

## **Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church**

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### ***The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost***

#### **Matthew 22:1-14**

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

(KJV)

### **The Sunday before the Exaltation of the Precious Cross**

#### **John 3:13-17**

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not

his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (KJV)

The Holy Gospel is centuries old and always relevant each day of each succeeding century. Believers are blessed to hear the Gospel. The Gospel contains the teachings and life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel describes the miracles of Christ and the impact of Christ. The Gospel is relevant and informative until Jesus Christ's Second Coming. Every day the world moves closer to the Second Coming. The present Gospel reading for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost speaks about the invitation to the wedding banquet for the king's son. The invitations were readily declined. The Divine Liturgy is the Lord's Banquet and many in the world choose not to come. If we went into the nearby communities and asked the residents why they did not attend the Divine Liturgy, many different answers would be given. Many persons baptized into Christ in the Church have fallen away and no longer come to the Divine Liturgy. There are persons raised in the Church as youths who no longer attend the Divine Liturgy.

The Gospel on this Sunday before the Exaltation of the Precious Cross vividly brings to mind Jesus' Crucifixion and love for humanity. The Divine Liturgy provides for being unified with Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The Divine Liturgy offers the Supreme Banquet of partaking of Jesus Christ's Precious Body and Blood. Individuals absenting themselves from the Divine Liturgy deny themselves the opportunity to be united with Christ. Attending the Divine Liturgy requires a conscious decision and effort. Partaking of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ solidifies the unity with Jesus Christ. Each person determines whether he or she will attend the Divine Liturgy and partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. The Holy Gospel tells us Jesus Christ came into the world not to condemn it, but to save the world. Great thought should go in to the decisions about attending the Divine Liturgy and about partaking of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. The decisions made determine if unity with Jesus Christ occurs and continues. God's Holy Church is where to experience unity with Jesus Christ. Believers' united with Jesus Christ in the Church serve as ambassadors and disciples of Christ in the communities where they live. Believers united with Christ and fervent about Christ will attract and encourage others to attend the parish Church. Each person has a hunger in the soul and is in need of Jesus Christ. Believers filled with love of Christ and love for neighbor will share the love. Persons in the community coming to know of Christ's presence in the parish church will seek to accompany fervent believers. Sharing the love of Jesus Christ is not only the priest's responsibility. Parishioners nourished in Christ seek to share the love and knowledge of the nourishment with others. Thank God for the Church and the preservation and proclamation of the Holy Gospel. Thank God for active parishioners aiding the priest in the growth of the parish. Thank God for the opportunity of salvation.

*The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Precious Cross. September 13/26, 2021. Holy Hieromartyr Cornelius the Centurion. Forefeast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.  
Father Rodney Torbic*

*The Prologue from Ochrid*

*St. Bishop Nikolai of Zhicha, New York and all Orthodoxy*

1. THE EXALTATION OF THE HONORABLE CROSS

Two events in connection with the Honorable Cross of Christ are commemorated on this day: first, the finding of the Honorable Cross on Golgotha and second, the return of the Honorable Cross from Persia to Jerusalem. Visiting the Holy Land, the holy Empress Helena decided to find the Honorable Cross of Christ. An old Jewish man named Judah was the only one who knew where the Cross was located, and, constrained by the empress, he revealed that the Cross was buried under the temple of Venus that Emperor Hadrian had built on Golgotha. The empress ordered that this idolatrous temple be razed and, having dug deep below it, found three crosses. While the empress pondered on how to recognize which of these was the Cross of Christ, a funeral procession passed by. Patriarch Macarius told them to place the crosses, one by one, on the dead man. When they placed the first and second cross on the dead man, the dead man lay unchanged. When they placed the third cross on him, the dead man came back to life. By this they knew that this was the Precious and Life-giving Cross of Christ. They then placed the Cross on a sick woman, and she became well. The patriarch elevated the Cross for all the people to see, and the people sang with tears: "Lord, have mercy!" Empress Helena had a silver case made and set the Honorable Cross in it. Later, the Persian Emperor Chozroes conquered Jerusalem, enslaved many people, and took the Lord's Cross to Persia. The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years. In the year 628 A.D. the Greek Emperor Heraclius defeated Chozroes and, with much ceremony, returned the Cross to Jerusalem. As he entered the city Emperor Heraclius carried the Cross on his back, but suddenly was unable to take another step. Patriarch Zacharias saw an angel preventing the emperor from bearing the Cross on the same path that the Lord had walked barefoot and humiliated. The patriarch communicated this vision to the emperor. The emperor removed his raiment and, in ragged attire and barefoot, took up the Cross, carried it to Golgotha, and placed it in the Church of the Resurrection, to the joy and consolation of the whole Christian world.

2. SAINT PLACILLA, THE EMPRESS

Placilla was the wife of Emperor Theodosius the Great. In mind and deed, she was a true Christian. She was especially distinguished for helping the needy and the sick. When some

people told her that this was not consistent with imperial dignity, she replied: "It becomes the imperial calling to assist with money; however, in my personal efforts concerning the poor, I give to Him who deigned to give me this calling." She rested peacefully in about the year 400 A.D.

### 3. THE VENERABLE MARTYR MACARIUS OF THESSALONICA

Macarius was a disciple of Patriarch Niphon when the latter was laboring in stillness at Vatopedi [on Mount Athos]. Macarius longed to be martyred for Christ the Lord, and begged St. Niphon for his blessing. The clairvoyant patriarch, seeing that this was the will of God, blessed his path to martyrdom. Macarius went to Thessalonica and, in a crowd of Turks, began to speak about Christ as the One True God. The Turks beat him and threw him into prison. When they brought him to trial, Macarius cried out to them: "Oh if you only knew the truth, and were baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit!" The Turks beheaded him in 1527 A.D. At that very moment, St. Niphon saw this in the spirit and told a monk of Macarius's death by martyrdom, saying: "Know this, my child, that today your brother Macarius died a martyr's death and is borne to heaven, celebrating and rejoicing in the Lord. May we, by his prayers, be made worthy of blessedness."

