

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

(10.02.2022.)

Matthew 25:14-30

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that

hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **(KJV)**

The Sunday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Life-giving Cross

Mk.8:34-9:1

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.
(KJV)

St. Mark's Gospel for today makes clear the soul is worth more than the whole world. Believers are charged with keeping the soul pure and clean throughout earthly life.

The world is full of perils, temptations and afflictions that jeopardize the soul. Vigilance and faithfulness to the Lord God are necessary at all times. Evil attacks the believer in weak moments.

God's Holy Church is where to find constant refuge against evil. The Church provides the nourishment and fortification to lead a God-pleasing life. The Church is where to learn to follow the narrow path to God's Kingdom and eternal life.
(Mt.7:13-14)

St. Matthew's Gospel for today makes clear that believers are to be good stewards of the talents given by God. Everyone will face the final judgment at the Lord's Second Coming.

At the Last Judgment, believers will need to give an account of the use of talents given by God. Persons wasting their talents or burying them in the earth will not hear pleasing news.

Good stewards of God's talents will be like the servants in the current Gospel who doubled the talents received. Talents received from God are to be used for God's glory.

Talents used for God's glory multiply in value. Believers investing in the Kingdom of God reaps lasting benefits to the soul. Wisdom to invest in God's Kingdom is found in the Holy Gospel and teachings of the Church.

The poor widow who gave two mites was a wise investor. (Mk.12:42) Martyrs losing their life for the Gospel are wise investors. Wise investors in God's Kingdom feed the hungry, visit the sick and imprisoned and welcome strangers. (Mt.25:31-46)

Attending the Divine services in God's Holy Church, reading the Holy Scriptures and writings of the Holy Fathers and Mothers are sound investments in the Kingdom. Faithful prayer to God is a secure investment.

Believers will experience failures that will take a toll on the soul. Repentance is necessary throughout life to redirect life toward God's Kingdom and eternal life. Holy Confession and Communion restore the relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ went to the Cross and rose from the Tomb in order for believers to have the opportunity to begin again. When the soul is damaged through bad investing, repentance leads to Jesus purifying the soul.

Life is given by God, is to be lived for the glory of God and in God-pleasing ways. Investing the days of life in the Kingdom of God brings love, joy, and peace. Growth in life is possible throughout life.

The reassurance of God's presence is manifested when life is invested in the Kingdom of God. God is ever-present for the believer to provide wisdom in making life's investments.

Prayer, the Divine services and teachings of the Church yield the guidance necessary for investing life daily. Love of neighbor and resolute forgiveness facilitate life pleasing to the Lord God.

God is ever-present. Learning to live the God-pleasing life entails reaching out to God at all times and desiring to love and remain united with God. Barriers to living the God-pleasing life are overcome with God's help.

The desire to love God exists in the heart, mind and soul of the believer. The believer decides daily whether to nourish the love for God and whether to seek the God-pleasing life. It is timely everyday to love God and to seek to please God.

***The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Sunday after the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. September 19/October 2, 2022.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic***

The Prologue from Ochrid St Nicholai of Zhicha

1. THE VENERABLE EUPHROSYNE

Euphrosyne was the daughter of Paphnutius, a wealthy and distinguished man of Alexandria. Her childless parents had besought God with prayer for the birth of a child, and they were given her. Her devout parents raised their daughter in the Christian Faith. Not wanting to enter into marriage, the young Euphrosyne hid from her father, changed into men's clothing, and presented herself to the abbot of a monastery as a eunuch of Emperor Theodosius, giving the name Smaragdus. The abbot received her, and turned her over to the spiritual father Agapitus for guidance. By her fasting and prayerful asceticism, Smaragdus quickly surpassed all the monks in that monastery. When she had completed thirty-eight years of strict asceticism, her father Paphnutius visited that monastery, and the abbot directed him to Smaragdus for prayer and counsel. Smaragdus recognized Paphnutius, but Paphnutius did not recognize Smaragdus. When the father confessed his grief for his lost daughter, Smaragdus told him not to lose hope, for he would see his daughter again in this life, and besought him to come again within three days. When Paphnutius came again, Smaragdus was on her deathbed. The dying one said to Paphnutius: "I am Euphrosyne, your daughter; you are my father!" For a long time, the father was unable to come to himself due to his severe shock. Then, the Blessed Euphrosyne breathed her last, and her father wept over her. After burying her, Paphnutius himself entered the monastery, and settled in the cell of his holy, reposed daughter. After ten years of asceticism, Paphnutius also entered into rest in the Lord.

