

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Veneration of the Holy Cross

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this third weekend of the Great Fast, we hear readings from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews and Mark's Gospel. The mid-point of the fast is this coming Wednesday. Until now the Church has had us focus on our own personal transformation. Now she turns our attention to the Cross of Christ. She calls us to venerate it and to think about the lesson that it teaches us.

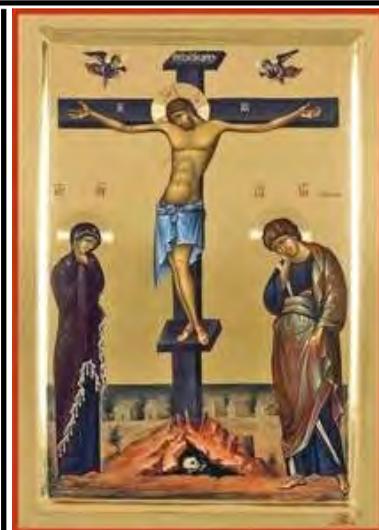
What is important to note, however, is that our special prayer today never singles out the Cross by itself but always connects it to the Resurrection. We pray: *We bow to Your Cross, O Master, and we praise Your Holy Resurrection.*

Paul tells us that Christ became, because it was bestowed upon Him by the Father, our High Priest. As such, He showed us true worship of God, namely the offering of self in thanksgiving for the gift of life. We are likewise called to imitate Jesus, to offer our very lives back to God in true and real thanksgiving. A real part of what God reveals to us through the Person of Jesus as He died upon the Cross, is the necessity to truly FORGIVE OTHERS and return unkindness with UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. This is the true message of the Cross. When we live this way there is but one real result, RESURRECTION and FULLNESS OF LIFE.

The passage we hear from Mark's Gospel deals with the "doctrine of the Cross." Simply stated it is: *If a person wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross and follow in my steps.*

As we know, our personal cross can be any real challenge that presents us, especially challenges that are intimately connected with others around us. How we respond to these challenges can result in spiritual growth OR, at least, help us begin to understand what we need to change in our lives in order to grow in our LIKENESS of Jesus.

As one might guess, because we are people who need personal change, we are not always going to



respond to the various challenges of life in a positive way. We can, however, learn from our failures. This is why the church encourages us to daily examine how we have lived the day. We must always realize that growth comes one small step at a time. We should never become discouraged with our progress but after real reflection on how we have lived, make a new resolve to become more like Jesus.

Now is the time when the Great Fast may become a little tedious. Now is the time to renew our efforts!

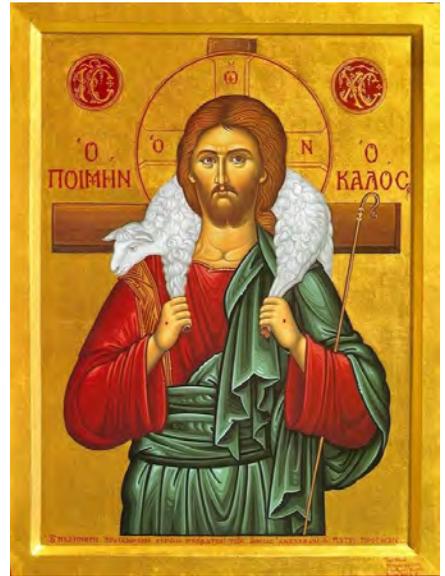
CHRIST, TRUE GOD and TRUE MAN

In the last issue of this article I introduced the idea of *kenosis*, which is very predominant in Eastern Theology. In Eastern Christian theology, *kenosis* is the 'self-emptying' of Jesus' own will and becoming entirely receptive to God's divine will. The word *ἐκένωσεν* is used in Philippians 2:7, "Jesus made himself nothing" or "He emptied himself", using the verb form *κενόω* "to empty". The act of becoming incarnate as a human being - that is taking on human nature - was and is perhaps the most loving thing that we believe our God (i.e., Father, Son and Holy Spirit) did in history. Think about it! A being that we exclaim as incomprehensible, unlimited and beyond all boundaries, decided to limit Himself to becoming just one human being. He did this in the Person of the Son. But, of course, we know that God, Who is Three-In-One, never does anything as a singular Person. All Three Divine Persons always act in concert.

It was an act of Divine Will that the Son would take on limited nature, although He also and always shared in unlimited Divine nature. This was an act of great humility and love.

If we really think about this particular action of God, how can we ever conceive Him as being a God Who even thinks about "punishing" His adopted children, human beings. He Himself became a human being. This action took place in time, although in God there is no time. Therefore His action in time became a revelation about the truth of humanity.

