

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

(10.09.2022.)

Matthew 15:21-28

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (*KJV*)

The present Gospel is read as part of the Divine Liturgy on the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost each year. Attentive listeners in parish churches and monasteries hear the Gospel and to take it to heart.

With each reading of the Gospel, change is expected among the listeners. The Divine Liturgy intends for all present to actively participate with the full heart, mind and soul.

The Divine Liturgy changes lives for the better for individuals actively participating. The Gospel readings contain the known life, words and lessons of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Gospel provides nourishment for the hunger of the soul. The Gospel offers the wisest instructions for the believer's life. Gospel readings occur within God's Holy Church and are understood in the context of the Church.

The present Gospel verifies Jesus' love for children. Jesus healed the mother's daughter vexed by the devil. The mother's strong faith and persistence in seeking healing for her daughter was recognized by Jesus.

Parents of every generation have had sons or daughters vexed by the devil. Often parents do not know where to turn and are frustrated with a child that is demon-possessed and exhibiting bizarre behavior.

God's Holy Church is where parents are able to bring their children from the time of birth and feel completely welcomed. The parish church is where children are firmly and lovingly welcome from the time of infant baptism.

Attentive and interested parents learn the fundamentals of child bearing and raising in God's Holy Church. Believing parents will be faithful in attending the Divine services of the Church.

Welcoming parishes go a long way in helping parents in raising their children. Infants crying in the Divine Liturgy is Holy Noise to God. Children actively present in the Divine Liturgy assures the parish's future.

Parents struggling with raising their children benefit from the wisdom and nourishment of the Divine Liturgy. Parents and children unite with the Lord Jesus Christ when receiving the Precious Body and Blood of Christ.

Raising children is a challenge in every generation. Each generation has its own set of worldly issues to contend with. Parents immersed in the life of the Church benefit from the Lord Jesus Christ in their child-rearing.

The mother in the present Gospel was astute enough to know the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mother loved her daughter and was resolute in seeking healing for her daughter.

The Lord Jesus Christ recognized the mother's strong faith. Jesus healed the daughter. Parish churches are havens for parents struggling with raising their children in contemporary times.

The parish church is a haven and refuge of God's healing and nourishing love. The Lord Jesus Christ made clear His lasting and immeasurable love for children. The Church has preserved and readily proclaims Jesus' love for children.

Jesus said centuries ago: "Suffer little **children**, and forbid them not, to **come** unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 19:14) Healthy parishes ensure that children are welcome and loved.

Parents struggling with raising their children need to feel the support and love of the parish church in addressing their struggles. Being a parent is a great responsibility.

God's Church is where parental responsibility is best learned and discerned. The parish church is where parents can replenish their strength and gain the wisdom needed for raising their sons and daughters.

Jesus Christ's love for parents is manifested in the current Gospel. The mother in today's Gospel experienced Jesus' love for her and for her daughter. Parents always needed reassured of Jesus' love for them.

Healthy parishes serve as the reassuring presence of Jesus Christ for parents. Parishes filled with Christ's love manifest that love in all parish undertakings. The Gospel is alive at best when alive in the hearts, minds and souls of all parishioners.

The Gospel for the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost addresses a mother's challenge of having a daughter vexed by the devil. Raising sons and daughters can be vexing at times for every parent.

Thank God for God's Holy Church where parents can turn to for help, wisdom and strength in raising their children. Thank God for the Lord Jesus Christ's verification of His love for children.

Hope remains for all parents in the Church. Jesus' love and healing power are always present for parents. Widespread joy comes when Christ's love and healing are embraced in strong and resolute faith.

