



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Our priest is Fr. Peter Irfan, Acting Rector.
You may reach him at 716-342-8520 (cell) or at fatherpeter777@yahoo.com.*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Sunday, March 15
Divine Liturgy: 10am

**No coffee hour
following the service**

*The above services are
at St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY, 13676*

*Daily Vespers at the
Hermitage of Saint
Olympia*
<saintolympiahermitage.org>

*Vespers Services are
closed to the public
for the time being.*

**Cancelled Events
at the Hermitage!**

Liturgy of the
Presanctified Gifts
Friday, March 20, 27

Lenten Mini-Retreat
Saturday, March 21

Third Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Cross



O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries. And by virtue of Your Cross preserve Your habitation!
Troparion of the Cross

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden; it has mysteriously been quenched by the wood of the Cross! The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished; for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell:
“Enter again into paradise.”
*Kontakion of the
Sunday of the Cross*

Father Peter and the Parish Council ask that everyone who attends our parish read the following communications from Archbishop Michael, issued on March 18, 2020.

Archpastoral Letter Regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic
<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/covid-19/ARCHPASTORAL-LETTER-CORONAVIRUS-NYNJ-2020-03-18-final.pdf>

Diocesan Guidelines Concerning the Coronavirus Pandemic
<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/covid-19/DIOCESAN-GUIDELINES-CORONAVIRUS-NYNJ-2020-03-18-final.pdf>

Through the Cross... Joy!
Fr. Steven Kostoff (OCA website)

“For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comprehension” [2 Corinthians 4:17].

The Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross extends throughout the entire week. Thus, we continue to “bow down” and venerate the Cross whenever we gather together for any services throughout this week up to, but not including, Great Vespers on Saturday evening. The Cross is the goal of our Lenten journey—as is the empty tomb and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Cross and Resurrection are the two components of the one integral paschal mystery. This is not only the crown of our liturgical year, but the very substance of our Orthodox Christian Faith. A Cross without the Resurrection would have buried Jesus in the oblivion of historical time. But according to the design of God, there could be no Resurrection without the scandal of the Cross. No death—“even the death on a Cross” [Philippians 2:8]—no Resurrection. It would be very difficult to find a scriptural text that makes explicit mention of the Cross without a balancing text that connects the Cross to the Resurrection, or to an understanding of the Cross that reveals its fulfillment in the Resurrection. In the divine *oikonomia*, suffering leads to glorification. As Saint Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, “this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised Him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” [Acts 2:23-24]. In a compact formulation, the Apostle Paul writes of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification” [Romans 4:25].

Further, in what amounts to be something of a creedal formula of the early Church, the Apostle Paul proclaims the Gospel that endures to this day when he writes, “for I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve” [1 Corinthians 15:3-5].

We find this organic connection between the Cross and glorification already revealed in the Lord’s “passion prophecies” as recorded in the Gospels. At the conclusion of the Gospel reading prescribed for the upcoming Fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we will hear Christ proclaim, “the Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He is killed, after three days He will rise” [Mark 9:31]. As difficult as it may be to look beyond the suffering and anguish of the Cross—and of our own personal crosses—the promise of God is that this is the true way to glorification: “Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” [Hebrews 12:1-2].

Our liturgical life of prayer and practice is fully consistent with the scriptural witness of uniting the Cross and Resurrection in an endless proclamation of how God has transformed suffering into joy: “For through the Cross, joy has come into the world!” The purpose of the hymnography and rites of the Church is never to cover up the scandal and shame of the Cross endured “for our sake” by the “Lord of glory.” But the mystery of Christ is the disclosure that what is sown in dishonor will be raised in glory [1 Corinthians 15:43]. In the holistic life of the Church that appreciates and recognizes the human person as a psychosomatic unity of “soul and body,” we express this belief by literally—that is, bodily—prostrating ourselves before the life-giving Cross as we sing the powerful hymn, “Before Thy Cross we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify.”

We worship the One Who was nailed to the Cross and we simultaneously glorify His resurrection. This hymn perfectly captures the Good News in a world often overwhelmed by bad news. And in a world paralyzed by uncertainty and “relativism,” what a blessing and privilege to bow down before the Lord Jesus Christ, “the same yesterday and today and forever” [Hebrews 13:8], crucified and raised for our salvation!

All-Canada Orthodox Prayer Service

Small Compline with Canon and Akathist Hymn

Friday 20 March, 7pm Eastern / 4pm Pacific

Join the service prayerfully online:
<https://zoom.us/j/430585929>

*Served by His Eminence, Archbishop Irénée,
Fr Geoffrey Ready and a small choir*

<https://www.archdiocese.ca/articles/all-canada-orthodox-prayer-service-friday-20-march>