Human beings, created in the image of God Himself, are the greatest of all of God's creative efforts. He created, from all eternity, a being that was in His image and has the potential to grow in His likeness as seen in the Person of Jesus.



Why? Out of love. The power that joins Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the power of love. Love, however, is a power that seeks always to be expressed. That's the true meaning of love. And so, in order to allow this power to express itself, humanity was created and creation was shared with humanity.

Think about it. When you truly love someone, you want all others to know that person as you do. True love always finds a way of expressing itself in a very creative way.

So God took on human flesh in order to express His love for us.

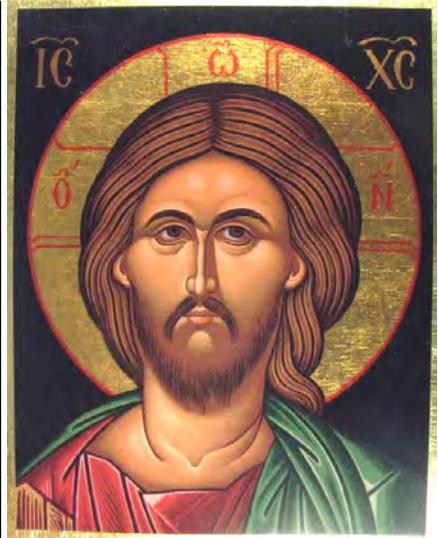
THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

The mysterious, luminous cloud mentioned in the Gospel narrative of the Transfiguration suggests the place and presence of God. This cloud recalls the cloud pillar that protected and guided the Israelites through the desert, the dense cloud on the top of Sinai where Moses met God, the cloud that covered the temple of the Lord, and countless other instances where the presence of God is understood in specific terms of location.

If you haven't come to the conclusion by now, there are parallels created in Christianity to events in Judaism. We see this throughout the Gospel story. For example, Jesus becomes the new Moses, the giver of the New Law - the Law of Love of Neighbor. The Exodus of the Jews out of Egypt is paralleled by Jesus conquering Death and leading believers to a new Kingdom - an immortal, eternal Kingdom of God. Jesus fasted 40 days in the desert as a parallel to the Jews wandering in the desert for 40 years (*we also fast for 40 days during the Great Fast to parallel the purgation that happened to the Jews and Jesus*).

Yet, the cloud of the Transfiguration remains different than other clouds, because it envelops everyone present. The "place of God" includes Moses, Elijah, Peter, John and James, along with Jesus. For the first time in history we can understand how the people who make the church become part of the place of God, part of the body of Christ, helping us understand our own incorporation to the body of Christ and our union with Him in the church.

This is an important point. Since we share the same human nature as Jesus, He and us are joined in some mystical union and we, after His death, now become the vehicles by which God



comes into the world. We must see ourselves as a real extension of Jesus in time. We are now called to become the instruments by which God makes known His revelation about the true meaning of human life and His Kingdom. We now, by the way that we live, are the vehicles of His revelation. So, if we say that we believe in Jesus, we truly have a great responsibility to live like Jesus lived so that God's revelation can continue to humankind. We must be open to making His Kingdom real - a kingdom where unconditional love and forgiveness abound. This calls us to learn how to **BE LIKE JESUS!**

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



Great Fast

SOUP AND SALAD LUNCHEON

Today Sunday, March 15th



I would thank all who made this 2020 Great Fast SOUP & SALAD LUNCHEON possible and also express my thanks to all who took the time

to attend. This is one of the major community-building events that we hold each year. THANKS!

EASTER DINNER - SVIACHENNE

Sunday, April 19th

I'm announcing this way-in-advance so that people might plan to attend this special Dinner. We will again go to Carieras Restaurant so that all can enjoy the event. More informant to follow. We will just order off the regular menu.

REMEMBER OUR FOOD DRIVE

During the Great Fast this year we are collecting "dry" food products for St. Patrick's Senior Center in the Cass Corridor.

Be willing to go all out, in pursuit of your dream. Ultimately it will pay off. You are more powerful than you think you are

THE NEW LIFE

It is my sincere hope that the thoughts and ideas that I express in this article, cause my readers to "think" about their lives and about the tenets of our faith.



It is my truest believe that religion, our religion, is of little value if it doesn't cause us to stop and think about our lives and to let the beliefs of our religion change our lives.

Our religion is not magical! Our religion is superstitious! Our religion is not filled with a multitude of rules and regulations which, if you keep them religiously, you will be spared, after death, from punishment and gain reward. Eternal life is this, says St. John in his Gospel: to know God as a loving Father and the Son as a model Brother and the Holy Spirit as the Giver of Life and Helper for our life's journey.

