

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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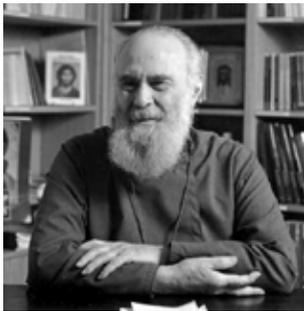
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SERMON ON THE CROSS +Metropolitan Anthony Bloom



In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

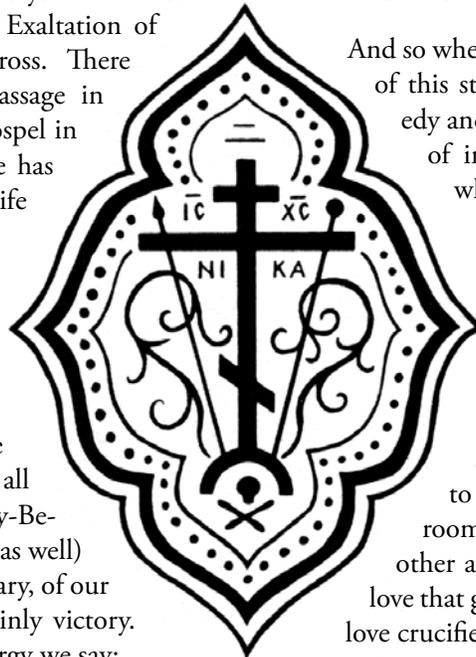
We have been keeping these days the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. There is a passage in the Gospel in

which the Lord says to us, “No one has greater love than he who gives his life for his neighbor.” And these words resolve the antinomy between the horror of the Cross and the glory of it, between death and the resurrection. There is nothing more glorious, more awe-inspiring and wonderful than to love and to be loved. And to be loved of God with all the life, with all the death of the Only-Begotten Son, and to love one another (as well) at the cost of all our life and, if necessary, of our death, (this) is both tragedy but mainly victory. In the Canon (Anaphora) of the Liturgy we say:

“Holy art Thou and all-holy, Thou and Thine only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit! Holy art Thou and all-holy, and magnificent is Thy glory! Who hast so loved Thy world as to give Thine only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; who when He had come and had fulfilled all the dispensation for us, in the night in which He was given up — or rather, gave Himself up for the life of the world — took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands; and when He had given thanks and blessed it, and hal-

lowed it, and broken it, He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles....”

This is the divine love. At times one can give one’s own life more easily than offer unto death the person whom one loves beyond all; and this is what God our Father has done. But it does not make less the sacrifice of Him who is sent unto death for the salvation of one person or of the whole world.



And so when we think of the Cross we must think of this strangely inter-twined mystery of tragedy and of victory. The Cross, an instrument of infamous death, of punitive death to which criminals were doomed — because Christ’s death was that of an innocent, and because this death was a gift of self in an act of love — becomes victory.

This is why Saint Paul could say, “It is no longer I, it is Christ Who lives in me.” Divine love filled him to the brim, and therefore there was no room for any other thought or feeling, any other approach to anyone apart from love, a love that gave itself unreservedly: love sacrificial, love crucified, but love exulting in the joy of life.

And when we are told in today’s Gospel, “Turn away from yourself, take up your Cross, Follow Me” (Mark 8: 34) — we are not called to something dark and frightening; we are told by God: “Open yourself to love! Do not remain a prisoner of your own self-centeredness.” Do not be, in the words of Theophane the Recluse, “like a shaving of wood which is rolled around its own emptiness.” Open yourself up! Look — there is so much to love, there are so many to love! There is such an infinity of ways in which love can be experienced, and fulfilled and accomplished.

Open yourself and love (others) — because this is the way of the Cross! Not the way which the two criminals trod together with Christ to be punished for their crimes; but the wonderful way in which giving oneself unreservedly, turning away from self, existing only for the other, loving with all one's being so that one exists only for the sake of the other — this is the Cross and the glory of the Cross.

So, when we venerate the Cross, when we think of Christ's crucifixion, when we hear the call of Christ to deny ourselves — and these words simply mean: turn away from yourself! Take up your cross! — we are called to open ourselves to the flood of Divine Love, love that is both death to ourselves and openness to God, as well as to each and to all.

In the beginning of the Gospel of Saint John we are told, "And the Word was with God"; in the Greek it says "Godwards." The Word, the Son, had no other love, no other thought, no other movement but towards the Beloved One, giving Himself to Him Who gave Himself perfectly to Him.

