

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905
Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic
(814) 244-4063

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
(09.15.2024.)

Matthew 19:16-26

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. *(KJV)*

Synaxis of the Serbian Saints
Matthew 5:14-19

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the

kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. *(KJV)*

St. Matthew's Gospel for today reveals the difficulty of pursuing eternal life when a person clings to personal possessions to a greater degree than seeking the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ made clear the difficulties the rich man faced in seeking eternal life can be overcome with God's help. St. Matthew's Gospel verifies that with God, all things are possible. (Mt. 19:26)

The Gospel for this Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost inspires believers to examine their relationship with personal possessions. Believers are to honestly assess the desire for seeking the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

The rich man in the Gospel was so wedded to his possessions that he was not willing to listen to Jesus Christ and lay up treasures in heaven. He was unwilling to relinquish his possessions to seek the Kingdom of God.

Believers today are challenged to think about the degree they invest in the Kingdom of God. Believers are to thoroughly examine themselves to determine if they are laying up treasures in heaven each day.

The way a person manages the time, wealth and gifts of life reveals the depth of interest in the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Budgeting the time, talents and treasures of life to pursue the Kingdom of God requires considerable discipline.

The Church provides Divine services, fasting periods and preaching the Gospel to guide the believer from the baptismal font to the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

Wise believers assess whether the personal time of life and personal wealth are being used for the glory of God. Grateful believers use the time and wealth of life to demonstrate complete gratitude toward God

God is the Origin of all good in life. (James 1:17) Gratitude for God's goodness is reflected when personal treasures are invested in the Kingdom of God. Grateful believers lay-up treasures in heaven.

Today's God's Holy Church remembers and celebrates the Saints of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Serbian saints are remembered dearly in celebration because of the Light of Christ shown through their lives.

The Serbian saints commemorated today are beacons of light enabling believers to travel through periods of darkness in life with great hope in the Resurrected Christ.

When Jesus Christ was crucified great darkness covered the earth. (Lk.23:44) The rich man experienced darkness in his life when he was challenged to give up his possessions to seek the Kingdom of God.

The Resurrected Christ brings Light to the world. The darkness of Jesus' crucifixion did not prevail. Jesus' Resurrection offers hope to all believers for all the times of life even in the darkest moments.

Jesus' Resurrection is enduring proof that with God all things are possible. Jesus' defeat of death opens the path for believers seeking eternal life. Jesus is the Light shining through the darkness of every century until the Second Coming.

Today's Divine Liturgy reveals the Light of Christ. Believers partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ today. Believers are united with and renewed in the Resurrected Christ.

Christ's Resurrection eradicates darkness. The Light of Christ is stronger than any darkness. Embrace today with immeasurable joy. Unite with the Resurrected Christ throughout all the days of life. Seek first the Kingdom of God! (Mt.6:33)

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Mamas, Venerable John the Faster of Constantinople. Synaxis of the Serbian Saints. September 2/15, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.
Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid **Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic**

1. THE HOLY MARTYR MAMAS

He was born in Paphlagonia of renowned Christian parents, Theodotus and Rufina. His parents were cast into prison for Christ's name. His father died first in prison, and as soon as Rufina bore Mamas, she also died. Thus the newborn child was left alone between the dead bodies of his parents. However, God the Provider sent an angel to a noble widow, Ammia. Ammia saw the angel in a dream: he told her to go to the prison and take the child in. The local eparch granted Ammia permission to bury the dead and to take the child to her home. When Mamas reached his fifth year, he began to talk and his first word was "Mama!"--for which he received the name "Mamas." In school, Mamas displayed unusual intelligence, and as he had been reared in a Christian spirit, he did not hide his faith, but confessed it to the other children and laughed at the idols. During the reign of Aurelian there was a bitter persecution of Christians. The pagans did not even spare the Christian children. Mamas was fifteen years old when he was brought before the emperor. The emperor told him that he needed only to deny Christ verbally. Mamas replied: "Neither in my heart nor with my lips will I renounce my God and King, Jesus Christ." The emperor ordered him to be beaten, burned with torches, and finally thrown into the sea. But an angel of God saved him, and took him to a high mountain near Caesarea. There he lived in solitude and prayer. Even the wild beasts were tamed by his sanctity. He was finally discovered by his persecutors and subjected to torture again. When he had overcome torture both by fire and by wild beasts, St. Mamas was run through with a trident by a pagan priest. Thus he gave his holy soul to God, to Whom he had been faithful during all of his tortures. From his relics many healings of the sick have taken place.

2. SAINT JOHN THE FASTER, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

He is also celebrated on August 30. He was at first a goldsmith, but because of his great and many acts of mercy--and by God's providence--he was ordained a priest. Once, when he was a young man, John was walking with Eusebius, an old monk from Palestine. Suddenly, a bodiless

voice spoke to Eusebius: "Abba, do not walk to the right of the great John." It was the voice of God, foretelling the great service to which John would shortly be called.