### 4. THE VENERABLE MARIA OF TARSUS

She lived a life of total debauchery. Two monks traveling through Tarsus stayed at the inn where Maria plied her trade. When she approached the monks, they rebuked her and pushed her aside as unclean. She suddenly repented, and vowed never to sin again. The monks took her to a convent, where Maria lived a life of asceticism until old age. She was made worthy of working miracles even during her lifetime.

#### HYMN OF PRAISE THE HONORABLE CROSS

Save, O God, Thy people!

Save, O Lord--

By Thine Honorable Cross, Thou dost shine upon us,

By the Cross, Thou dost lead us!

The Cross is power and a sign;

The Cross is salvation.

Save, O God, the Patriarch  
And the Assembly of Serbian Bishops;  
Grant them strength to serve

Thine Honorable Cross!  
The Cross is power and a sign;  
The Cross is salvation.

Save, O God, all those  
Who are in authority;  
May the Most-holy Cross protect them  
From dark destruction!  
The Cross is power and a sign;  
The Cross is salvation.

Save, O God, all people  
Who pray to Thee.  
By Thy Cross, may they quickly overcome  
Every difficulty.  
The Cross is power and a sign;  
The Cross is salvation!

#### REFLECTION

Just as a candle is lighted from another candle, so also a good work is born from a good work. A patrician wanted to donate a gold cross to a church. He summoned a young but experienced goldsmith, gave him a great deal of gold that he weighed out, and told him to fashion whatever sort of cross he desired. The poor goldsmith, seeing what a large donation this patrician was making for the sake of his soul, became inflamed with love for God in his own heart, and decided that he would add his own ten pieces of gold to the amount of the patrician's gold. When the cross was completed, the patrician weighed it, and discovered that it was heavier than the gold that he had given to the young man. He immediately began to scold the young man as a thief, suspecting that he had taken some of the gold and replaced it with some other heavy metal. When the young man saw the patrician so angry, he confessed his deed. He said: "I added from my gold, as the widow gave two mites, in order to receive Christ's reward with you." Hearing this, the patrician's heart was touched, and he said to the honorable young man: "From this day, I take you as my son, and the heir of all my goods."

#### CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the transgression of Jeroboam and the punishment of God (I Kings 12, 13):  
1. How Jeroboam cast two golden calves and ordered the people to worship them as gods;

2. How the prophet declared God's displeasure to Jeroboam, and miraculously broke the altar before the idols;
3. How Jeroboam raised his hand against the prophet, but his hand withered, and only after the prayers of the prophet was it made whole again.

HOMILY  
on the truthfulness of Christ's witness

Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true (John 8:14).

The light witnesses truthfully when it witnesses to the existence of the sun, and it does not lie. In the same way, the Lord Jesus witnesses truthfully to all that He testifies. He descended among men as a heavenly witness, to affirm the existence of the Triune God, the existence of the angelic world and of men's souls, the love of God for men, God's providence toward men, the power of justice over injustice, the might of truth over falsehood, the blessed immortality of the righteous and the eternal torment of the sinners, the resurrection from the dead, the Judgment of God and many other things that men--under the veil of sin--only felt as a faint premonition, but did not know of or strongly believe in. Most of all, He witnessed that He is the Son of the Living God, equal to His Father in Essence, power and love, and equal to the Holy Spirit of God. For the Witness had to witness first to Himself, so that by His witnessing to other mysteries, He could be believed. From the point of view of a pure and immutable truth, every witness of Christ is true; but from the point of view of the darkened Jews, it was not true. For God, and the angels of God, and the righteous ones, and for eternity, and for all time--His witnessing is true, and that is why He also said: My record is true. But for the darkened minds of the hardened sinners, this witness is not true. That is why He said to the Jews earlier: If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true (John 5:31). In other words; "It is not true for you Jews, but in essence it is true in and of itself."

O Most-blessed Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God and our only Savior, deliver us from the weakness of a sinful mind, and the wickedness of a sinful heart. Illumine us with the light of Thy words, eternally true.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

***Services this Week***

***-The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross*** (Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>) – 09:00

AM Divine Liturgy

***-Holy Martyrs Faith, Hope and Love with their mother Sophia*** (Thursday, September

30<sup>th</sup>) – 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy

*-15th Sunday after Pentecost* (Sunday, Oktober 3th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Donations Sunday September 19, 2021

Offering - \$532.00 Candles - \$70.00

Donations

From Thomas, Radojka, & Vanco Nikolic honoring their Slava  
Alexander Nevsky - \$100

Building Fund

In Memory of David Keckich from Judy Wagers - \$100

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Charles Bulich from Olga Bulich

In Memory of Christine Bulich from Olga Bulich

In Memory of Charlie Bulich from Olga Bulich

In Memory of Violet Sewak from Olga Bulich

In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich from Dan & Dyne Tomak

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**SAVE THE DATE – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16th**

Family Night with the Sunday School

Everyone is welcome – details to follow

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**Next Fish Fry – Friday, October 22, 2021**

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**SUNDAYMARKET@** *CambriaCity*

#SUNDAYMARKETCMBRIACITY

*Stella*

#STELLAJOHNSTOWN

We will be participating in Sunday Market @ Cambria City

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Men's Club will be working the booth today Sunday,  
September 26th