2. THE VENERABLE SERGIUS OF RADONEZH

Sergius was a great ascetic and light of the Russian Church. He was born in 1313 A.D., in Rostov, of devout parents, Cyril and Maria. After his parents' deaths, Bartholomew--for that was his baptismal name--became a monk, and founded the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in the forests of Radonezh. As a quiet and gentle servant of God, he knew only labor and prayer. Because of the purity of his heart he was made worthy of the gift of miracle-working, even resurrecting the dead in the name of Christ. The Holy Theotokos appeared to him many times. Princes and bishops came to him for advice. He blessed Prince Dimitri Donskoy, and foretold

his victory in the battle for the liberation of Russia from the Tartars. He saw into the hearts of men as well as future events. His monastery was full of monks, even during his lifetime and, century after century, has been one of the most important centers of spiritual life and God's miracles. St. Sergius entered into rest in the year 1392 A.D. Following his repose, he appeared many times to various people.

3. THE VENERABLE EUPHROSYNE OF SUZDAL

Euphrosyne's baptismal name was Theodula. She was the daughter of Michael Vsevolodovich, and the betrothed of Menas, the Prince of Suzdal. She did not at all desire to marry, and prayed to God to preserve her as a virgin until death. When they took her to Suzdal to be married, her betrothed, Menas, suddenly died. Euphrosyne did not return to the home of her parents but entered a convent, where she labored in asceticism until her repose. God endowed her with the gift of working miracles. She entered into rest in the year 1250 A.D.

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE VENERABLE SERGIUS OF RADONEZH

An example of prayerful meekness

From his youth, holy Sergius

Loved God and God's beauty,

And instilled serenity and goodness in himself.

He filled the wilderness with ceaseless prayer,

And transformed the forest into a holy place of God.

He cared not for worldly vanity,

Nor was he ever angered.

He was utterly quiet and meek with everyone,

Yet not meek toward the wicked adversary.

With the foe of God, the father of all lies,

Who seeks to devour the souls of men,

Sergius bravely waged a bitter struggle,

Tireless and powerful unto the final victory.

Thus the elder reposed, but the saint remained

As a fiery pillar for the Russian people,

Beseeching God for every blessing

And bringing blessings down from heaven to his people.

Holy Sergius, do not cease to shine,

Do not cease to pray to the Most-high God

For the good of the Church, for the good of Russia,

In the glory of Christ, O Saint Sergius!

REFLECTION

A saint does not shine outwardly. All of his riches are within, in his soul. A peasant came from afar to the monastery to see St. Sergius. When he asked the monks for the abbot, they told him he was working in the garden. The peasant went to the garden, and there saw a man in poor, ragged clothes, digging like any other peasant on a farm. The peasant returned to the monastery dissatisfied, thinking that the monks had made fun of him. So, to make things clear, he asked again for the glorious holy father, Sergius. Just then, Sergius returned to the monastery, and welcomed the peasant, serving him at the table. The saint saw into the heart of his

guest, and knew the low opinion he had of his appearance. He consoled him by promising that he would see Sergius in a little while. A prince and his boyars then arrived at the monastery, and they all bowed low to St. Sergius, and asked his blessing. The monks then removed the peasant from the room in order to make room for the new guests. In amazement the peasant looked on from a distance, to see that the one he had sought had been nearby all the time. The peasant rebuked himself for his ignorance, and was greatly ashamed. When the prince departed, the peasant quickly approached the saint, fell at his feet and began to beg his forgiveness. The great saint embraced him and said to him: "Do not grieve, my son, for you are the only one who knew the truth about me, considering me to be nothing--while others were deluded, taking me for something great."

