

The Gospel's Voice



Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration

Number 28, March 2018

On the way to Easter

The five Sundays of Lent will invite us to remember historical events and characters.

The first Sunday, feast of Orthodoxy, reminds us that the 7th Ecumenical Council definitively restored veneration of icons (March 11, 843). Because the icons invite us to enter into communion with Christ who said: "*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father*". (John XIV / 9)

The theological foundation of the veneration of the icons is the double divine and human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second Sunday is dedicated to Saint Gregory Palamas (14th century), who, a few decades before the fall of Byzantium, integrated into a doctrinal synthesis the secular tradition of the contemplative monasticism of the Christian East, known as hesychasm.

The third Sunday is dedicated to the veneration of the Holy Cross, which reminds us of the foundation of the Christian faith: the death and

resurrection of Christ, who took upon himself our sins, our weaknesses, our diseases, and obtain for us forgiveness and healing. The Cross also reminds us of Christ's victory over death, the demons, and the fact that our Lord has broken the gates of hell to free the righteous.

On the 4th Sunday, we commemorate St. John Climacus (seventh century) author of the "*holy ladder*", a very comprehensive account of the spiritual struggle of one who wishes to become truly the temple of the Holy Spirit. This book is read during Lent each year in the monasteries.

On the 5th Sunday of Lent, we commemorate St. Mary the Egyptian (6th century). Her story is poignant with truth and simplicity. Repentance and metanoia. Summary of the Christian life!

The 5 Sundays of Lent are like stages to prepare us to meet the risen Christ through the silence of reflection, the spiritual struggle against temptation, purification through repentance, fasting and conversion, turning to Christ and turning away from the false values of the world.

Jesus said, "*Without me you can not do anything!*" (John XV / 5) So, we call him, we beg him with love, saying, "*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.*"



Orthodox theology is apophatic, that is to say negative: we do not know the essence of God nor can we explain it. So God is inexpressible, incomprehensible, invisible, inaccessible, eternal, always the same. And God works by his grace or his energies and from the nothingness, He has brought us to be, He has relieved us who have fallen, and He has not ceased to act until He has raised us to heaven and given us the Kingdom to come. For that we give thanks to him. (According to the prayer of oblation, liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom)

In other words, orthodox theology is at the same time dogmatic and mystical, for there is no knowledge of God without experience of the encounter and presence of God and all its effects in our lives.

P. Athanasios



Divine Liturgy

Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.

Sunday March 4th: St Gregory Palamas

11th: Sunday of the Holy Cross

18th: Sunday of St. John Climacus

25th: Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God
and commemoration of St. Mary the Egyptian

Matins at 9.30 a.m. every week day.

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration

Grande-Rivière N-O
Mauritius
(behind Garage BALA)

**Divine Liturgy every
Sunday
at 9.30 a.m.**

Web site:

<http://orthodoxchurchmauritius.org>

*Matins at 9.30 a.m. every
week day.*



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