Let us learn the glory of crucified Love, of this sacrificial Love which is, in the words of the Old Testament, "stronger than death, stronger than hell," stronger than all things because it is Divine Life conquering us and poured through us onto all those who need to be loved in order to come to Life, to believe in Love, and themselves to become children of Love, children of Light, to inherit Life eternal. Amen.

From: <http://www.saintbarbarafw.org/sermon-on-the-cross>



OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, AND BISHOP ALEXANDER'S VISIT

2016 marks 10 years since Holy Cross Orthodox Church was established as a mission of the Orthodox Church in America, bringing the good news of Christ's salvation to all in the Piedmont Triad and offering English-language services.

Also during 2016, our diocese welcomed Bishop Alexander as our new shepherd in the faith.

In celebration of both events, we are hosting Bishop Alexander at our 10th anniversary banquet, to be held on Saturday, September 17, 2016 at 6:30 PM in the hall of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church, 808 N. Hamilton Street, High Point, NC. We invite you to join us for this joyful occasion.

Bishop Alexander will also be with us for Great Vespers (Saturday, September 17 at 5:00 PM—note early time) and Divine Liturgy (Sunday, September 18 at 10:00 AM). Both services will take place at Holy Cross Orthodox Church, 645 Greensboro Road, High Point.

Tickets for the banquet are \$25 per adult and \$10 per child. Ticket prices cover the costs of the banquet and other expenses related to Bishop Alexander's visit. Please consider donating a few extra dollars as a gift for those that want to attend but are not able to afford tickets. If you would need this assistance to attend, please contact Father Christopher.

We look forward to having you join us for services, our anniversary banquet, or both during this time of celebration!



THE EUCHARIST

A Poetic Compilation by Fr. John Finley

*Father Finley decided to challenge himself with that assignment, but he expanded it to include quotes from *The Liturgy and Life of the Eucharist*, by Father Alexander, as well. The result? A poem entitled, *The Eucharist Is*, a poetic compilation of quotations from Father Alexander Schmemmann.*

*We are right at the 25th anniversary of the departure from this life of Father Alexander Schmemmann, and Father John Finley would like to dedicate this podcast to Father Alexander with this poem, as published in Father John Finley's book, *Sacred Meals*, in the chapter entitled, "Bread Which Strengthens Man's Heart."*

The Eucharist is a mystery, the very mystery of joy, the mystery of all mysteries, the mystery of the Church.

The Eucharist is a joyful gathering of those who are to meet the risen Lord, and they enter with him into the bridal chamber.

The Eucharist is an action, by which a group of people become something corporately, which they had not been as a mere collection of individuals. It is the essential attitude, and the essential act of the Church, which is the new humanity, restored by Christ, one transforming act, and one ascending movement.

The Eucharist is a procession of the Church following the ascension of Christ.

The Eucharist is a journey of the Church into the dimension of the Kingdom.

The Eucharist is a real separation from the world. We always want to make Christianity understandable and acceptable to the mythical modern man on the street, and we forget that the Christ of whom we speak is not of this world, and that after his resurrection, he was not recognized, even by his own disciples. We do not realize that we never get anywhere because we never leave any place behind us.

The Eucharist is an entrance of the Church into the joy of its Lord, and to enter into that joy so as to be a witness to it in the world, is the very calling of the Church, its

essential ministry, the mystery by which it becomes what it is. It is an entrance into the risen life of Christ, the very movement of the Church, as passage from the old into the new, from this world into the world to come.

The Eucharist is a manifestation of the Word of God. God will speak to us. His eternal Word will be given to us, and we will receive it.

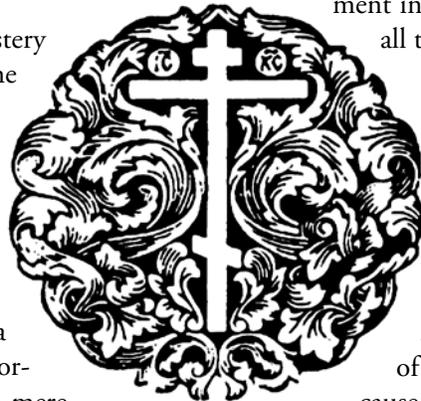
The Eucharist is a movement, the movement that Adam failed to perform, and that, in Christ, has become the very life of man—a movement of adoration and praise, in which all joy and suffering, all beauty and all frustration, all hunger and all satisfaction, are referred to their ultimate end, and become finally, meaningful. It is real life, a movement of love and adoration toward God, the movement in which, alone, the meaning and value of all that exists can be revealed and fulfilled.

