

THE CROSS PROVIDES US SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

The great Fast is a lengthy period of prayer, fasting, and penance. It is a spiritual struggle that begins with great personal expectations and often ends with feeling of discouragement over that we perceive as a lack of accomplishment on our part.

The Church knows our weaknesses well. On the Third Sunday of Lent, to assist us in our attempt to travel the course of Lent in the proper manner, the Cross is placed before us as a powerful incentive for us to persevere in our quest for a fulfilling celebration of our Lord's Resurrection.

Today, our Church encourages us to venerate the Cross of our Lord in a very special way, so that we may be strengthened in spirit. It is significant for us to note that in the services perscribed for this day, alsomost no mention of the Cross is made as being an object of suffering and death. Instead, we speak of it today as a symbol of joy, victory and life. One of the hymns from Vespers for this Sunday proclaims:

REJOICE, O LIFE-GIVING CROSS, MOST BEAUTIFUL PARADISE OF THE CHURCH, THE TREE OF IMMORTALITY WHICH GAVE US THE JOY OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

**It is customary on the Third Sunday of Lent to carry out the Cross in solemn procession and place it on the tetrapod for veneration by the faithful. Join us as we sing:
"COME ALL YOU NATIONS, LET US EXTOL THE CROSS OF THE LORD WITH HYMNS OF PRAISE."**