



# ST OLYMPIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

POTSDAM, NEW YORK 13676

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA  
DIOCESE OF NY AND NJ



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

**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.  
Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am.  
Great Vespers are held every Saturday evening at 5 pm.**

## Next Services

**Saturday, April 6th**

**Great Vespers - 5:00 pm**

*Fr. Peter is available to hear confessions before Vespers by appointment.*

**Sunday, April 7th  
4th Sunday of Great Lent:  
St. John of the Ladder**

**Matins - 8:30 am**

**Divine Liturgy - 10:00 am**

**Fellowship to follow at**

**St. Olympia Chapel  
123 Main Street  
Potsdam, NY, 13676**

**Also:**

**Daily Vespers at 5 pm  
St. Olympia Hermitage  
Edwards, NY**

**\*\*\*This Wednesday, April 3rd,  
Fr. Peter will hold a  
Presanctified Liturgy at the  
Hermitage at 5 pm\*\*\***

*Visitors are welcome to attend.  
E-mail:  
mothersophronia@gmail.com  
to confirm and for directions.*

*At left: A common icon associated with the Veneration of the Cross is the same icon used for the Feast of the Veneration of the Cross on September 14. In the icon, Patriarch Macarius is standing in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate. On each side of the Patriarch are deacons holding candles. The elevated Cross is surrounded and venerated by clergy, chanters, monastics and lay people, including Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine. In the background of the icon is a domed structure that represents the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. This church was one of the churches constructed and dedicated by Emperor Constantine on the holy sites of Jerusalem.*

**Come and Worship!**  
**Archbishop Michael will be with us to celebrate  
the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts  
on Wednesday evening, April 10th, at 6:30 pm**

**Lenten buffet dinner  
and fellowship with His Eminence will follow**

**Parish news:** *Marianthi Stakos will present her junior recital on clarinet in Hosmer Hall, Crane School of Music, SUNY-Potsdam, this coming Saturday, April 6th, at 3:30 pm. Admission is free and all are welcome!*



## The Third Sunday of Great Lent:

### Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross

*Note: the following article was excerpted from the website Orthodox Christianity.  
You may access the entire article at <http://orthochristian.com/69342.html>*

#### Introduction

On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week.

#### Historical Background

The commemoration and ceremonies of the Third Sunday of Lent are closely parallel to the feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (September 14) and the Procession of the Cross (August 1). Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ.

As we have "crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24), and will have mortified ourselves during these forty days of the Fast, the precious and life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, and depression. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. In other words, we must experience what the Lord experienced during His Passion - being humiliated in a shameful manner. The Cross teaches us that through pain and suffering we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: the heavenly inheritance and eternal glory.

As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Fathers "planted" on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged.

Or, as before the arrival of the king, his royal standards, trophies, and emblems of victory come in procession and then the king himself appears in a triumphant parade, jubilant and rejoicing in his victory and filling those under him with joy, so does the Feast of the Cross precede the coming of our King, Jesus Christ. It warns us that He is about to proclaim His victory over death and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection. His Life-Giving Cross is His royal scepter, and by venerating it we are filled with joy, rendering Him glory. Therefore, we become ready to welcome our King, who shall manifestly triumph over the powers of darkness.

The present feast has been placed in the middle of Great Lent for another reason. The Fast can be likened to the spring of Marah whose waters the children of Israel encountered in the wilderness. This water was undrinkable due to its bitterness but became sweet when the Holy Prophet Moses dipped the wood into its depth. Likewise, the wood of the Cross sweetens the days of the Fast, which are bitter and often grievous because of our tears. Yet Christ comforts us during our course through the desert of the Fast, guiding and leading us by His hand to the spiritual Jerusalem on high by the power of His Resurrection.

Moreover, as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam's gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal

#### Icon of the Commemoration

The most common icon associated with the Veneration of the Cross is the same icon used on the Feast of the Veneration of the Cross on September 14. In the icon, Patriarch Macarius is standing in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate. On each side of the Patriarch are deacons holding candles. The elevated Cross is surrounded and venerated by many clergy and lay people, including Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine.

In the background of the icon is a domed structure that represents the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. This church was one of the churches constructed and dedicated by Emperor Constantine on the holy sites of Jerusalem.

#### Orthodox Christian Commemoration Of The Sunday Of The Holy Cross

The Sunday of the Holy Cross is commemorated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which is preceded by the Matins service. Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening [or a vigil may be scheduled]. The hymns of the Triodion for this day are added to the usual prayers and hymns of the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ. Scripture readings for the Sunday of Orthodoxy at the Divine Liturgy are: Hebrews 4:14-5:6; Mark 8:34-9:1.

At the conclusion of the Matins [during the Great Doxology] a special service is held. The Cross is placed on a tray surrounded by basil and/or flowers, and is taken in solemn procession through the church to the chanting of the Thrice Holy Hymn [Trisagion hymn]. The tray is placed on a table before the people, and the hymn [apolytikion] of the Feast of the Cross is chanted. As the priest venerates the Cross, the priest then the people chant, "We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and Your holy Resurrection we glorify." At the conclusion of the service, the people come and venerate the cross and receive the flowers or basil from the priest.

#### Hymns of the Feast

##### Apolytikion (Mode One)

Save, O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance;  
Grant victory to the faithful over their adversaries.  
And protect Your commonwealth, by the power of Your Cross.

##### Kontakion (Varys Mode)

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden;  
It has been mysteriously 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!"