The Eucharist is an offering. It is our offering to him of ourselves, of our life, and of our whole world, "to take into our hands the whole world, as if it were an apple," said a Russian poet.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice, but it the most natural act of man, the very essence of his life. Man is a sacrificial being. Because he finds his life in love, and love is sacrificial, it puts the value, the very meaning of life, in the other, and gives life to the other, and in this giving, in this sacrifice, finds the meaning and joy of life. It is, indeed, a sacrifice offered on behalf of all, and for all.

The Eucharist is Christ, himself. The Eucharist is his Eucharist, and he is the Eucharist. It is he who offers, and it is he who is offered. Christ is the perfect man, who stands before God. Christ, alone, is the perfect Eucharistic being. He is the Eucharist of the world. In and through this Eucharist, the whole creation becomes what always was to be, and yet, failed to be.

The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ. It is the mystery of cosmic remembrance. It is, indeed, a restoration of love as the very life of the world. Remembrance is an act of love. God remembers us, and his remembrance, his love, is the foundation of the world. In Christ, we remember. The church, and its separation from this world, on its journey to heaven, remembers the world, remembers all men, remembers the whole creation, and takes it, in love, to God. We remember his life, his death, his resurrection,



one movement of sacrifice, of love, of dedication to his father, and to men. This is the inexhaustible content of our remembrance.

The Eucharist is the lifting up of our offering, and of ourselves. The Eucharist is the ascension of the Church to heaven. We have entered the Eschaton, and we are now standing beyond time and space. It is because all this has first happened to us, that something will happen to bread and wine. It is our ascension in Christ.

The Eucharist is the state of perfect man. When man stands before the throne of God, when he has fulfilled all that God has given him to fulfill, when all sins are forgiven, all joy restored, then there is nothing else for him to do, but to give thanks. When a man stands before God, face to face, when he has been accepted into his presence, when his sins are forgiven, and he has recovered his pristine beauty, the Eucharist, thanksgiving, adoration, worship, is truly the ultimate and the total expression of his whole being. It is the divine element, the image of God in us, the life of paradise, the one essential relationship with God, the only full and real response of man to God's creation, redemption, and gift of heaven. It is a new style of life, the only real life, of creation with God, and in God, the only true relationship between God and the world. In sin, man has lost that pure Eucharist. He has directed his life, his love, his care, toward other objects. He has become incapable of Eucharist, thanksgiving, which is the state of man in paradise.

The Eucharist is the breakthrough that brings us to the table in the Kingdom, raises us to heaven, and makes us partakers of the divine food.

The Eucharist is the end of the movement. We are at the Paschal table of the Kingdom, the end of the journey, the end of time. It is the arrival at a vantage point from which we can see more deeply into the reality of the world.

The Eucharist is the mystery of unity and the moment of truth, the very expression and edification of the Church. Here, we see the world in Christ, as it really is, and not from our particular, and therefore, limited, and partial, points of view.

The Eucharist is communion with the whole Church. It is the supreme revelation of the communion of the saints, of the unity and interdependence of all the members of the Body of Christ. It is judgment and condemnation to people who do not see Christ in the Church, but see

in it merely human pride and arrogance, selfishness, and the spirit of this world. It is the breaking of the bread, the one source of life that brings all to it, and redeems the unity of all men under one head, Christ, the mystery of forgiveness, the mystery of reconciliation achieved by Christ, and eternally granted to those who believe in him. It is the essential food of the Christian, strengthening his spiritual life, healing his diseases, affirming his faith, making him capable of leading a truly Christian life in this world, the gift of eternal life, an anticipation of the joy, peace and fullness of the Kingdom, a foretaste of its light. It is both partaking of Christ's suffering, the expression of our readiness to accept his way of life, and sharing in his victory and triumph—a sacrificial meal, and a joyful banquet. His body is broken, and his blood is shed, and partaking of them, we accept the cross. Yet, by the cross, joy has entered the world, and this joy is ours when we are at the Lord's table. It is given to me, personally, in order to transform me into a member of Christ, to unite me with all those who receive him, to reveal the Church as a fellowship of love.

