

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Second Sunday after Pentecost

(26.06.2022)

Matthew 4:18-23

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. (KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ offers healing and the Kingdom of God for those choosing to follow Him. Believers are to leave behind all that inhibits the full love of God when choosing to follow Christ.

At Baptism the believer's full body is dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ. Following Baptism believers are to learn in God's Holy Church the best and most pleasing ways to follow Christ.

The Church offers the way of repentance when poor choices are made and sin in life occurs. Jesus Christ's love and forgiveness provide the healing necessary for new beginnings throughout life.

Jesus' call to follow Him is very powerful and appealing as it offers the way out of sin and toward the fullness of life in God's Kingdom. Peter, Andrew, James and John recognized in Jesus the value of leaving all behind and following Him.

Believers in every century have heeded the call of Christ to follow Him. Jesus calls each person at each moment of time to leave behind the chains of sin and embrace the goodness in Him.

Each person is unique, created in the image and likeness of God. Through living in Christ, the believer finds the best ways to manifest the image and likeness of God.

The Church nourishes and guides the believer from Baptism to eternal life and God's Kingdom. God's saints open the paths to follow and shine the light of Christ through their lives. The saints show that following Christ is very possible.

When doubts occur in the mind, Christ is ever-present to reassure the believer and renew the call to follow Him. Peter, Andrew, James and John in the present Gospel follow Jesus without hesitation.

We know from the Church's history that Peter, Andrew, James and John lived in Christ in ways that are of lasting value. The Holy Apostles Peter, Andrew, James and John are of immeasurable benefit to every generation.

The hunger in the soul is addressed and filled when the believer says 'Yes' to the call of Christ at each moment of life. Evil is to be firmly rejected and Christ is to be embraced at all times.

Prayer, fasting and charitable works keep the believer oriented and attentive to Christ. Through prayer and nourishment in the Church, the believer finds the ways to live out life in ways most pleasing to the Lord.

The saints show that life can be lived in a variety of ways and be fully in ways pleasing to the Lord. The world needs believers to live out life in different capacities for the existence of communities.

God reveals to the believer the path to take in manifesting the image and likeness in the Lord in daily life. Strength to overcome barriers to Christian growth and roadblocks in life come through faith and belief in Christ.

Peter, Andrew, James and John were guided by Christ as they went forth. They left behind their old lives and took up the new life in Christ to the benefit of their salvation.

Each person makes choices during the course of the day. The choices determine whether Christ is followed and God's Kingdom are the primary goal. Peter, Andrew, James and John did not turn back after having following Christ.

Following Baptism each person is to remain firmly on the path to God's Kingdom and eternal life. The joys of life are experienced as the person remains faithful to Christ even in the most difficult of circumstances.

The Lord Jesus Christ showed that going to the Cross did not remove joy from life. Going to the Cross revealed the greatest joy as Jesus Christ defeated death by going to the Cross.

Each believer is baptized under the sign of the Cross. Each Divine service takes place under the sign of the Cross. Life is to be lived under the sign of the Cross. Life under the sign of the Cross is the life in Christ and offers new life in Christ.

The present Gospel is proclaimed by the Church each year to reassure believers of the immediacy of the value of following Christ. The call of Christ is timely and timeless and beckons the believer to eternal life and God's Kingdom.

God's Holy Church is present for believers to heed the call of Christ and to follow Him. The Church offers unity with Christ through the Holy Scriptures, the Divine services and the Holy Mysteries.

The world is transformed and overcome when believers choose to follow Christ. Just as death was defeated by Christ, sin, evil and death are overcome by the life in Christ.

Today say "yes" to following Christ. At every moment resolve to say "yes" to the call of Christ. Through the prayers of the Holy Apostles Peter, Andrew, James and John draw strength in following Christ throughout life.

The Second Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostle Aquilina; St. Tryphilius, Bishop of Cyprus. June 13/26, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

THE TRINITY SHINES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD On the Persons of the Holy Trinity



Late twelfth-century icon of the Hospitality of Abraham.

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!”

It is with these great and holy words that the pastors of the Church usually begin all of their talks with us, my brethren. On other days, these holy words serve only as the

holy heading to the Church's words and conversations; but on this day, they can form the very subject of our teaching. For we now celebrate for the honor and glory of the All Holy, Consubstantial, Life-Creating, and Undivided Trinity: What is more appropriate to talk about now, if not about those Persons in Whose honor this celebration is being held?

