

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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BETRAYAL THEN AND NOW: ON GREAT WEDNESDAY Archpriest Alexander Iliashenko



Why was it necessary to have a traitor? After all, it would seem that tracking down the Savior would have been easy since He neither hid nor concealed Himself. He could have been located without any trouble. They could have just sent a detachment to seize Him. But, for some reason, it was necessary to have a traitor – so that this frightful act would take place from within.

This serves as a warning to us all that we must guard our inner unity, not allowing ourselves even to entertain thoughts against those of like mind with us or against those people who are close to us, which can ruin a great thing.

It amazes me that, as it says in the liturgical texts, Judas was deprived of nothing relative to the other disciples. Everything that the other disciples had, he had too: they spoke with the Savior, and so did he; they went about Judea with the Savior, and so did he; they slept and ate in common, and so did he. Their boat suffered calamity, and the Savior passed by the boat on the waves. Judas saw how the Apostle Peter left the boat and walked on the waves to the Savior, Who was standing on the water. And how the Lord saved Peter – Judas saw all this. The Lord gave him, as He did to all the Apostles, power over unclean spirits. And Judas drove them out, too. It is therefore amazing how this desire for betrayal crept into his soul. Evil always

acts subtly.

The Apostle John the Theologian says that Judas stole money from this small community (he was the treasurer, to put it in modern terms, and appropriated a certain portion of the money for himself). He also showed self-interest when the sinful woman anointed the Savior's feet with precious ointment, which he said would have been better to sell and give to the poor.

The Apostle remarks that Judas said this not because he cared for the poor, but because he was self-interested. It was this sinful tendency towards self-interest that isolated and inwardly separated him from the other disciples, prompting him to embark on the road to betrayal.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that Judas did not desire the Savior's death. He did not think that his betrayal would end as it did.

Judas was also present at the Mystical Supper.

In church, through coming into contact with this mystical and majestic day in the divine services, we experience to our own degree that which took place then. But Judas was an immediate participant, so he also experienced it. He saw the reaction of the surrounding disciples. At the Mystical Supper, when the Savior washed the feet of the disciples, He washed Judas' feet as well. The Savior, having celebrated the first Eucharist, gave Communion to the Apostles, including Judas.

Judas was not deprived of anything, not of the smallest share of the Savior's attention. But Satan entered his soul along with the blessed Eucharistic bread, and he went out into the darkness from the upper chamber of Sion. When the Savior prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, exhausted and with sweat like drops of blood falling to the ground, the disciples could not bear their weariness and exhaustion. Although the Savior had asked them to watch with Him, their eyes waxed dim and they fell asleep.

Judas came to this garden at the head of a detachment armed with swords and clubs, coming for the Savior as though He were a thief. The Savior's final words to Judas are astonishing: Friend, wherefore art thou come? [Matthew 26:50].

Even at this moment, the Savior extended His hand to him, saying: Friend.

But this word did not stop him.

People ask if he could have repented. Of course, he could have. The Apostle Peter denied the Savior three times. The Savior prepared His disciples, warning the Apostle Peter that this would happen. But the Apostle Peter went and denied Him three times. When he recognized his sin, he repented: he went out and wept bitterly [Matthew 26:75]. Judas also repented. But, in contrast to the Apostle Peter, who went to the disciples and spent all the rest of the Gospel narrative only with the disciples and especially with John the Theologian, Judas went to the chief priests.

John the Theologian was the youngest and the purest, tremulous, and beloved disciple of Christ. The Apostle John's love was sufficient to keep the Apostle Paul from falling into the abyss of despair into which Judas had fallen.

If Judas had gone to the disciples, and not to the high priests, then his fate could have been different. He would have been understood and forgiven. The Apostle Peter wept throughout his entire life whenever he heard the morning cry of the rooster, reminding him of his betrayal, although the Savior had forgiven him. The Apostle Peter could not forgive himself for his moment of weakness when he denied the Savior. Of course, Judas could also

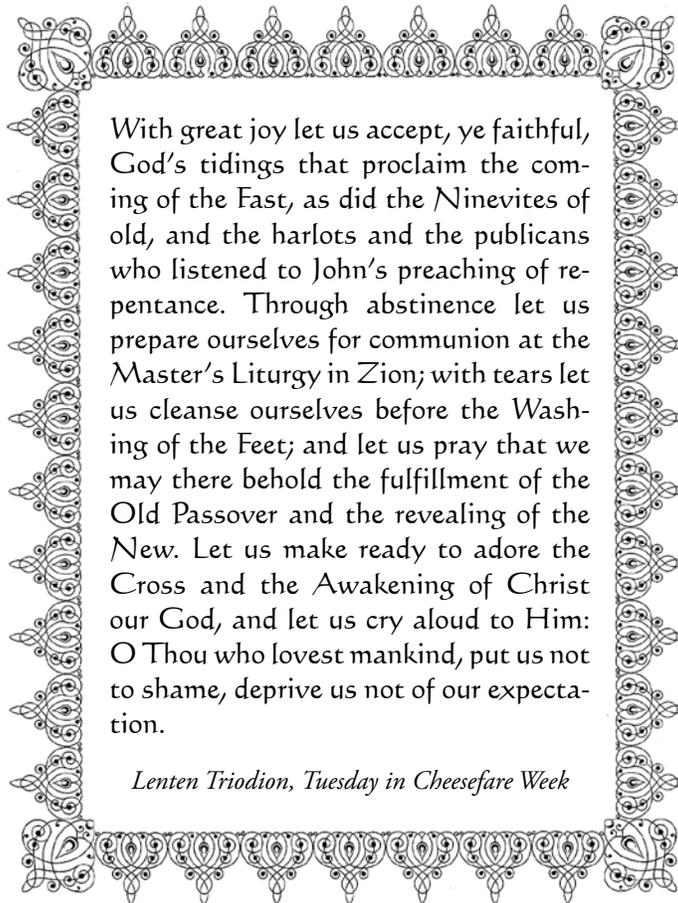
have repented. We do not know how, but the fact is that the Savior did not abandon him; He did not doom him to the fatal deed he performed in desperation.