The Eucharist is the mystery of the Kingdom, the fullness and manifestation of the Church as the age to come.

The Eucharist is our secret joy and certitude, the source of inspiration and growth, the victory that overcomes evil, the presence that makes our whole life, life in Christ.

The Eucharist is the beginning, and things that were impossible are again revealed to us as possible. The time of the world has become the time of the Church, the time of salvation and redemption.





ANNOUNCEMENTS

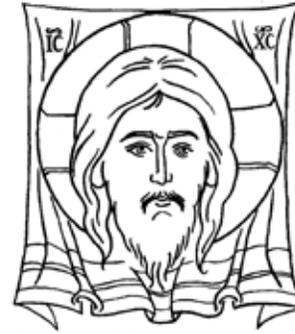
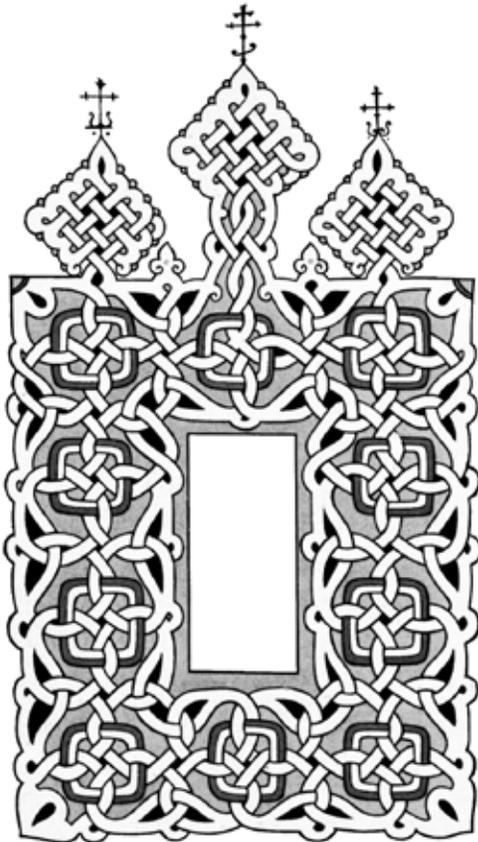
Order Gift Cards Through Holy Cross! Scrip cards are available from hundreds of retailers and don't cost any more than the face value of the gift card. It's a "free" fundraiser to benefit the Holy Cross building fund! Contact Karen Brudnak-Slate.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

(Figures do not include the Capital Campaign or Building Fund.)

	August	YTD
Total Income	\$8498.79	\$75,446.08
Total Expense	\$8051.62	\$72,976.33

Thank you very much for your generous support!



PRAY FOR LOVE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE KINGDOM

Saint John of Kronstadt
From My Life in Christ

In order not to be in daily bondage to the passions and the devil, you must set yourself an object to aim at, have this object constantly in view, and endeavor to attain it, conquering all obstacles by the name of the Lord.

What is this object? The Kingdom of God, the Divine palace of glory, prepared for believers from the creation of the world. But as this object can only be attained by certain means, it also is necessary to have such means at one's disposal.

And what are these means? Faith, hope, and love, especially the last.

Believe, hope, and love, especially love,
disregarding all obstacles;
love God above everything
And your neighbor as yourself.

If you have not sufficient strength to preserve in your heart these inestimable treasures, fall down more often at the feet of the God of Love. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," for He Who has promised is true. Walking, sitting, lying down, conversing, or working, at every time, pray with your whole heart that faith and love may be given to you. You have not yet asked for them as you should ask - fervently and instantly - with the firm purpose of obtaining them.

Say now, "I will begin to do so henceforth."

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 6 PM Great Vespers 7 PM OCAT Taco Social
4 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 12:30 PM Church School Meeting	5	6 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	7 6:30 PM Great Vespers	8 Nativity of the Theotokos 8 AM Divine Liturgy 6PM Parish Council	9	10 6 PM Great Vespers
11 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	12 6:30 PM Sisterhood Meeting	13 6:30PM Vigil for the Exaltation, followed by a potluck feast.	14 EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS 8 AM Divine Liturgy 7 PM Catechism	15	16	17 5 PM Great Vespers 6:30 PM 10th Anniversary Banquet
18 9:40AM Hours 10AM Hierarchal Divine Liturgy	19	20	21	22 7PM Men's Group	23 5PM Open Door	24 6 PM Great Vespers
25 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	26	27	28	29	30	1 October 5PM Great Vespers

