

Liturgical Insights into Important Holy Days during Great Lent

Thursday, March 25, 2010

The Feast of the Annunciation

The Archangel Gabriel receives the directive from God the Father to announce to the Virgin Mary (in Hebrew "Mariam") that she has been chosen to receive the Grace of the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Christ. The virgin Mary/Mariam willingly and unconditionally accepts the blessing and the Will of God to serve as the vehicle, the "ark" to bring the Christ into the world. On this great day, we celebrate the blessed event of the Archangel Gabriel announcing to the Theotokos (Birth-Giver of God) that she would bear a son who would be called Jesus Christ in a miraculous way

Saturday, March 27, 2010

The Raising of Lazarus

One could say that Holy Week for Orthodox Christians begins on this day when we remember the Raising of Lazarus, by Christ, who was the Lord's friend, the brother of Mary and Martha, and who was dead in the tomb for 4 days. Christ raises him from the dead. The thousands around who witnessed the event are shocked. Through this, we get a foretaste of the coming Passion, Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus also shows us that weeping is a holy part of emotional expression when upon learning about the death of his friend Lazarus, he wept openly...

Sunday, March 28, 2010

Palm Sunday

On this day we celebrate the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem in order to observe the Hebrew Passover. He rides a donkey and not a chariot. He offers humility, not haughtiness. Thousands welcome Him with palm branches and praises of "Hosanna in the Highest; Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!" He is acknowledged for His spirituality and authority from God the Father. He is the Messiah and Lord because of his power to heal many, and to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Palm Sunday Evening

The theme for this evening's Service is watchfulness and making the most of our gifts and talents. We should always make the best of a challenging situation and use our personal gifts to the Glory of God and not to and for the glory of this world. Even when we are slapped around, we must always persevere, just as Christ persevered.

Monday, March 29, 2010,

Holy and Great Monday Evening

The theme again is watchfulness along with preparing to receive Christ with vigilance. We should be constantly working at becoming a better Christian, and not be caught unprepared when Christ comes again.

Tuesday, March 30, 2010
Holy and Great Tuesday Evening

At this time, we appreciate the sinful condition of each of us and the opportunity to repent and change our ways. We note that sin comes from the Greek word “amartia” which means to “miss the mark, to miss the target, to miss the bull’s eye. When we succumb to sinfulness, Jesus gives us the opportunity to change our attitude, make amends, ask for forgiveness from Christ and each other, and to “go forth and sin no more” as our Lord so proclaims.

Wednesday, March 31, 2010
Holy and Great Wednesday

In the morning we celebrate the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts for the last time of this year. We are reminded that we are welcome to “taste and see how sweet is the Lord” by receiving His precious Body and Blood through Holy Communion.

Holy and Great Wednesday Afternoon and Evening

The Healing Service of Holy Unction takes place whereby we receive the therapeutic power of Holy Oil in order to receive forgiveness, blessing, and healing.

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the will to be lazy
and sad, the desire to get ahead of other people and to boast and
brag.

Give me instead a pure and humble spirit, the will to be patient
with other people and to love them.

O Lord and King, let me realize my own mistakes, and keep me
from judging what other people do. For You are blessed now and
forever.

AMEN.

Η Προσευχη του Αγίου Εφραιμ του Συρου

Κυριε και Δεσποτα τη ζωης μου, πνευμα απιας, περιεργιας, φιλαρ
χιας, και
αργολογιας, μη μοι δως.

Πνευμα δε σωφροσυνης, ταμεινοφροσυτης, υπομονης, και αγαπης
χαρισαι μοι
τω σω δουλω.

Ναι Κυριε Βασιλευ, δωρησαι μοι του οραν τα εμα παισιματα, και
μη
κατακρινειν τον αδελφον μου, οτι ευλογητος ει εις τους αιωνας.

AMHN.