There are different kinds of repentance. There is the repentance that heals the soul, and there is the kind that plunges it into the abyss of despair if one does not have God. Judas could have repented and returned to the shared, grace-filled life of the other Apostles.

Judas betrayed Christ in perfect freedom after some sort of anger or sinful weakness had settled into his soul, which opened itself to temptation. His soul accepted this temptation and rooted itself in it. In his abyss of despair, he could have remembered that the Savior had called him a friend; that an outstretched hand would have pulled him out of this abyss – but he did not. He went to the high priests, and not to the Apostles. We can therefore by no means say that his freedom was violated or that he was compelled to do what he did. God's will was fulfilled, as it should have been – for it is written in the Bible that the Mes-

siah would be betrayed. But all the same, Judas could have acted somehow differently; he could have repented. And his repentance would have been accepted.

From <http://www.pravmir.com/betrayal-then-and-now-on-great-wednesday/>



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moleben on our property: We will continue serving a weekly short prayer service on our property in Kernersville. This is a service of supplication (Molieben) that Archbishop Dimitri of blessed memory blessed for the use of parishes in the diocese. Fr. Christopher will be serving it on Friday mornings at 10 AM except where noted in the calendar. Our property is located at 1320 Masten Drive in Kernersville.

Sisterhood of the Holy Myrrhbearers: In the spirit of Great Lent, we will gather in March to prepare for Pascha. Ana Iltis has graciously opened her home for us to gather to discuss our Pascha basket traditions on Tuesday, March 20 at 6:30 pm for our gathering. Feel free to bring a Lenten snack or beverage to share if you would like to, but there is no obligation to do so.

As we wind our way through Great Lent, we will be looking ahead to Pascha. Many women have asked about the beautiful Pascha baskets that line the hall at Holy Cross on Pascha. For some of us, preparing a Pascha basket is a long-standing family tradition. We use the same recipes every year and the list of items we include rarely changes. Some of us have developed our own Pascha basket traditions in recent years or we do something new every year. For others, this is all new. What do you put in your Pascha basket? How do you prepare it? What other Pascha traditions do you hold dear?

Men's Group: This month we will be singing the Akathist to the Theotokos on Friday, March 16 at 7 PM at the church. This will be followed by a discussion on the first chapter of a great book called *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* by Henri Nouwen.

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

	Actual	Budgeted
February Income	\$9,369.37	\$12,515.00
February Expense	\$9,772.55	\$10,223.92
YTD Income	\$26,557.30	\$25,031.75
YTD Expense	\$20,063.05	\$20,376.34



As we celebrate today the joyful veneration of Thy life-giving Cross, O Christ our Saviour, we prepare ourselves for Thy most holy Passion; for Thou in Thine almighty power hast brought to pass the salvation of the world.

There is joy today in heaven and on earth, for the sign of the Cross is made manifest to the world. The thrice-blessed Cross is set before us, and to all who show it veneration it is a fount of ever-flowing grace.

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ? For Thou hast given us Thy Precious Cross to venerate, on which Thy holy Blood was shed, to which Thy flesh was fixed by nails. With love we kiss it and give thanks to Thee.

*Lenten Triodion
Sunday of the Adoration of the Holy Cross, Matins.*

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6PM Parish Council	2 10AM Prayers at the Property	3 6 PM Great Vespers
4 St. Gregory Palamas 9AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	5	6 7:30PM Choir Rehearsal	7 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	8	9 10AM Prayers at the Property	10 6 PM Great Vespers
11 Veneration of the Holy Cross 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 7PM OCAT House Meeting	12	13	14 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	15	16 10AM Prayers at the Property 7:00PM Men's Group Akathist & Discussion	17 Soul Saturday 9AM Teaching Liturgy 4:30PM Catechism' class 6 PM Vespers
18 St. John Climacus NO Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	19	20 6:30PM Sisterhood	21 6:10PM 9th Hour, Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	22	23 10AM Prayers at the Property 5 PM Open Door	24 11AM Church Cleaning 4:30PM Catechism Class 6 PM Vespers
25 ANNUNCIATION, St. Mary of Egypt 9AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	26	27	28 6:10PM 9th Hour, Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	29	30 10AM Prayers at the Property	31 Lazarus Saturday 9AM Divine Liturgy 6 PM Vespers

Today He who is in essence unapproachable, becomes approachable for me and suffers His Passion, delivering me from passions. He who grants light unto the blind is spat upon by the mouths of the transgressors, and He gives His back to scourging for the sake of those that are held captive.

When the pure Virgin His Mother saw Him on the Cross, she cried aloud in pain: 'Woe is me, my Child! What is this that Thou hast done? Thou who wast in beauty fairer than all mortal men, dost now appear without life and form, having neither shape nor comeliness. Woe is me, my Light! I cannot bear to look upon Thee sleeping, and I am wounded inwardly, a harsh sword has pierced my heart. I sing the praises of Thy Passion, I venerate Thy merciful kindness: O longsuffering Lord, glory to Thee!' *Lenten Triodion: Sunday of the Adoration of the Holy Cross, Matins.*