

### *The Third Week of Great Lent*

In this week the Holy Church, as well as in the past weeks, inspires us with the necessity to offer "to Christ our God"; "gifts that are pleasing", "a pure fast and abstinence from evil", abstention from "anger, wrath and every sin", "tears and prayer, to works of compassion, and to a contrite way of life, to upright thoughts and a pure way of life". In particular the Holy Church, calling us to avoid food, as "the begetter of passions ", and to love fasting as "the mother of virtues ", in detail it opens, "if it is good, if it is great, if it is grace given by God", it is a fast. "Let us love the fast", sings the Holy Church, "it makes the stubborn passions of the soul to wither, and gives us strength to do the works of God; it makes our mind ascend to heaven, and gains for us the forgiveness of our sins". "By fasting Elisha gave back to the Shunnamite her child alive", "Daniel in the den tamed the wild beasts with the muzzle of abstinence: let us also subdue the passions by fasting", "for this strengthens the body, and illuminates the mind and heart". Together with this during all the days of this week the Holy Church prays to the Lord that He grant us to see His cross. "With our flesh cleansed by abstinence," cries the Holy Church, "and our souls enlightened by prayer, O Lord, grant us to look upon Thy holy and honorable cross" "and to reverence it uncondemned with fear and love", "to kiss it with undefiled lips", "in Psalms and songs let us celebrate the light", "in our illumination". In such a way it follows that the third week is essentially a sort of Forefeast to the cross of the Lord.

**On this Friday** at **Compline** we sing the service from the Menaion, for those saints whose day fell during the third week of the Fast.

**On Saturday** at Little Vespers the **carrying out of the cross** and placing it on the altar (throne) is done according to the rubrics, as it was done on August 1 (see page 264).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp., (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 517-518.  
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