There is nothing we can do to ever make God love us more than He already does. Our penitential practices are not to get God to love us more and to forgive us BUT, rather, to help us understand how much He does love us. Our puny penitential practices are meant to open our hearts and minds to God's love for us (Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

SUNDAY, MARCH 15th

Heavenly Father, I bow before the Cross of Your Son Jesus and I praise His glorious resurrection. I know that He had to die in order to “conquer Death” and reveal that human life is immortal. As I venerate the Cross, help me to comprehend what it reveals. First it reveals that Death is only a means of making a transition to a different way of living. Second it reveals resurrection, telling me that I have an eternity to build my relationship with You, my true God. As I venerate the Cross of Your Son, allow me to embrace the revelation that it shares with me. Jesus embraced death to reveal to me true life. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

MONDAY, MARCH 16th

Heavenly Father, as I look upon the Cross of Your Son, I realize that He embraced it for two reasons: to show me that it is possible to grant unconditional love and forgiveness to those who may be unkind to me and to show us that human death only reveals immortality and resurrection. There could never have been an Eastern Sunday without a Good Friday. Death is the way that humans make a transition from this way of life to the next. What the Cross does also show me, however, that if I can accept the challenges of life in a way that Jesus did, then my transition to the next life is truly enhanced. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

TUESDAY, MARCH 17th

Heavenly Father, when I think about how Your Son Jesus suffered upon His Cross, I realize that I will never be called to meet such an extreme challenge in my life. He met His challenge without bitterness, despair or anger but, rather, with love and forgiveness. He taught me, through this event, how to face life's challenges. I beg You, through the power of Your Holy Spirit, to help me develop the courage to meet the challenges of my life the same way that He met the challenges of His life. I believe that if I can do this, I will experience the fullness of life and be able to experience resurrection as He did. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18th

Heavenly Father, we have reached the mid-point of the Great Fast. Although I find that I have gotten into the routine of the Fast, I don't know if I am truly lifting my mind and heart to the mystery that we are going to celebrate. I would beg the help of Your Holy Spirit. Enkindle in my heart and mind the desire to transform myself so that I might understand the mystery of Your love for me. I believe that You have spared nothing in order to reveal to me the meaning and purpose of my life. I would ask Your help and assistance to understand Your revelation and to use it to change myself. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

O Christ our God, help me to live as You lived, meeting the challenges of my life in the same manner as You met the challenges in Your life!

A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

THURSDAY, MARCH 19th

Heavenly Father help me to renew my efforts to make this Great Fast a time of preparation for the celebration of the Death and Resurrection of Your Son Jesus. I know that this great mystery reveals to me the meaning and purpose of life. Further, I know that the way Jesus embraced the challenges of His life, namely how He responded to the cruelty of those who put Him to death and the rejection and betrayal of others, tells me how to live my life. I realize that when I get angry at others because of how I think they treat me, I am giving in to my own pride and automatic way of living. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

FRIDAY, MARCH 20th

Heavenly Father I would join with Your Son Jesus in offering my praise and worship to You by humbly offering You my life as Jesus did when He was on this earth. I offer my life to You in thanksgiving for the great gift of my life. To express my gratitude, I will try to do everything I can, with the help of Your Spirit, to think and live as Jesus did. I beg You to help me grow in my likeness of Him. Help me to make sure that my attitudes and ideas about life are like His and expressed in my behaviors and way of living. Help me to truly be Your child. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SATURDAY, MARCH 21st

Heavenly Father, I believe You revealed to me, through the Person of Your Son Jesus, how to live this human life and become the person You dreamed about from all eternity. I desire to be the Person You conceived me to be, knowing that if I do, I will bring glory and praise to You, my true God. I also realize that the person You dreamed from all eternity is a person who understands and believes that the purpose of this life is to grow in the likeness of Jesus. Your Son became a human being in order to model for me and humankind how to be a genuine human being, one of Your children. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SUNDAY, MARCH 22nd

Heavenly Father, I recall that St. John Climacus, whose memory our Church recalls today, shared his ideas about how I can progress in my personal transformation and change. He called his thoughts the Ladder of Divine Ascent and gave his ladder thirty rungs. The first three steps, I recall, dealt with the detachment from this world, that is growing in my desire to grow in my communion with You, My true God. I ask Your help as I attempt to accomplish the task. I seem to so easily get distracted with the cares of this life that I forget that the only true purpose of this life is to grow in my likeness of Jesus. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

As a part of your Great Fast effort this week, why not try to reach out to someone who may be home-bound and in need of someone just caring!