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. Repose of the Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian. September 26/October 9, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid St Nikolai of Zhicha

1. THE VENERABLE CYRIACUS THE RECLUSE

Cyriacus was born in Corinth, to John and Eudoxia. His father John was a presbyter and Peter, Bishop of Corinth, was his kinsman. In his early youth, the bishop ordained Cyriacus a reader in the cathedral church. Reading the Holy Scripture, the young Cyriacus marveled at God's providence: how God glorified all His true servants and how He arranged the salvation of the human race. At age eighteen, Cyriacus's desire for the spiritual life led him to Jerusalem. There, he entered the monastery of a godly man Eustorgius, who gave him his first instruction in the monastic life. After that, he went to St. Euthymius, who foresaw that he would be a great spiritual father. He clothed him in the schema and sent him to St. Gerasimus at the Jordan, where Cyriacus spent nine years. Following the death of Gerasimus, he returned to the Monastery of St. Euthymius, where he remained in stillness for ten years. Then, fleeing the praise of men, he moved from place to place. He finally lived a life of asceticism in the community of St. Chariton, where he ended his earthly sojourn of 109 years. A celebrated ascetic and miracle-worker, St. Cyriacus was massive and strong in body, and remained such in deep old age, despite strict fasts and vigils. In the wilderness, he sometimes ate only raw greens for years. He was very zealous for the Orthodox Faith, denouncing all heresies, especially that of Origen. He said of himself that, since he became a monk, the sun had neither seen him eat nor become angry with anyone. According to the Rule of St. Chariton, the monks ate only once a day, after the setting of the sun. Cyriacus was a great light, a pillar of Orthodoxy, the adornment of monks, a mighty healer of the sick, and a gentle comforter of the sorrowful. Having lived long for the benefit of many, he took up his habitation in the eternal joy of his Lord in the year 557 A.D.

2. THE HOLY MARTYRS DADA AND GABELAS

Dada was a great Persian nobleman and a kinsman of King Sapor, and Gabelas was Sapor's son. When St. Dada openly confessed his faith in Christ, King Sapor ordered that he be cruelly tortured. During these tortures, Dada worked great miracles in the name of Christ, and these so strongly influenced Gabelas that he also believed in Christ. The pagan King did not even spare

his own son, but subjected him also to harsh tortures. Both Dada and Gabdelas glorified God with their patient endurance and many miracles, and gave up their souls to God under torture. They suffered in the fourth century. Gabdelas's sister Casdoa, and Gargal the chief pagan priest, suffered with them--for they, too, had come to believe in Christ.

3. SAINT THEOPHANES THE MERCIFUL

Theophanes was a wealthy citizen from Gaza. He was so merciful that, in distributing his possessions to the poor, he impoverished himself. Toward the end of his life, he was afflicted with dropsy and died from that illness. Thereafter a healing myrrh flowed from his body, by which the sick were healed.

4. SAINT MARY OF PALESTINE

At first, Mary was a reader of the Psalter in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. Because she was of beautiful countenance, many who gazed upon her were tempted by lustful thoughts. So that she would no longer be a cause of temptation for men, Mary withdrew into the wilderness of Souka with a basket of beans and an earthenware jug of water. St. Mary lived in the wilderness for eighteen years. By God's power, neither the beans nor the water ran out. The disciples of St. Cyriacus found her during her lifetime, and later buried her.

HYMN OF PRAISE

SAINT MARY OF PALESTINE

The beautiful Mary was born beautiful,
And, faithful to Christ, she prayed to Him:
"Help me, my Lord, a helpless woman,
Show me, the lowly one, the path to salvation.
With Thy help, I struggle not to sin,
But my face is a temptation to the weakness of others."
Mary bowed with tears to the Living God,
And hid in the wilderness from the eyes of men.
Mary conversed with God, and that was her reward.
Her soul shone brighter than pure gold.

Her body withered with the passing years,
And an angel raised the heavenly woman up to Paradise.

She now rejoices, radiant among the angels,

And Saint Mary prays to God for us.

