



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church  
 Weekly Newsletter  
 Sunday, April 4, 2021

**Sunday of the Holy Cross**

**Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:1-6**

**Mark 8:34-38, 9:1**

**Upcoming Meetings**

- Choir – Tues 3/30, 7pm  
In person practice
- OCLI 2-month check in – Sat 4/3,  
9:30am (Office will send Zoom link)

**Catechumen Class:**

The inquirer/catechumen class is weekly on Saturday at 6:30pm. [Click here for the Google meeting link.](#)

**Philly OCF**

- Meeting – Monday 4/5, 8pm  
[Zoom link](#)  
Mtg ID # 835 2215 9264  
Password: Fellowship
- Bible study - Tuesday 4/13, 11am  
[Zoom link](#)  
Mtg ID #880 5713 0161  
Password: Scripture

**End of Year Finance Report:**

The 2020 Finance Report is now available. If you are interested in receiving a copy, [please contact the office.](#)

- The following services will be held in the church and streamed on the [website](#):
  - **Tuesday 3/30** – Akathist, 7pm
  - **Wednesday 3/31** – Presanctified, 6:30pm
  - **Thursday 4/1** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 9am
  - **Friday 4/2** – Akathist, 6:30pm
  - **Saturday 4/3** – Vespers, 5pm
  - **Sunday 4/4** – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
- To attend one of the services listed above at the church, please sign up via Sign Up Genius ([March services](#))([April services](#)). When doing so, please keep in mind the following:
  - reserve the number of slots for family members attending (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.)
  - those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home.
  - children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home.
- To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Prior to arriving at the church for communion, please say the [Morning Prayers](#) and the [Prayers of Preparation before Communion](#).
- Confession is also being scheduled by appointment. To set up an appointment, please email the church office and provide a few dates/times you are available. The office will email you to confirm your appointment time.

**Troparion of St. George**

O liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings, O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

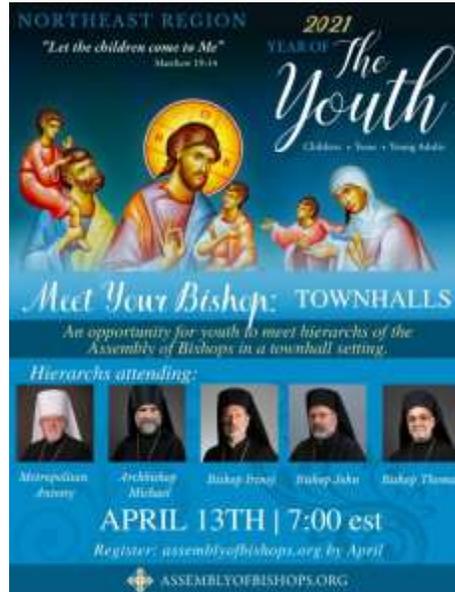
**If you attend a service, you must wear a mask/face covering out of care for ourselves, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our neighbors.**

## Antiochian Village Summer Camp Registration

Summer camp will be in person for 2021! For more information about changes for this year, visit the [Antiochian Village's website](#). Registration is now open.

## Youth Zoom Townhall: Meet Your Bishop!

The Assembly of Bishops has declared 2021 as the “Year of the Youth” and have organized virtual townhalls for the youth to meet bishops by region. The session for the Northeast region will be held on Tuesday, April 13, at 7pm. To register, [visit the Assembly of Bishops website](#). Registrants must be children or teens (age 18 or under).



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

**April Feast:** Palm Sunday (April 25)

### April 4

- Elementary school: Ask Abouna
- Middle school: At home resources
- High school: Class (via Zoom)

### April 11

- Elementary school: At Home Resources
- Middle school: Class (via Zoom)
- High school: Ask Abouna **(3pm)**

### April 18

- Elementary school: Class (via Zoom)
- Middle school: Ask Abouna
- High school: At home resources

### April 25

No Sunday School

## Veneration of the Holy Cross

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.

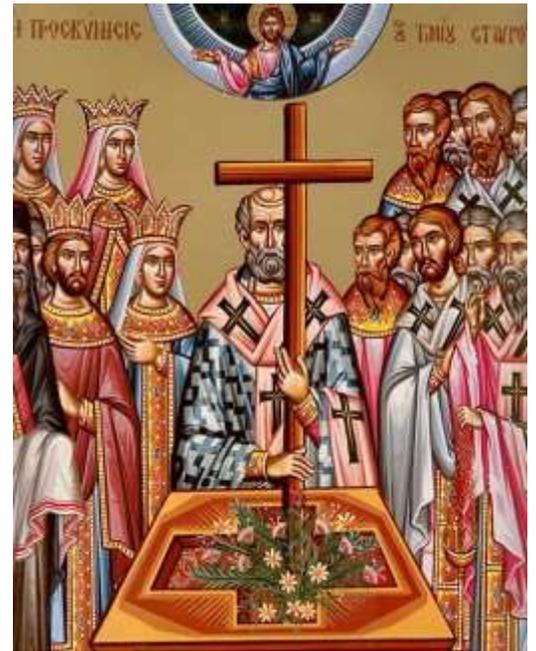
The commemoration and ceremonies of the Third Sunday of Lent are closely parallel to the feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (September 14) and the Procession of the Cross (August 1). Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us 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.

### Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

*“Fasting is a good safeguard for the soul, a steadfast companion for the body, a weapon for the valiant, and a gymnasium for athletes. Fasting repels temptations, anoints unto piety; it is the comrade of watchfulness and the artificer of chastity.”*

*+St. Basil the Great*