

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

(814) 244-4063

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (08.13.2023.)

Matthew 17:14-23

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry. **(KJV)**

The Gospel is proclaimed in God's Holy Church for the salvation of the soul. Attentive believers heed the Gospel in seeking the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

The Gospel is applicable to daily life and leads the believer to God's Kingdom. Heeding the Gospel brings peace to the heart, mind and soul. The Gospel unites the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ's teachings are proclaimed and preserved in the Gospel. Believers learn from the Gospel about Jesus Christ's earthly ministry, the miracles He performed and His death on the Cross,

Jesus Christ's Resurrection and Ascension are verified in the Gospel. Christ's return for the final judgment is anticipated in the Gospel. Attentive believers take the Gospel to heart and apply it to daily living.

The present Gospel describes Jesus Christ's power to heal a devil afflicted son for a mercy seeking father. Parents with afflicted sons and daughters find hope in the present Gospel.

All believers are afflicted by the devil to a certain degree during earthly life. The present Gospel teaches that through prayer and fasting with Christ's help the devil can be expelled from our lives.

The father experienced the joy of having his son healed by Jesus Christ. Believers find joy in Christ through prayer, fasting and living in ways pleasing to Christ.

The Church guides and nourishes believers from Baptism until their departure from this life. The Church offers Jesus' teachings and verifies his miracles through proclaiming the Gospel.

The Holy Mysteries in the Church enable believers to be united and remain united with Christ. Repentance is always encouraged and possible while life remains and the mind functions.

Hope in Christ has a basis in the Resurrection. Every issue is capable of being dealt with through the help of the Crucified and Resurrected Christ. Relationship issues, illness and despair can be faced with Christ's help.

The Resurrected Christ demonstrated that even death is not final. Eternal life is possible. The present Gospel references that Jesus would die and rise from the dead.

Each Sunday believers celebrating the Divine Liturgy experience Christ's Resurrection. Believers have the blessing to partake of Jesus' Precious Body and Blood during the Divine Liturgy.

The father with the afflicted son had the wisdom to turn to Jesus for healing. Believers are wise in turning to Christ for guidance in addressing life's problems. Jesus brings healing to the heart, mind and soul.

Husbands and wives centering their lives in Christ have a stronger marriage. Families focused on Christ grow and develop through the years. Jesus does not disappoint those placing faith and confidence in Him.

Persons of strong faith influence the direction of the home and their surroundings. Parish churches improve and strengthen neighborhoods and communities.

Jesus Christ brightens the world where He is celebrated and glorified. Active worship makes a difference in daily life. The darkness of Holy Friday is always replaced by the brightness of the Resurrection.

The discouraged and perplexed father found joy in Jesus Christ when his son was healed. All persons having issues find joy when turning to Christ in faith. Prayer and fasting facilitate the healing and arrival of joy.

The proof of the value of living in Christ is in the actual doing. Being a Christian involves being active in faith and in following Christ. Being lukewarm as a Christian is perilous to the soul. (Rev.3:16)

Thank God for the present Gospel as a source of instruction and hope. Thank God for the healing resting in Jesus Christ. God's Holy Church brings Jesus Christ to believers throughout the world.

Today is the day to embrace the Healing, Crucified and Resurrected Christ.

Now is the time to increase prayer and fasting. Let us always “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness” (Mt. 6:33)

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy and Righteous Eudocimus. Holy Martyr Julitta. July 31/August 13, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL? A Parable by Elder Cleopa

When Elder Cleopa was asked, “Why does the Lord allow evil?” he answered with the following story.

A long time ago in the Egyptian desert there lived a hermit monk. Sometimes he would go to Alexandria to sell the baskets he wove. The hermit would give almost all the money he made on his baskets to the poor, leaving only enough to buy himself the bare necessities.

One day while walking to the city he asked himself the question, “Why does the Lord allow evil in people’s lives if He is Good, Just, and Almighty?” His mind was disturbed because he had seen so much unhappiness and sorrow when he was last in the city.

Along the road he met another monk who was also going to Alexandria. They talked with each other, and he told his new travelling companion about his anguish. Seeing that the hermit was troubled, the monk comforted him and told him that the Lord will reveal the truth to him when they arrive at the city, but he will have to pray ceaselessly and never ask questions, no matter what happens.

The hermit promised to do as the monk said, and they continued along their way. They stopped at one home to spend the night. The householders received them with love and generously fed them. On the table was a beautiful silver vessel. Before they left to go to sleep, the monk surreptitiously took that vessel and put it in his rucksack. The hermit wanted to reproach his companion, but he remembered his promise and said nothing.

In the morning they came to the river. The monk took out the vessel, made the sign of the cross over it, and put it into the river.

By lunchtime the travellers had arrived at another village. They were invited to one of the houses for a meal. When they were leaving the house, a dog was barking in the yard. The monk killed it. Immediately a boy ran out of the house and started screaming. The hermit’s travelling companion grabbed him by the right arm, yanked it and broke it, then calmly continued his way. The

indignant hermit wanted to tell him what he thought, but remembering his promise he again kept silence.