St. Michael the Archangel
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Pastor

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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
In most instances membership
required for six months

Funerals
Membership of an immediate family
member required

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, March 15 - Third Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 7
9:30 AM - Lenten Matins
10:00 AM + Wasyl & Eugenia Tkacz; Kristina Tkacz

FOURTH WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - TONE 8

Monday, March 16 - Sabinus & Papas, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, March 17 - Alexis, Man of God, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, March 18 - Cyril of Jerusalem, Archbishop
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, March 19 - Chrysanthus & Daria, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

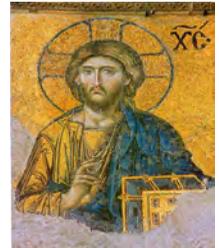
Friday, March 20 - Fathers of St. Sabbas Monastery
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, March 21 - James of Catania, Confessor
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, March 22 - Fourth Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 8
9:30 AM - Lenten Matins
10:00 AM + Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

(Continued from page 5 - The New Life)

not to change His love for us. Think about it! Is there truly anything that we can do to make our infinite God love us more? And, further, is there anything that we can do to truly make our God withhold His love for us and to punish us? Think about this!



One of my primary goals in my ministry is to help people to see that when we project onto God our values and attitudes, we distort who He IS. He is not made in our image and likeness. We are made in HIS IMAGE and unto HIS LIKENESS. When we want Him to punish the people we see as bad or evil and reward the people we see as good, we are projecting our values onto God. We do not see Him as He truly is, OUR LOVING FATHER.

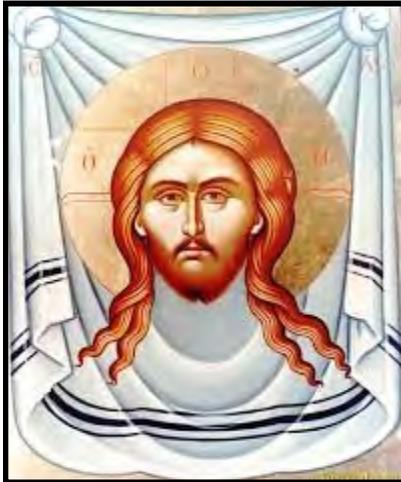
What say you?

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

THOUGHTS ON THE GREAT FAST

Originally, the forty-day period was computed from Good Friday, the day the Pasch of Crucifixion was celebrated, and then extended to six weeks. In Constantinople, when they transferred the solemn Baptism from Easter to the Saturday of Lazarus, the Lenten season of preparation also had to be anticipated by one week. Thus, according to the Byzantine practice, the Great Fast began seven weeks before Easter and ended on the Friday before the Saturday of Lazarus of Lazarus we sing: *We have concluded the beneficial Forty Days and we implore You, O Lover of Mankind, make us see the Holy Week of Your Passion and praise Your work of redemption* Liturgically, then, our Great Fast ends on the Friday before the Saturday of Lazarus and is exactly forty days long.

Holy Week, in the Eastern Church is considered as a "special week" and, strictly speaking, is not included in the Forty-Days Fast as St. John Chrysostom indicates: *At last we have arrived at the end of the Holy Forty Days and, with the help of God, we reached this Great (Holy) Week. Why do we call this week Great? Because of the great and indescribable benefits that have befallen us during this week.*



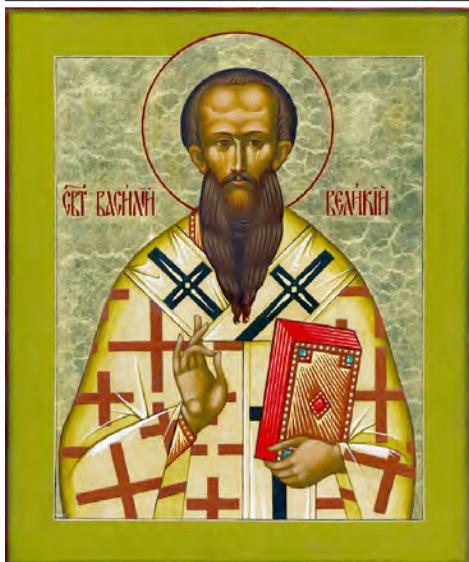
In the Western Church, Holy Week was included into the Lenten season and the Lenten season was of six week duration. But later, when the Sundays in Lent were exempt from fasting in the West, Lent became only thirty-six days long. This situation was remedied in the seventh century by adding four more days of fasting at the beginning of the Lenten season with

the first day of Lent on Ash Wednesday. This is the reason for the difference in the first day of Lent between the Eastern and Western Churches. According to Byzantine tradition, the Great Fast discipline consists of three separate parts: (1) Corporal or External Fast, including the abstinence from certain

foods, drink and amusements; (2) Spiritual or Internal Fasting which consists of abstinence from "all evil"-sin; and (3) Spiritual Renewal achieved by the practice of the virtues and good works.

