



■ † **Third Sunday of Great Lent - Sunday of the Cross**

**“Wherever there is a Christian,
there is a Cross”***

Epistle (Hebrews 4:14 - 5:6)

Brethren, seeing then that we have a great High Priest Who has passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession. For we have not a High Priest Who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant and on those who are outside of the Way, since he himself is also encompassed by infirmity. And by reason hereof, he ought, both for the people and also for himself, to make offering for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, except he that is called by God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son; today have I begotten Thee.” And He saith also in another place, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Gospel (St. Mark 8:34- 9:1)

The Lord said: Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For

whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the Holy Angels." And He said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that there are some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power."



“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (St. Mark 8:34).

It is impossible to follow the Lord as a cross-bearer without a cross, and everyone who follows Him unfailingly goes with a cross.

What is this cross?

It consists of all sorts of inconveniences, burdens and sorrows—weighing heavily both internally and externally—along the path of conscientious fulfilment of the commandments of the Lord, in a life according to the spirit of His teachings and requirements.

Such a cross is so much a part of a Christian that wherever there is a Christian, there is this cross, and where there is no such cross, there is no Christian.

Abundant privileges and a life of pleasure do not suit a true Christian. His task is to cleanse and reform himself. He is like a sick person who needs cauterization or amputation; how can this be without pain?

He wants to tear himself away from the captivity of a strong enemy, but how can this be without struggle and wounds?

He must walk counter to all the practices surrounding him, but how can he sustain this without inconvenience and constraint?

Rejoice as you feel the cross upon yourself, for it is a sign

that you are following the Lord on the path of salvation which leads to heaven. Endure a bit.

The end and the crowns are just around the corner!



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God.*