When dusk fell, the monk and the hermit decided to spend the night in a ramshackle house, which turned out to be inhabited by some children. Their parents had died and they had no one to take care of them. The travellers spent the night there, but in the morning before leaving the monk took a firebrand out of the furnace and burned down the house. And again the hermit was indignant, but again he could say nothing.

They came to a third village. There they saw a ruined church, but it was still possible to go into it and pray. The monk took up a stone and flung it through the church window, shattering it. Then he took his bemused brother to a tavern. When he entered, the monk made three prostrations. The hermit by now had resigned himself to his companion's strange behavior and just prayed.

On the last night the travellers were invited to spend the night in a house on the edge of a wood. There lived a young couple who had no children. In the morning the couple set out to work in the field, and the travellers went on their way. But suddenly the monk returned and burned down that house as well.

Finally they arrived at Alexandria. The hermit could no longer wait to understand the essence of what had happened to them on the road. So he asked his companion, "Tell me after all, who are you?"

"I am an angel," the other replied.

"You! An angel?!" the hermit scoffed disdainfully. "You are a real devil! Only a demon could do all those dreadful things you've done. Those good people showed you hospitality you repaid them all with black ingratitude. You were a thief, an arsonist, a murderer, and a sacrilegious desecrator. And you even wear monastic clothing!"

"You are mistaken," the travelling companion answered. "I really am an angel. And I was sent to you because the Lord saw your anguish and wanted to answer the questions that tormented you. I know that you want to know why I did all those things. I will start from the beginning.

"Why did I steal the vessel? I'll answer you. Our host's grandfather stole it from one monastery church, and because of that sacrilege his family was punished for three generations with illnesses and other problems. As a sign of gratitude for their hospitality I decided to deliver them from this punishment. I signed the vessel with the sign of the cross and put it into the river. Some monks will come there to wash their clothes, find it and return it to the monastery.

"I knew that the dog was already rabid. It would have bitten its owners and that is why I killed it. And I broke their son's arm because I could foresee that when he grows up he would become a robber. But with a bad arm like that you can't do much robbing.

“Why did I burn down the children’s house? Those children would soon have died without any care, and now in the place of their burned house they’ll find the silver their parents hid, and they can now go to Alexandria to their grandfather who is a bishop—he’ll take care of them. When they grow up, the boys will become priests and the girls will marry.

"I know that you are puzzled as to why I threw the stone through the church window and made prostrations in the tavern. I saw that the demons were dancing at the church window and I chased them away with that stone. That church will soon be repaired. In the tavern was a wealthy merchant who had promised the priest that he would pay the cost of repairing the church. That is why I bowed to him.

"And finally, about the last house. I burned it down in order to save the young couple from the curse of childlessness. The husband had made a dirty deal and built that house with the money he got from it. That is why they didn’t have any children. I saw that he is repenting of his deed and doesn’t know how to get rid of his house. Now he will build a more modest house but on honestly earned money. And the Lord will bless them with children."

Do you understand? [God’s mercy](#) for people is shown in everything, but they don’t see it and can’t understand it. The Lord never commits evil. But people look at His works as misfortunes and sorrows, while the Lord does these things only for the sake of good and for their correction. Therefore do not look at the external side, but try to see God’s all-encompassing justice in everything.

[Archimandrite Cleopa \(Ilie\)](#)

Services this Week

- ❖ *Monday – 08.14.2023. – Proces. of Honorable Gross – Holy Maccabean Martyrs - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ **Friday – 08.18.2023. – PARAGLISIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NEGTARIOS -05:00 PM – Confession**
- ❖ **Saturday – 08.19.2023. - Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **11th Sunday after Pentecost– 08.20.2023. - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**

Donations August 6, 2023

Offering - \$ 1,728.00 Candles - \$46.00

Donation of \$100 In memory of Milos Tumbas (8/3/96)
from Dianna Dunnington

Building Fund

In Memory of Irene Martinovich from Milica Knepp - \$25

Large Candles

In Memory of Panie Patty Martinovich from Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Steve & Stella Baich from Kathy Szmyd

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Kathy Szmyd

In Memory of Irene Martinovich from Dorothy Podolak

In Memory of Lazo & Bosa Vuckovich from Helene Gleason

Please visit our St. Nicholas Web Page

<https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>

We have now added a "DONATE" button to make it easier for you to send your donations. Please take a look.

Recently we received an anonymous donation of \$1,000 for the purchase of buying new altar robes for the altar servers. The total cost of the new robes is \$1,543.36. Leaving a balance of \$543.36. If you would like to donate for the purchase of these robes, please contact Carole McAllister or Carly Zahurak.

Thank you to the following for helping us meet our goal!!!

Dyne Tomak, Kathy Urban in Memory of her Mother, Irene Martinovich, Mame & Brandon Simms, Dorothy Podolak, Rick Kondas, Donna Zimmerman, Sylvester Gjurich & Joseph Golden

UPCOMING EVENTS



Slavic Festival – September 15–16, 2023