

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission, Denton


2026 W. Oak Street • Denton, TX 76201

(940) 565-6753 • www.stmaximus.org

Priest Justin Frederick (940) 293-3032 cell

## Bulletin for Sunday of the Cross April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

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### Schedule of Services

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday tone 3 Veneration of the Cross**

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Church School

6:00 p.m. Pan-Orthodox Vespers, St. John's, Euless

**April 6<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

6:00 p.m. Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Meal

**April 7<sup>th</sup> Thursday St. Tikhon**

6:00 a.m. Matins, Confession

3:00 p.m. Vespers

**April 8<sup>th</sup> Friday**

6:00 p.m. Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Meal

**April 9<sup>th</sup> Saturday**

5:00 p.m. Vigil, Confession

**April 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday tone 4 St. John of the Ladder**

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Church School, Mission Council

6:00 p.m. Pan-Orthodox Vespers, SS Constantine & Helen

As we reach today the middle of the time of abstinence, by the power of the Cross let us praise Him who was raised upon it in the midst of the earth; and let us glorify Him as our mighty Savior and our God, crying aloud: Grant us to behold, O Master, Thy passion and Thy holy Resurrection, and to bestow on us forgiveness and great mercy.

*Triodion, Monday Vespers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Week*

## Announcements for April 3

**To Our Visitors: Welcome!** Please join us after the service for coffee, food, and conversation. If you would, fill out a visitor's card for us and leave it in the basket on the table by the door. We invite you to go first through the food line and join the priest at his table.

**To All:** Please be aware that Holy Communion is open only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for worthy participation in the Mystery through prayer, fasting, and a recent confession to a priest (within the last month or so).

**The Holy Synod** has chosen Bishop Alexander, who has headed the small Bulgarian ethnic diocese in the OCA for several years, to be Bishop of the Diocese of the South. He plans to relocate to Dallas in the next few months. A letter from him is posted on the board. Let us give thanks to the Lord.

**The Special Offering** this week will be for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

**The Liturgy of St. Basil** is served today and the next two Sundays in place of the usual Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom as is appointed during this season.

**Pan-Orthodox Vespers** will be served tonight at St. John's Greek Orthodox Church in Euless at 6:00.

**Eucharistic Fasting** for the Presanctified Liturgies Wednesday and Friday should begin by noon at the latest.

**Confessions:** The Great Fast is time for repentance and Confession. Three weeks remain until Holy Week. Please make every effort to make your confessions before then.

**Weeding** needs to be done in our flower beds. Father has been working on it since the Fast began, but there is an opportunity here to serve and help keep our grounds up.

**Fr. Justin** was planning to be at Holy Archangels Monastery until Wednesday but may have to postpone until next week. The service schedule is what it will be if he does not go. If he goes, an email will go out, and there will be no service until Presanctified on Wednesday.

**No Classes This Week** see note above and first page.

### The Fast: Fourth Week

We abstain from meat, meat products, dairy, fish, wine (alcohol), oil. If fasting fully according to the norm, we take one meal a day M-F after 3 p.m. or after the Presanctified Liturgy. We join increased prayer and almsgiving to our fasting and cut back on (or cut out) all things that distract us unnecessarily from Christ.

**Mission Council** will meet next Sunday.

**Tithes, Offerings & Attendance:** Bringing our tithes and offerings to the temple of God is part of our worship of God and supports our efforts to proclaim the fullness of the Gospel of Christ in Denton through the establishment of a permanent Orthodox parish and new missions in Denton County and north Texas. Checks should be made out to St. Maximus Orthodox Church and placed in slot in the candle table (or in the basket passed during service). There are also boxes for alms (those in need) and for our building fund.

Last week, we gave \$1730.45 in tithes and offerings; this month we have given \$3631 electronically for a total of \$11,501.81; our monthly budget is \$10,350 (\$2389 per week). Candles \$67.50, special offering for IOCC \$111, Building Fund \$424. Attendance: Sat Vigil 32 Sun Liturgy 90.

