

UNCONDITIONAL FAITHFULNESS



Three Youths in the fire & Christ (Daniel 3)

“Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, “Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?” They answered the king, “True, O king.” 25 He replied, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the fourth has the appearance of a god.”

Presanctified Vesperal Liturgy celebrated Holy Monday Morning

1. Exodus 2:5-10 (Presanctified liturgy holy Tuesday morning) –

Pharaoh orders all male Hebrew children to be drown in the river. Moses is saved by Pharaoh's daughter and is not drown. Just like the three children saved from death in the fire. "When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, 'because,' she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'"

2. Job 1:13-22 (Presanctified liturgy holy Tuesday morning) – The Unconditional loyalty of Job parallels Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

"Then Job arose... Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing."

Presanctified Vesperal Liturgy celebrated Holy Monday Morning

3. Matthew 24:36-26:2 – Eschatological Discourse : the coming to an end of this “AGE” – The inauguration of the “AGE TO COME” – God is establishing His Kingdom through His Church – the King has come to conquer the final enemy of all humankind – death

- ❖ That Day and Hour no one knows
- ❖ We must be ready, vigilant, the Son of Man comes at an hour we do not expect
- ❖ We will give an account for what has been given to us – grace, faith, love
- ❖ Ten Virgins without oil – without grace
- ❖ Parable of the Talents – a buried faith is an unfruitful Christian
- ❖ Judgment of all Nations – when I was hungry you fed me...

Holy Tuesday (celebrated Holy Monday Evening)

Matins Service (read Holy Monday evening)

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-46, 23:1-22,25-29

The crucifixion before the crucifixion unfolds– the very leaders who were to know the Messiah when He comes seek to destroy Him. We find the evolution of the plot against Christ. The Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees aim their efforts at trapping Jesus to condemn him.

- ❖ Pharisees form an alliance with their rivals the Sadducees in order to find grounds to condemn Him
- ❖ They are silenced by His question concerning the Messiah – how is it that David call Him Lord if the Christ is His Son?
- ❖ The condemnation of religiosity, hypocrisy of the leaders of the people of Israel – Woe to you!
- ❖ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you. Behold your house is forsaken.

“For I say to you, in no wise shall ye see Me henceforth, until ye shall say, ‘Blessed is He Who cometh in the name of the Lord.’” (23:37-39)

By preserving these sayings the Evangelists declare the Christ is “not only a unique teacher, but also the highest judge. He is one with authority who has the right to judge and condemn” religious hypocrisy. (Archbishop Demetrios)

*“A true tragedy - the people designated by God to give signs of the Messiah and to be the religious leaders were the very ones who rejected the Messiah. This is the *passion, the crucifixion before the crucifixion*. He is in conflict with the very people who should know who He is!” (Archbishop Demetrios)*

Holy Tuesday (celebrated Monday Evening)

Kontakion: a long metrical sung sermon, theological homily

“Think my soul, upon your final hour. Recall with fear the cutting down of the fig tree. Work diligently with the talent (grace) that is given you. Endure, be vigilant and cry out: ‘May we not be left outside the Bridal Chamber of Christ’”

The Oikos – a stanza of the kontakion, further elaboration on the sung sermon

“Why are you careless, indifferent, my suffering, miserable soul? Why do you fantasize in thinking of unprofitable cares at this inappropriate time? Why busy yourself with passing things. The final hour is at hand, and we shall soon depart from all that is here. While there is still time, be sober and cry out: ‘I have sinned against You O Savior, do not cut me down like the unfruitful fig tree, but in your compassion, O Christ, take pity on me as I call out to you in fear: ‘May we not be left outside the Bridal Chamber of Christ.’”

Holy Tuesday (celebrated Holy Monday Evening)

Synaxarion (Events Commemorated)

- ❖ Parable of 10 Virgins – Being vigilant: judgment
- ❖ Parable of Talents – Accountable for Grace Given

The Three Youths in the Fire – unconditional faithfulness

“The three youths were not obedient to the decree of the tyrant; but when cast into the furnace, they professed God singing: Bless the Lord all the works of the Lord.”

Daniel 3 is introduced and will be finally read on Holy Saturday morning at the beginning of the Paschal vigil. There is an anticipation and expectation foreshadowed and based upon the key of remaining faithful unconditionally to Christ as we make our way to our end.

The prophecy of Daniel (3:1:23) ; The Prayer of Azarias & the Hymn of the Three Youths : Holy Saturday Monrning

23 -Then these three men, Sedrach, Misach, and Abdenago, fell bound into the midst of the burning furnace, and walked in the midst of the flame, singing praise to God, and blessing the Lord. (Daniel 3:23 breaks and the Apocryphal Book of "The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men" is inserted)

The last verses here are not included but interpret the whole
...for he has rescued us from Hades and saved us from the hand of death, and delivered us from the midst of the burning fiery furnace; from the midst of the fire he has delivered us. 67 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever.68 Bless him, all who worship the Lord, the God of gods, sing praise to him and give thanks to him,for his mercy endures for ever."

“Unspeakable wonder! The one delivering the holy youths in the furnace from the flame is laid dead, breathless, in a tomb for our salvation, of those who sing, ‘Redeemer, God, you are blessed.’ “ (Holy Saturday matins)

“Praise Christ God, who protected the youths praising in the furnace and who transformed the thundering furnace into dew, praise and highly extol Him into the ages” (Ode 8, Irmois)

“...Christ who accepted the Passion with unmeasured humility and unparalleled obedience and who on the Cross did not force God’s hand to intervene for an immediate release or even temporary relief but rather gave His spirit peacefully and with complete trust in His heavenly father.” (Eugen Pentiuic, Hearing the Scriptures.)

Exapostolarion of the Bridal Chamber

"I see your Bridal chamber adorned, O my Savior, and I have no wedding garment that I may enter therein; O giver of Light, make radiant the vesture of my soul and save me."

- ❖ At the approach of Christ all are found to be in the situation of Adam and Eve after the Fall. They are naked in one sense, clothed in rags of sin, in another. (Patitsas, pg. 137)
- ❖ Great Week's original function was to prepare catechumens for baptism – these hymn are meant to create a longing for spiritual cleaning. (Patitsas, pg. 138)

A definition of unconditional faithfulness

“‘If the God whom we worship is able...’ far from expressing doubts about God’s ability to save, conveys the three youths’ humble though undeterred faith in God...The confession of the three youths expresses their strong faith in and perfect surrender to God’s will. While stressing the ability to save, the three youths in utter humbleness, do not force God’s hand to save them. Thus their faithfulness is fully unconditional...faith is not contingent on anything external; it is merely, sheerly, the pure reflection of something rooted in the heart...” (Eugen Pentiu, Hearing the Scriptures.)

Trusting in God’s providential Care in our live – Acceptance

“Far from serving our God for payment (something in return) we are motivated by affection and longing, and at the same time prefer the worship of our God to everything. Instead of asking for release from troubles...we embrace the Lord’s planning and providence; and without knowledge of what will be of benefit...understanding clearly that He is able to free us...we leave it to Him...and accept His decision, confident that it is to our benefit (Theodoet of Cyrus, (393-457).”

- ▣ Hymns see a typology of the Cross with ourstraeached hands



Hymns see a typology of the Virgin Mary – the
burning bish not consumed



Hymns see a typology of the Holy Trinity