True, it's difficult to look at the sun. It's even more difficult to behold the Most Holy and Heavenly Trinity. There, vision is lost, here, the mind goes blind! So blinded were Arius, Macedonius, Sabellius, and Nestorius! And even now, those who dare to look directly at the most luminous face of the creative Being with their own eyes go blind. Let us proceed in such a way, but imitating the example of the God-wise and ecumenical teachers, let us arm our weak eyesight with a monocular, which while bringing the spiritual sun closer, at the same time moderates for us the brilliance of its rays. This monocular is the word of God, uttered by the Prophets and Apostles. This is the most reliable means for our purpose, for in the word of God either the Father Himself, or the Son Himself, or the Holy Spirit speaks about Himself. Don't They know Themselves correctly, or aren't They able to speak about Themselves as They should?

What does the word of God reveal to us about God? It reveals that God is one in all the power of His word; that, however, this God Who is one in essence consists of Three Persons. For the One Who appeared as one on Sinai and declared through Moses: *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one Lord* (Deut. 6:4), the same was revealed in the Jordan in three forms, and through His Evangelist proclaimed: *For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these Three are One* (1 Jn. 5:7). And the Son of God Himself, Who confessed Him Whom *no man hath seen at any time* (Jn. 1:18), sending the Apostles to turn the entire world from darkness to light, commanded them to baptize all peoples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. After this, it's by no means an indifferent act for us to confess the One, or the Triune God: No, to confess, worship, and preach the Most Holy Trinity is our immutable duty, because this is the foundation of our faith, the object of our love, and the pledge of our hope. This is eternal life! For who will redeem us with his own blood if not God the Son? Who will sanctify us by his grace if not God the Holy Spirit?

Therefore, in the one God, we confess Three—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is named such because He, being the beginning of the entire Godhead, pre-eternally begat the Son and pre-eternally produced from Himself

the Most Holy Spirit. God the Son is so named because He is begotten from all eternity by the Father, from His own Essence; and in time, He was well pleased to be born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary as man. God the Holy Spirit is so named because He is eternally spirated by the Father and Himself animates all things, especially spirits and rational souls.

How the Persons of the Godhead differ between Themselves is already evident from their very names. God the Father, according to the teaching of Holy Scripture, serves as the source of the Son and the Spirit, Himself unoriginate and self-existent; God the Son is begotten, but doesn't beget and doesn't send forth the Spirit; God the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but isn't begotten, nor does He Himself beget or send forth. Fatherhood, sonship, and procession—these are the three distinguishing characteristics of the Divine Persons! Thus differing from one another, these three Persons constitute one and the same God: The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—not three Gods, but one Godhead. They are one in power, one in will, one in might, one in glory and authority.

Thus, following the word of God, the holy Church teaches about God without assuming that everything possible was said about God, or that what is said fully and perfectly expresses the image of the Divine Being.

No, despite its dignity as the Bride of Christ, the Church is far from such boldness. It calls the doctrine of the Holy Trinity a mystery; that is, a matter of faith that exceeds our minds; and what exceeds the mind cannot be expounded upon. What is expounded upon is no longer a mystery.

What's most generally understood in this mystery of faith under consideration here is the benefaction with which each Person of the Most Holy Trinity has marked Himself in relation to man. From this point of view, there's nothing unclear, no confusion. God the Father is our greatest Benefactor, inasmuch as He called us out of nothingness, honored us with His image, didn't abandon us when we fell, but sent His Only-Begotten Son to redeem us and the Most Holy Spirit to sanctify us. God the Son is our greatest Benefactor inasmuch as during our ill-fated transgression of the Edenic commandment, He took upon Himself all responsibility for our sin and all the weight of our fall; and then in order to restore us to our primitive perfection, He clothed Himself with our nature, lived among us, died for us, and resurrected for us. God the Holy Spirit is our greatest benefactor inasmuch as despite His unparalleled holiness, He didn't disdain us, sinful and unclean, but overshadows the Church with

His grace, so that everything in it might beget, strengthen, and heal by the Sacraments us who are dead in our sins. He enlightens us through the Prophets and Apostles inspired by Him, and even deigns to mystically inhabit every believer's soul, to prepare it for the eternal dwelling of the entirety of the Most Holy Trinity. In short, the whole teaching of the word of God about the actions of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit consists in the narrative about Their benefactions to sinful mankind in various forms.

And how many times has the myopic human mind with its pitiful bewilderments and objections risen up against this most exalted, comforting, and all-enlightening teaching! And this mind, insolent and audacious, would like the fullness of the Godhead to be revealed to it!... Behold, the edge of the veil is lifted up, revealing a hint of the unity of the Tri-Hypostatic God, and the poor mind is unable to bear the radiance! What would have happened had the Triune God appeared to it in all the fullness of Its mysterious perfections? But if it's hard for the mind to raise its eyes to Heaven and behold the Uncreated Light at its very source, then let the poor and weak at least look around themselves. For it wasn't in vain that another wise pagan noticed and said that a tri-unity shines throughout the world.