**Please Pray:** for those preparing for holy illumination and Adam and Jenilee Skelton, our catechumens Estephania Dean and Marsha Northam, our inquirers the Wells family, the Dean family, for the novices Elias and Svetlana. Pray for Joe Fincher and Olga, for Patricia, Perpetua, and James Lydon. Pray that the Lord will send laborers into His harvest field here in Denton and North Texas. Remember always to pray for your priest. Please pray for John Roberts and his wife Edith, who has been diagnosed with cancer. Pray for those whom you have not seen at church for some time.

### From Saint Maximus 500 Various Texts

'Every valley shall be filled' - yet not 'every' without qualification, or 'everyone's valley', for the text does not refer to the valley of those who have not prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight. By a valley is meant the flesh or soul of those who have prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight in the manner I have explained. When such a valley has been filled with spiritual knowledge and virtue by the divine Logos who, present in His commandments, walks in its paths, then all the spirits of false knowledge and evil are 'abased'; for the Logos treads them down and brings them into subjection. He overthrows that cunning power which has raised itself up against human nature; He levels it as if it were high and massive mountains and hills which He uses to fill in the valleys. For the rejection of passions which are contrary to nature, and the reception of virtues which are in accordance with nature, fills up the valley-like soul and abases the exalted lordship of the evil spirits (Isa. 40:4. LXX).2.53

The 'rough places' - that is to say, the attacks of trials and temptations suffered against our will - shall be made 'smooth', above all when the intellect, rejoicing and delighting in weakness, affliction and calamity, through its unsought sufferings deprives of all their lordship the passions in which we deliberately indulge. For by 'rough places' Scripture means those experiences of unsought trials and temptations which change to smooth ways when endured with patience and thankfulness (cf. Isa. 40:4. LXX). 2.54

He who longs for the true life knows that all suffering, whether sought or unsought, brings death to sensual pleasure, the mother of death; and so he gladly accepts the harsh attacks of trials and temptations suffered against his will. By patiently enduring them he turns afflictions into smooth untroubled paths, unerringly leading whoever devoutly runs the divine race along them towards 'the prize of the high calling' (Phil. 3:14). For sensual pleasure is the mother of death and the death of such pleasure is suffering, whether freely chosen or not. 2.55

Everyone, then, who through self-restraint does away with sensual pleasure, which is intricate, convoluted and intertwined in many ways with every sensible object, makes the crooked straight. And he who with patience withstands and defeats the harsh implacable bouts of suffering turns the rough places into smooth ways. Thus, when a person has well and truly struggled, has defeated sensual pleasure with desire for virtue, has overcome pain with love for spiritual knowledge, and through both virtue and knowledge has bravely persevered to the end of the divine contest, he will see, according to Scripture, 'the salvation of God'; and this will be his reward for virtue and for the efforts he has made to attain it (Isa. 40:4-5. LXX). 2.56

### **Troparia and Kontakia for Sunday, April 3**

#### **Resurrectional Troparion, Tone 3**

Let those in Heaven rejoice, / let those on Earth be glad; / for the Lord hath wrought a mighty act with His arm./ He hath trampled down death by death; / He hath become the first-born of the dead.  
/ From the womb of hell hath He delivered us, // and hath granted the world great mercy.

#### **Second Sunday of Lent, Kontakion, tone 4**

The season of the virtues now hath come, /and the Judge is at the door. / Let us not hold back with darkened face, / but let us keep the Fast, / offering tears, contrition, and almsgiving; / and let us cry out: / our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea, / but Deliverer of all, forgive each one of us, // that we may receive an incorruptible crown.

#### **Sunday of the Cross, Troparion, tone 1**

O Lord, save Thy people / and bless Thine inheritance. / Grant victory to Orthodox Christians / over the enemy; / and by Thy Cross / preserve Thine estate.

#### **Kontakion of the Third Sunday of Lent, tone 7**

The fiery sword no longer guardeth the gate of Eden, / for in a strange and glorious way / the wood of the Cross hath quenched its flames. / The sting of death and the victory of hell are now destroyed, / for Thou art come, O my Savior, / crying unto those in hell: / "Return again to Paradise."