In the next issue of the Bulletin I will address each of these three items of the Fast. The main thing is that we voluntarily and freely choose to do things that we believe will help us to spiritually grow - achieve personal change and transformation. That is the primary goal of the Great Fast.

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

We should not be surprised to see man, in the second story of creation, sharing with Yahweh the creation of the animals by bestowing on them their names and thus establishing their functions on earth. This is the second creation story's version of *adam* being made in the divine image, for he is called to minister to god as a priestly intermediary between Him and His creation. In the words of the psalmist, God gave him dominion over the works of His hands and put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6). Such authority brings with it responsibility to tend the world and protect it, as a king

protects his people.

A second lesson of the story is that the man and his woman (to employ the actual terminology of the story itself [Genesis 2:25]) are the ontological equal of each other. The first creation story expressed this by declaring that both the male and female were *adam* and made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). This story expresses that same truth through the man's ecstatic recognition that the woman was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, a feminine version of himself, an *ishah* from an *ish* (Genesis 2:23). This was a revolutionary thought in ancient times, when polygamy was allowed and women were treated like chattel. The widespread use of pornography, the flourishing of the sex trade and even sexual slavery, the common abortion of girls in some cultures, and the persistence of rape and domestic violence all prove that this continues to be a revolutionary thought in our own day as well.

Thirdly, this story shows that this ontological equality is compatible with male leadership in the family (or, if one prefers the term, with male headship). Whether here in Genesis 2:23 or later in Genesis 3:20, the man named his wife just as he had previously named the animals, indicating a measure of protective authority. Further, the man was made first and was the first to receive commands from Yahweh; the woman came afterward and learned of these commands through the man. Also, she was made to help him; he was not made to help her. In all these details we note a priority and preeminence bestowed upon the man.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 11 THIRD WEEKEND OF THE GREAT FAST March 14-15, 2020

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

I suspect that the primary difference between the East and the West is that, in the West people are “obliged” to be good and not break rules while in the East people are encouraged to freely embrace a life of spiritual growth and personal transformation. Keeping all the possible rules that have been formulated over the centuries, will not necessarily lead to transformation. Why? Because transformation first and foremost involves the change in our attitudes and ideas about life that can then lead to behavioral change.

For example, most of us must learn to think about all other human beings as “brothers” and “sisters”, members of the same human family. In this modern day and age that is often very difficult because it seems that our society is constantly “judging” people within our society and we, in a very subtle way, seem to pick up these attitudes. This is usually connected to people who “are not just like us” and, quite often thought of as strangers, foreigners or minorities. This attitude is even further exacerbated if the others are of a different religion.

Attitudinal change is, perhaps, one of the more difficult things that we



humans are challenged to change. Why? Because so often they are connected to things that we have learned from childhood.

However, if we are ever to learn how to unconditionally love and forgive others, we probably have to change some of our attitudes and ideas about life. I truly believe that our Eastern spirituality challenges us to do precisely this.

So one of the real helpful exercises during the Great Fast is to “review” the various attitudes and ideas we have about our lives and others. See if they are the attitudes that Jesus taught and lived. If they aren’t, then why not undertake a program of change. You will never be sorry since such change brings true PERSONAL FREEDOM.

Carrying Our Crosses

Once there were two monks who traveled to a monastery in the dead of winter. At one point, they heard a voice crying for help. They spotted a man lying in the snow. He had fallen and had nearly frozen to death. One monk said to the other, "We must go and help our brother." However, the other monk replied to the first saying, "If we stop to help him, we, too, will surely freeze to death. The poor man's fate is already sealed. Let us move along." Subsequently, one monk decided to stay and help the injured man, while the other monk decided to continue alone on his journey to the monastery.

Remaining behind, the monk bandaged the wounds of the injured man, hoisted him upon his shoulders, and resumed his journey. Even-

tually, they arrived at the monastery. Much to their surprise, they saw the lifeless body of the other monk just a few feet away from the door of the monastery. By choosing to travel alone, he had frozen to death. The monk, however, in choosing to help the injured man had arrived safely. Ironically, carrying the injured man upon his shoulders had insulated him from the cold.

Our Lord tells us, "those who will save their life will lose it and those who lose their life for My sake will save it." (Luke 9:24) As we venerate the Holy Cross today, let us remember that it is by carrying our own crosses and bearing our burdens in this life that we reap the greatest blessings - not only in this life, but in eternal life to come.