

**Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen  
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the  
British Isles and Ireland  
Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East**

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**Sunday 15 March 2026. Issue 20.**

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**Tone 7**

**Veneration of the Precious and Life Giving Cross; Martyr  
Agapios of Palestine and those with him; Apostle Aristoboulos  
of the Seventy, first bishop of Britain; New martyrs Manuel of  
Crete and Parthenios**

**Epistle Reading  
Hebrews (4:14-5:6)**

**Prokeimenon in Tone VI**

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

**Verse:** Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry; O my God, be not silent unto me.

Brethren, since we have a great High Priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathise with our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest, being taken from among the people, is appointed on behalf of the people in things pertaining to God, that he may offer up both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant and on those who are erring, since he himself also is encompassed with infirmity. Because of this he is bound, as for the people so also for himself, to offer up for sins. And no one takes the honor upon himself, but as being called by God, as was Aaron. So Christ also did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but it was

by the One saying to Him, “Thou art My Son, today I have begotten thee.” As He says also in another place, “Thou art a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.”

### **Alleluia.**

**Verse 1:** Of Thy mercies, O Lord, will I sing for ever; from generation to generation shall I proclaim Thy truth with my mouth.

**Verse 2:** For Thou hast said, “Mercy shall be built up forever.” Thy truth shall be established in the heavens.

### **Gospel Reading Mark (8:34-9:1)**

At that time, Jesus called the multitude to himself with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. Indeed, whoever wants to save his life will lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will save it. What will it profit if someone gains the whole world and loses his life? Or what will someone give in exchange for his life? Whoever will be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I tell you that there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God come with power.”

### **Troparion of the Resurrection. Tone 7.**

By Thy Cross, thou didst destroy death! To the thief, Thou didst open paradise! For the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping in to joy! And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.

### **Troparion of the Cross**

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Grant vict'ry to the Orthodox over their adversaries. And by virtue of Thy Cross preserve Thy habitation.

## **St Martin the Merciful Troparion**

In signs and in miracles thou wast renowned throughout the land of Gaul. By grace thou art a light for the world, O Martin, Bishop blessed of God. Deeds of mercy and compassion filled thy life with their splendours, teaching and wise counsel were thy riches and treasures, which still thou dost dispense freely to those who honour thee.

## **St Helen Troparion**

We behold thee, glorious Helen, with thy God-inspired son, in the joys of the kingdom of Heaven, and we magnify Christ, for he hath revealed to us thine honoured festival, giving light more brilliant than the sun. Therefore we cry in faith: O People, exalt Christ above all forever!

## **To Thee the Champion Leader Kontakion**

To thee, the Champion Leader, we thy flock dedicate, a feast of victory and of thanksgiving, as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos. But as thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do thou deliver us, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, thou bride unwedded.

## **Third Sunday of Lent: Holy Cross**

Each of the Sundays of Great Lent has its own special theme. This Sunday's theme is that in the cross of Christ crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved (1 Cor 1:24). On this Sunday in the middle of the Lenten season, the cross stands in the middle of the church, not merely to remind the faithful of Christ's redemption and for them to keep the goal of their Lenten efforts, but also as a reminder: "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:38).

The historical theme, as seen in the hymnology, is the victory and joy of the cross, not the suffering. The Church fathers equate the life-giving cross with the tree of life and plant it in the middle of the Lenten

pilgrimage. It was the tree that was planted in Paradise; it is to remind the faithful of both Adam's bliss and how he was deprived from it.

For the catechumens of the early church, and the faithful preparing for Pascha today, the spiritual theme starts to change from personal faith, and personal effort, to Christ. The Church teaches that it is Christ's cross that saves. One cannot take up his own cross and follow Christ unless one has Christ's cross which he took up to save mankind. Partaking of this tree, one will no longer die, but will be kept alive.

This is done to refresh, reassure and to encourage those participating in Great Lent. The Church equates the appearance of the cross at this time to the banners and symbols that precede the return of a victorious king. The Epistle reading is from Hebrews 4:14-5:6 and explains Christ's priesthood, and the Gospel lesson from Mark 8:34-9:1 ends with And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

*Source: OrthodoxWiki*

### **Edifying quote**

*I want you, my child, to live for Christ. Give your whole self to Him. I want if one were to open your heart to find nothing else, but Christ.*

**St Amphilochios Makris of Patmos**

### **Services this week**

**Wednesday 18 March, 6pm  
Presanctified Liturgy, St Martin's Church.**

**Friday 20 March, 6pm  
Akathist - Fourth Salutations, St Helen's Chapel.**