In fact, whether we consider the greatest or the least of the forces of nature, in every one of them we will see a threeness: Their very dimensions are threefold. Thus, all things are primarily enclosed in time and space, and time is threefold: past, present, and future. Space is also threefold: length, width, and height or depth. What keeps the whole world going? Centrifugal, centripetal, and rotational forces. What does a day consist of? The morning, afternoon, and evening. What does every night consist of? Dusk, midnight, and dawn. What do we see in all things? Shape, color, and weight. With all of these and many others factors, all of visible nature expresses the threeness of the force that drew it out of nothingness.

But apart from all this, each of the Three Persons of the Godhead, we can say, has placed a kind of mark of His Personal existence on all things. For the difference between the Divine Persons, as we have said, is fatherhood, sonship, and the procession of the Spirit. Now look, which of the creatures that we see does not have the ability to give birth and be born? Which, despite its crudeness, doesn't even have its own spirit? Everywhere there's birth, everywhere there's a spirit, as the traces and signs of the Tri-Hypostatic God.

But if the Divine Trinity shines throughout the entire world, then in man, created according to the image of God, It's reflected with greater fullness. There's a threeness everywhere and in everything here, beginning with the composition of our nature: our body with the ability to beget, our soul with the ability to feel and suffer, and our spirit with the ability to breathe in the higher, the Divine, and to animate the lower, the sensual, so it becomes not earthly and limited, but like the Heavenly, consubstantial and undivided Trinity, in Which Three are One! (1 Jn. 5:7).

Let's take the human body, with its visible three-part composition: bones, flesh, and fluids. Let's take the soul. It's also in three parts: intellective, incensive, and appetitive. If we take the spirit, again there're three: mind, will, and freedom. Each of these faculties is also threefold in action: The mind receives an impression from an object, judges, and concludes; freedom sees, chooses, and determines; the will is stimulated to desire, strives, and achieves. Amidst such Threeness in all things created, whether material or spiritual—would not contradicting the threeness in the uncreated be like closing your eyes and not even seeing the light at midday? Such is the fate of those who reject the guidance of the word of God and give themselves over to the guidance of their poor mind! Passing from delusion to delusion, they often reach the point where they begin to doubt their own existence.

Regretting such folly, and prayerfully seeking enlightenment from above for the deluded, let us turn, my brethren, to the subject of our talk; let us mentally ascend above all things created and draw near to the throne of the Tri-Hypostatic God, having received the boldness to do so through the merits of our Divine Redeemer. Let us fall down in awe before the greatness of the inscrutable perfections and, as a testimony of our love and gratitude for the Most Holy Trinity's innumerable benefactions to us, let us offer our entire being to It. Let us offer our body to God the Father, that it might be an instrument for the fulfillment of His most holy will; let us offer our soul to God the Son, that it might be inspired by the power of His Cross; let us offer our spirit to God the Holy Spirit, that aflame from its dew-bearing breath, it might soar aloft over all things terrestrial. Blessings to those who even in this life begin, as our holy Church sings, to be "illuminated by the Holy Trinity in a sacred mystery."¹

1 Matins, 1st Antiphon, Tone 4

St. Innocent of Kherson
Translation by Jesse Dominick

The Prologue from Ochrid
St Nikolai of Zhicha
(06.28.2022)

1. THE HOLY PROPHET AMOS

Amos was born in the village of Thecua near Bethlehem. Being of simple origin and life. Amos was a swine herdsman for a wealthy man of Jerusalem. But God, Who does not regard a person by his outward appearance but rather by the purity of his heart, and Who took both Moses and David from their sheep and appointed them leaders of the people, chose this Amos as one of His prophets. Amos rebuked King Uzziah and his pagan priests for idolatry and dissuaded the people from worshipping the golden calves in Bethel, teaching them to worship the One Living God. When the chief pagan priest, Amaziah, persecuted Amos, he prophesied that the Assyrians would conquer Israel, that they would slay the king and the sons of Amaziah, and that the Assyrian soldiers would defile Amaziah's wife before his eyes because he had led the people into adultery with idols. All of this later came to pass. The son of the pagan priest struck the prophet on the forehead with his staff so forcefully that Amos fell down. Barely alive, Amos was brought to his village of Thecua, where he surrendered his holy soul to God. Amos lived in the eighth century before Christ.