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the righteousness and sin of King Joash, and God's reward and punishment (II Chronicles 24):

1. How, at first, Joash hearkened to the high priest Jehoiada, and did that which is right in the sight of the Lord;
2. How God blessed Joash with a long and peaceful reign;
3. How Joash changed, and slew the righteous son of Jehoiada, and committed other evils;
4. How a small Syrian army defeated Joash, and plundered the land; and, how Joash, gravely ill, was slain in bed by his servants.

HOMILY

on the shared riches of the Father and the Son

All things that the Father hath are Mine (John 16:15).

These are some of the last words of Christ the Lord before His passion. They are the weightiest words--for they reveal the divinity of Christ the Savior to the world, and in connection with the words, *He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you* (John 16:14), also reveal the equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. That which the Spirit will receive of Mine cannot be different or contrary to that which is the Father's, for *All things that the Father hath are Mine*. Why did our Lord not say, "He will take Mine," but rather, *He shall receive of Mine*? Because the Holy Spirit will not reveal everything to men, but only a part of everything--as

much as men can bear, and as much as is necessary for them. One part of God's gifts are given to the faithful on earth, and another part will be given to them in the Heavenly Kingdom.

This heavenly part is that which the visionary Apostle describes: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him* (I Corinthians 2:9). All this, and incomparably more, is part of Christ's possession. His possession encompasses not only this world, but also the other world, and it is incomparably greater and more precious than both worlds. Eternity is His, immortality is His, perfect might is His, perfect wisdom is His, perfect love is His, and perfect goodness is His, as are mercy and justice and truth. What else can we think of or express that is good? All perfection is His, and it transcends everything that earthly man can ever conceive of. The Father has all this, the Son has all this, and the Holy Spirit has all this. All things that the Father hath are Mine. By these words, the indescribably wealthy One, the unequalled Son of the King, Jesus Christ, revealed His boundless and inconceivable riches to His disciples on the dark night when He was about to stand barefoot before the Jewish elders to be scourged and spat upon.

O our God, Most-holy and Most-abundant Trinity, have mercy on us sinners, and save us.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ ***Thursday – 10.06.'22 – The Conception of Glorious Prophet and Baptist John – 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy***
- ❖ ***Friday – PARACLESIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NECTARIOS -05:00 PM – Confession***
- ❖ ***Saturday –10.08'22 - Ven. Mother Euprohsyne, Ven. Father Sergius of Radonezh – MEMORIAL SATURDAY – 09:30 Holy Liturgy for Repose***
- ❖ ***17th Sunday after Pentecost– October 09th – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy***

Donations September 25, 2022

Offering - \$1,307.00 Candles - \$180.00 Dues - \$250

Sunday School

From Kathleen McDowell - \$100

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Steve Baich from Kathy & Gerry Szmyd

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Rick Kondas

In Memory of Father, Mike Tumbas from Milica Knepp

In Memory of Linda Zedlar Griffiths from Milica Knepp

In Memory of Christine and Charles from Olga Bulich

NUT and APRICOT ROLLS

FOR SALE - \$12

PLEASE SEE Rose, Suzette or Dick!

BASKET PARTY – OCTOBER 9th

PLEASE BRING YOUR BASKET BY TUESDAY OCT. 4th!!!!

The kolo will be having their annual basket party once again on Sunday, October 9th in the church hall. Doors open at noon, drawing begins at 2.

Admission is \$12 and includes lunch and 26 basket chances. A limited number of tickets will be sold. Please see Kristina with any questions/for more information.

PLEASE BRING YOUR BASKET/DONATION TO THE CHURCH HALL BY TUESDAY OCT. 4th!!!!

CEVAP LUNCHEON!!!

Sunday October 16th

Following Divine Liturgy