

If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain... 1 Corint. 15:14



ST. NICHOLAS

Serbian Orthodox Church

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9th Sunday after Pentecost

"Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Weekly Bulletin - Sunday August 6, 2017

**Sunday, July 24/ August 6, 2017. 9th Sunday after Pentecost;
Holy Mar. Christina of Tyre; Ven. Polycarp of the Kievan Cave; Holy Mar. of
Prebilovci and Lower Herzegovina.**

• **Liturgical Readings: Gospel St. Matt. (14, 22-34)**

Epistle: 1 Cor. (3, 9-17).

• **Donations Received Sunday July 30, 2017**

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• **The Gospel According to Matthew 14:22-34** -At that time, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they entered the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

1 Corinthians 3:9-17 (KJV)

⁹For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.¹⁶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

• **Homily by V. Rev. Stav. Rodney Torbic**-In the present Gospel reading, Peter stepped out in faith. He stepped out with an expectation that he could actually walk on the water. He actually did walk on the water. Trusting in Jesus enabled Peter to do a miraculous act. Trusting in Jesus brings out extraordinary abilities in individuals. Jesus is empowering to individuals trusting in Him with good intentions. Peter's interest was to draw near to Christ. Drawing near to Christ is the wisest of actions. Drawing near to Christ is movement toward the good and away from the perilous. Peter definitively decided to draw near to Jesus. Peter stepped out on the water alone empowered by His belief in Christ. When an individual is empowered by Christ, his or her capabilities increase and attainments reach unexpected levels. Talents and treasures used for the glory of God bring greater results than when used for alternative purposes. The depth of Peter's confidence in Christ was revealed by his fear. Peter's faith in Christ had weakened. Fear set in and Peter began to sink. The loss of extraordinary power set in. Personal confidence was gone. Desperation was taking over. Death might be imminent. The best way to face life is to have full faith and confidence in Christ. Faith and confidence in Christ provides individuals with the resoluteness to face every conceivable worldly circumstance. The First Epistle of St. John states: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (Jn.4:4) The lives of the saints and martyrs facing adversity through the centuries bear witness to the power of resolute faith in God. When difficulties arise in life, believers do well to place complete confidence in Christ. Peter's desperate cry to Jesus to save him would bear results. Jesus did not let Peter drown. Jesus acknowledged Peter's shallowness of faith and the presence of doubt. When Peter's faith in Christ became less, Peter's ability to act became less. The degree of faith and confidence a person places in Christ makes a big difference. The Gospel describes the wind ceasing after having been boisterous. Think back to the time of the Holy Prophet Elijah. Through the prayers of the Holy Prophet Elijah, the rain stopped and the rain resumed. (James 5:17-18) The elements are controlled by God. Individuals do well to center their lives in God. The Lord Jesus Christ said: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mt.11:28) Christians benefit immediately and directly by choosing to live in Christ. Christ is an insulation and protection against the strongest of the elements. Christ shines in the lives of individuals resting in Him and consistently living in Him. Christ saving Peter in the present Gospel is a permanent lesson of value. Crying out to Christ in faith does not fall on deaf ears. Believers have a daily responsibility to live faithfully in Christ. When believers recognize personal sin, repentance is in order. Once believers know about Christ, faithfulness is constantly expected. Christ warrants faithfulness with love and appreciation. The disciples recognized Jesus as the Son of God. The disciples worshipped Him. Jesus walking on the water and Peter walking on the water was a miracle before their very eyes. Believers today will see miracles in their daily lives if they look at occurrences in daily life with great faith. Taking time to rejoice and give thanks to God for miracles is always appropriate. Taking time to give thanks to God for life each day is appropriate. Each breath, each thought, each movement of the body, each sound that is heard, each sight that is seen is a miracle from God. The miracles of God are plentiful and easily can become taken for granted. Taking time to consciously think about the miracles of God may lead to increased gratefulness to God. The crossing of the sea on this particular occasion was more than routine. This particular crossing became of lasting importance. The miraculous work of Christ was demonstrated. The value of faith in Christ was a lesson learned. Peter's experience with Christ showed that individuals are empowered in proportion to their faith and commitment to drawing near to Christ. Amen!

THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYR CHRISTINA -Christina was born in the city of Tyre the daughter of Urban, the imperial deputy, an idol worshipper. The reason her parents gave her the name of Christina is unknown but it concealed the mystery of her future following of Christ. Until age eleven, she knew nothing of Christ. When she reached the age of eleven her father, in order to conceal her from the world because of her extraordinary beauty until she fully matured, designated the highest floor of a tall tower for her to live. All the comforts of life were afforded her; slaves were given to serve her, gold and silver idols were placed in her quarters so that she may offer daily sacrifices to them. However, in this idolatrous environment, it was difficult for the soul of young Christina. Looking out through the window each day at the sun and all the beauty of the world then, again at night, at the miraculous cluster of shining stars, Christina, through her own natural understanding came to the firm belief in the One Living God. The merciful God, seeing her longing for the truth, sent His angel who traced the sign of the cross upon Christina and called her the bride of Christ and completely instructed her in godly understanding. Christina then smashed all the idols in her quarters and provoked wild fury in her father. Her father brought her to trial and handed her over to be tortured and, after that, threw her into the dungeon with the intention to behead her the next day. That night Urban, completely healthy, parted from his soul and went to the grave before his daughter. After that two imperial deputies, Dion and Julian, continued to torture this holy virgin. Christina's courageous endurance and her miracles, which she worked by the power of God, converted many pagans of Tyre to Christianity. During the torturing of Christina, Dion suddenly fell dead in the midst of the people. Dion's successor, Julian, severed the breasts and tongue of Christina. The martyr took her tongue and threw it into Julian's face and he was instantly blinded. Finally her suffering for Christ ended by death beneath the sharp sword and her life continues in the immortal kingdom of the angels. Christina honorably suffered in the third century.

THE VENERABLE POLYCARP, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF THE CAVES IN KIEV -Polycarp possessed "love toward God and his fellow men, joy because of an untainted conscience, peace because of victory over all passions, patience in time of temptation and misfortune, goodness in submission toward all, benevolence toward the poor, undoubting faith in fulfilling the commandments, truth in fulfilling his vows, meekness in not knowing anger, restraint and so forth." So well did he govern the Lavra of the Caves in Kiev that, after his death, a worthy successor among the monks could not be found (for those who were worthy did not want to accept the rank of abbot out of humility), so that the brethren were compelled to take Basil, a secular priest, as their abbot. St. Polycarp reposed in the Lord in the year 1182 A.D.