2. THE HOLY MARTYRS VITUS, MODESTUS AND CRESCENTIA

St. Vitus was born in Sicily of renowned but non-believing parents. Modestus was his teacher and Crescentia was his governess. St. Vitus was baptized at an early age, and at the age of twelve he withdrew to live a life of great asceticism. Angels appeared to him and directed and strengthened him in his asceticism, and he himself was as radiant and beautiful as an angel of God. The hand of a judge who beat him withered, but Vitus healed the hand through prayer. His father was blinded, seeing in his room twelve radiant angels "whose eyes were as stars and whose faces were as lightning." Vitus restored his sight through prayer. When his father wanted to kill him, an angel appeared to Vitus and took him, together with Modestus and Crescentia, to Lucania on the shore of the river Silaris. Here Vitus worked many miracles over the infirm and the insane. At the request of Emperor Diocletian, Vitus

traveled to Rome, where he expelled an evil spirit from the emperor's son. The emperor did not reward him for this but, on the contrary, cruelly tortured him because he would not worship the dumb idols. However, the Lord delivered him from all torments and, by His invisible hand, transported him back to Lucania, where he, Modestus and Crescentia all reposed in the Lord. The relics of St. Vitus are located in Prague, the Czech Republic.

3. THE VENERABLE MARTYR DOULAS

Doulas lived a holy life in a monastery in Egypt. One of his brethren, out of envy, accused him of sacrilege: the stealing of ecclesiastical articles. They removed the cassock from the innocent Doulas and turned him over to the prince for trial. The prince ordered him to be scourged and wanted to cut off his hands, according to the law for such a crime, but at that moment that brother repented and declared the innocence of Doulas. After twenty years of exile and humiliation, Doulas was restored to the monastery, and on the third day he reposed in the Lord. His body vanished in a miraculous way.

4. THE HOLY MARTYR LAZAR [LAZARUS], PRINCE OF SERBIA

Lazar was one of the Serbian noblemen who ruled the Serbian empire after the death of Tsar Dušan. After the death of Tsar Uroš, Patriarch Ephraim crowned Lazar as the Serbian king. Lazar sent a delegation to Constantinople with the monk Isaiah to implore the patriarch to lift [remove] the anathema from the Serbian people. He fought against the Turkish powers on several occasions. Finally, on June 15, 1389 A.D., he clashed [fought] with the Turkish Emperor Amurat at Kosovo Polje [the Field of Blackbirds, Kosovo Polje] where he was beheaded. His body was translated to and interred in Ravanica, the monastery he founded [Zaduzbina] near Ćuprija, and was later translated to [New] Ravanica in Srem, and from there, during the Second World War (1942), it was translated to Belgrade and placed in the Cathedral Church of the Holy Archangel Michael, where it rests today incorrupt, extending comfort and healing to all those who turn to him with prayer.^(*) St. Lazar restored the monasteries of Hilandar [Mt. Athos] and Gornjak. He built Ravanica and Lazarica [in Kruševac] and was a benefactor of the Russian monastery St. Pantaleon [Mt. Athos] as well as many other churches and monasteries.

(*) In 1989, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of his martyrdom, St. Lazar's relics were again translated to the Monastery of Ravanica in Ćuprija. --
Trans.

5. SAINT EPHRAIM, PATRIARCH OF SERBIA

As the son of a priest, Ephraim yearned for a spiritual and ascetical life from an early age. He fled to Mt. Athos when his parents wanted him to marry. He later returned and lived a life of asceticism in the Ibar gorge and in the Monastery of Dečani [Kosovo]. When rivalry and war broke out concerning precedence in the state and, unfortunately, even in the Church, the Synod [Sabor] chose Ephraim to succeed the deceased Sava as patriarch in 1375 A.D. When he was informed of his election, he wept bitterly but was unable to refuse. He crowned Prince Lazar as Tsar in 1382 A.D., then renounced his throne and turned it over to Spyridon and again withdrew to the wilderness. Following the death of Spyridon in 1388 A.D., Tsar Lazar begged him to accept the throne again. He governed the Serbian Church in the difficult time of the defeat at Kosovo [1389 A.D.] until 1400 A.D. when he died in the eighty-eighth year of his earthly life and took up his habitation with the Lord, Whom he loved. His relics repose in the Monastery of Peć [Kosovo].

6. BLESSED AUGUSTINE, BISHOP OF HIPPO

Augustine turned from paganism to Christianity, thanks to the counsels, tears and prayers of his mother, Monica. He was a great teacher of the Church and an influential writer, but with certain impermissible extremes in his teaching. As bishop of Hippo, he glorified the Lord for thirty-five years and lived a total of seventy-six years on earth (354-430 A.D.).

