassilisa the Martyrs, Euthemios the New Martyr

EPISTLE *St. Paul’s First Letter to Hebrews* 6:13-20

GOSPEL *Mark* 9:17-31



63rd Year

MARCH 15, 2015

Pamphlet # 11 (3224)

THE OASIS OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

Since we are in the middle of Holy and Great Lent, we hear our Church call today’s Sunday, the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, an oasis. Of course, it is logical for Holy and Great Lent to be compared to a journey in a desert, since the fasting and the ascetic struggles, which characterize this period, denote a condition of hardship for the body in order for the condition of repentance to be strengthened. However, why is today’s Sunday an oasis? Maybe does it stop, even for one day, the fasting? Maybe does the prevailing mournful climate of Holy and Great Lent change? No, of course. Then, why oasis?

The cross a good shady tree

What is unique about today, which initially justifies it being characterized an oasis, is the projection for veneration of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross of our Lord. The Fathers say that especially the two horizontal beams of the Cross, compare to the image of a tree with branches full of leaves, which secure coolness and protect from the burning heat. Thus, just like the traveler in the desert seeks even the slightest shade in order to be protected from the burning sun, much more so he rejoices when he arrives at the oasis with the many trees, the thick shades and the cool water, thus

St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2.

Psalm 27.9,1

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

BRETHREN, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

also the Christian, proceeding in the footpaths of life which are difficult to traverse and mainly, struggling in the current spiritual period, seeing the Cross being extended, recognizes its consolation and takes refuge there, just as the power of the Cross overcomes every contrary power and makes it an invincible weapon, before which the devil "freaks and trembles not being able to behold its power", while the angels rejoice and are glad recognizing the flag of triumph.

Thus essentially, the Precious Cross, that instrument which from a sign of a dishonorable and painful death, developed into a symbol of triumph, of defeating death and the devil and a guaranteeing power of the saving journey of the Christian upon earth. Not only this, but it also ended up the visible symbol of confession of Faith and an invocation of God the Father. So for this reason, it's correct imprinting upon our body, every time we do our Cross, is obligatory, otherwise it ends up an insult and blasphemy against the Lord of Glory, who with this sign was glorified and validated our own paradisaal glory.

The person of Christ

Beyond the power of the venerable symbol, today's Sunday is an oasis also for one more reason. The uniqueness of the person of Christ is projected. The Church presents today's epistle passage, where Christ is projected as the par excellence superior person, higher than the angels, prophets, and the righteous. So for this reason also the Church is projected superiorly as higher than every other religious format upon the earth, due to the fact that it comprises Christ extended onto the ages. What does the Apostle Paul say? "Having the great high priest having come from the heavens, Jesus the son of God, we keep the confession". Christ is the eternal and only High Priest. Death did not defeat him, but through his Resurrection and his Ascension he has traversed the heavens, surpassing them, and the entering into the place of his heavenly kingdom he also awaits us, so long as we keep, as a precious treasure, the confession of our Faith in him. Here the Cross is associated with today's day! It is the proof of the eternal kingdom of Christ, as it proves his victory over death and his quality as the Son of God.

Furthermore, because the Apostle Paul must show forth the quality of eternity in the person of Christ, he associates him with another key and respected person of the Old Testament, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, to whom the Primogenitor of