REFLECTION

In ignorance, many people labor more to avoid suffering in old age and terminal illness than to avoid the torments of hell in the life after old age and death. Such was the case of an unmarried and avaricious man who, from year to year, and with ever greater passion, amassed for himself unnecessary wealth. When asked why he strove so much to pile up excess wealth he replied: "I am gathering it for my old age. This wealth will heal and feed me in old age and sickness." And indeed, his foreboding came true. In old age, a grave and long-lasting illness befell him. He distributed his accumulated wealth to physicians so they would heal him, and to servants so they would care for him and feed him. His wealth was soon spent, and the illness continued. The physicians and servants abandoned him, and he fell into despair. His neighbors brought him bread until his death, and he was buried at the expense of the community. He had used his wealth for that which he had intended it. God had even done for him according to the man's will. God had sent him the illness that he had, in a sense, desired, and for which he had prepared great wealth. Nevertheless, all his wealth was unable to alleviate his sufferings in this world--so with what would he be able to alleviate his sufferings in the other world? Nothing, if he took with him neither faith, nor hope, nor charitable deeds, nor prayers, nor repentance! Someone saw a departed man in the great glory of Paradise, and asked him how he had become worthy of that glory. The man replied: "In my earthly life I was the hireling of an evil-doer who never paid me. But I endured all and served him to the end, with hope in God." Then the onlooker saw another man in even greater glory, and when he asked him, that one replied: "I was a leper, and to the very end I offered gratitude to God for that." But no one saw in the glory of Paradise the man who had amassed money for illness in old age.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the punishment with which God punished King Uzziah (II Chronicles 26):

1. How, in his conceit, Uzziah unlawfully approached the sanctuary of God;
2. How leprosy suddenly appeared on his forehead.

HOMILY

on knowing the Father through the Son

O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee (John 17:25).

An equal knows his equal best. The lower does not know the higher, or the mortal the immortal. The Old Testament prophets and some of the wise men of ancient times knew God as the Creator and the Provider, but no one knew Him as the Father of the Son. Those who knew Him in ancient times knew Him through creation, and not through birth. Through creation they knew something of the righteousness, wisdom and power of God; but they did not know His love, for love is known through birth. A father knows the mystery of the one born, and the one born knows the love of the parent. It could be put this way: *"The world hath not known Thee*, for the world looked at Thee as Lord and itself as a slave; *But I have known Thee*, for I see Thee as Father and feel Thine inexpressible love. The world looks at Thee through the veil of Thy works; but I look at Thee face to face, in the eternal beauty of Thy love." The Lord brought this illuminating flame of eternal filial and paternal love among men, so that men could see God in this flame, in this new and hitherto unknown light. The Lord passed this new knowledge of God's love to His apostles, and through them to us.

Oh, may this flame of divine eternal love burn in us! May we thus know God as our Father, and ourselves as His children, adopted through the sacrifice of the Only-begotten Son of God.

O God of Triune Flame, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: illumine us also, darkened as we are by sin, with the eternal glory of Thy love.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ *Wednesday – 10.12.'22 – Venerable Father Cyriacus the Hermit, of Palestine – 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *Friday – 10.14.2022 – The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos – 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *18th Sunday after Pentecost – October 16th – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy*

Donations October 2, 2022

Offering - \$970.00 Candles - \$56.00

Building Fund

In Memory of Beverly Stipanovich from Gojko, Rose & Kristina
Marinkovich - \$20

In Memory of Tom Luy from Wife, Ann Luy - \$1,000

In Memory of Michael & Evelyn Raich From Ann Raich Luy, Evelyn & Steve
King and Michael & Mary Raich - \$500

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Steve Baich from Kathy & Gerry Szymd

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!

Anyone interested in running for and/or remaining on the St Nicholas Church Council for 2023 must submit their name and intent in writing to a member of the nominating committee (Carole McAllister, Joseph Golden and Helene Gleason) You may also leave this information in the Candle Room to the attention of the Committee.

CEVAP LUNCHEON!!!

Sunday October 16th

Following Divine Liturgy