HYMN OF PRAISE

SAINT VITUS

The most excellent Vitus, full of heavenly honey,
Before the unbelievers, confessed Christ,
And mocked the lifeless idols
And the dark idolatrous soothsayers.
He glorified Christ as the power of God;
To his father and to the judge, he taught the truth,

But against him, both of them took up arms,
And for the young Vitus, torments prepared.

But God, His martyrs protects
And glorifies those who glorify Him.
Vitus needed to witness to the Lord Christ

Before the emperor
And in Rome, to suffer publicly,
That his name would be more glorified.

Little Vitus the angels held,

Little Vitus the angels led.

And his soul, the angels bore;

Into Paradise they took it and to God presented it.

REFLECTION

It is not always easy to conquer the spirit of vanity and conceit in oneself. Only the great spiritual directors have succeeded in this, with God's grace above all, with constant vigilance over their souls, and with very delicate spiritual sensitivities and distinctions. Abba Nisteroes was once walking with one of his brethren. Suddenly they spotted a serpent on the road. The brother quickly moved aside, and the great Nisteroes fled after him. "Are you also afraid, father?" the monk asked Nisteroes. The elder replied: "No, my son, I am not afraid, but I had to flee otherwise-- otherwise I would not have escaped from the spirit of vanity." That is: "Had I remained in place, you would have been amazed at me, and from that I would have become vain!"

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous healing of many who were sick: *And (they) besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole* (St. Matthew 14:36):

1. How many who were sick only touched the hem of the Lord's garment and were made whole;
2. How my soul can be healed if I touch His Body and Blood, as the physical garment of His Divinity.

HOMILY

About the poor man and his Creator

"He who mocks the poor, blasphemes his Maker (Creator)" (Proverbs 17:5).

If you are wealthy, in what are you wealthy, if not in the property of God? The things which constitute your wealth--whose are they, if not God's? Therefore, if you take pride in what you possess, you are taking pride in the property of another; you taking pride in that which is loaned to you by God. Why do you then mock the poor man, who has less of someone else's property in his hands? Why do you mock him if he has borrowed less from God than you? If he has taken less, he owes less; and you who have taken more, owe more. Not only should you not mock the poor man but you should admire him. Behold, he struggles on the battlefield of this world with much less means than you. Both of you are soldiers, but you fight as a soldier abundantly equipped with all that is necessary, and he fights naked and hungry. If both of you succumb and surrender to the enemy, he will be judged more leniently than you. However, if you are both victorious, he will receive a greater reward than you, and his victory will be more celebrated than yours.

He who mocks the naked and hungry soldier mocks his king. He who mocks the poor defames his Creator. If you know that the poor man's Creator is your Creator, the one and the same, you will not mock him. If you know that the poor man stands in the same military regiment as you, you will cover him, feed him, and bring him closer to yourself.

O Omnipotent Lord, boundless is Your wisdom in the economy of Your creation. Illumine us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may marvel at that economy and behold all of Your creatures with reverence and love, beholding them through You.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ *Tuesday 06.28 '22 Holy St. Lazarus and All Serbian Martyrs - Vidovdan – 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *Friday – PARACLESIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NECTARIOS -05:00 PM - Confession*
- ❖ *3rd Sunday after Pentecost– July 03th – 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy*

Donations June 12, 2022

Offering - \$1,764.00 Candles - \$66.00 Donations - \$100.00

Building Fund Donations

In Memory of Philip Tomak from Bob Stramanak- \$20.00

Donations

In Honor of Petty Gjurich's 95th Birthday from Irene Nesdor - \$100

In honor of Milica Knepp's Birthday - \$100

In Memory of Milos & Milka Tumbas from Milica Tumbas - \$200

To the Sunday School In Memory of Philip Tomak from Dorothy

Podolak - \$20

Large Candles

In Memory of Connie Bartis from the Bartis Family

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Frank Palmer

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Kathy & Gerry Szmyd

In Memory of Nick & Sarah Davich from Carol McAllister

In Memory of Nicholas Davich Jr. from Carol McAllister

In Memory of Dudukovich & Knezevich Families from Mark Stokrp

**July 14, 15
&
July 20, 21, 22 & 23,**

**Stackhouse
Park**

2022



*We will be
providing food at intermission!
Details coming soon*

JOIN US FOR



*Saturday, August 13th, 2022
Orchestra Drustvo under the tent!!!
WORK DETAILS COMING SOON!!!!*

*July 14, 15 & 16
&
July 20, 21, 22 & 23,
2022
Stackhouse
Park*