After the Blessed Eutychius, John was chosen to be Patriarch of Constantinople. He did not want to accept this but, having been frightened by a certain heavenly vision, he accepted. He was a great faster, intercessor and miracle-worker right up to his death. He reposed in the year 595 A.D. After his death, his only personal possessions were found to be a wooden spoon, a linen shirt and an old garment. His writings on repentance and confession are well known.

3. SAINT ELEAZAR

Eleazar was the son of Aaron, and second in order of the high priests of Israel. He assisted Moses during the census of the people of Israel, and assisted Joshua the son of Nun in apportioning the Promised Land among the Twelve Tribes. He faithfully guarded the Ark of the Covenant in Shiloh and reposed peacefully.

4. THE FEAST OF THE MIRACLE OF THE KALUGA ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.

[See the "Reflection" below.]

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Martyr Mamas

Mamas the pious was born in prison,
And was kindred with Christ from his first day;
His father and mother, martyrs for God,
Birthed their only child in prison darkness.
For fifteen years, orphaned Mamas
Was alone in the prison of the world.
His only comfort and his only light
Shone upon him from the countenance of the Son of God:
This was his fulfillment and his wealth.
Mamas glorified Christ his God,
He glorified Him in word and in deed
By his prayerful soul and innocent body.

His friendship with God was more dear to him
Than the devious world that torments and lies.
He loved God and His pure Christ
And he became a friend to pure nature--
To the wilderness and forest and wild beasts,
To wild goats and fierce lions.
And God endowed his friend
With wondrous gifts of the Holy Spirit.
And Mamas shamed his persecutors,
And turned many torturers to Christ.
The emperor and the empire were against this boy,
But the right hand of God sustained him--
And, enduring torments, Mamas glorified the Savior.
The emperor and the empire collapsed to nothing,
While Mamas reigns, even now, with Christ,
And rejoices with the angels of God in heaven.

REFLECTION

The life of the Orthodox Church provides us with numerous examples of how Almighty God manifests His power through small and lifeless things--especially those things that serve as signs of the Incarnation, life and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such things include the Cross, icons of the Theotokos and the saints, holy water, oil, myrrh, and so forth. For example, a miracle was wrought through an icon of the Holy Mother of God in the year 1748 A.D., in the home of a boyar named Khitrov, near the Russian city of Kaluga. Two of the boyar's servants, rummaging in Khitrov's attic one day, came upon a rolled-up piece of cloth that depicted the beautiful image of a woman's face. The image emanated holiness and piety. One of the servants was humble and modest, while the other was vain and talkative. The former, looking at the image on the cloth, called it "The Abbess." Evdokia--the vain and talkative one, whose name we know--did not honor this name, but coarsely mocked her humble companion. To give even more force to her vulgarity, she spat on the painting. At that instant Evdokia fell to the ground, writhing with her whole body, blind and dumb, and began foaming at the mouth. That night the

Theotokos appeared to the parents of the unfortunate girl, and told them what had happened to their daughter. She told them to get a priest and have him pray before the image that had been found and sprinkle the girl with holy water, and then she would be healed. When this was done, Evdokia was healed, and from then on she amended her disposition and was more modest. Thus was a miracle-working icon of the Holy Theotokos discovered. This icon was taken to a church in Kaluga, where it can be found today, still working miracles.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate God's punishment of David for his adultery and murder (II Samuel 12):

1. How God, speaking through the prophet Nathan, told David that because he took another's wife, his own wives would be taken by other men;
2. That his son would die;
3. That the sword would not depart from his house--all of which came to pass.

HOMILY

on the Word of God, the Creator of the world

It [the Word] was in the beginning in God. Everything came into existence by Him (John 1:2-3): *

Brethren, the Evangelist is speaking of the wondrous Logos of God, of the rational, intelligent Word, of the eternal Wisdom of God, of the co-eternal Son of God. This wondrous Word is of one Essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, yet hypostatically different from the Father and the Spirit, for He was begotten of the Unbegotten Father. He always was, is, and shall be. When was the Word in God? The Evangelist says: *In the beginning*. What does *In the beginning* mean? It means the same as "first" or "first of all." So, first of all, the Word of God was in God, and has always been of one being with the Father, and has always been the Son, in hypostasis, but not yet incarnate. Later, the Word of God became incarnate, and appeared in a body for the sake of mankind. When He was still the unincarnate Word in God, *everything came into existence by Him*. Heaven and earth, and the whole inhabited heavenly and earthly worlds--*everything came into existence by Him*, by the Word of God, when He was in God, and not yet incarnate. Without the Word of God, no created thing came into existence. He was Life and Light, and the Light shone in darkness, *and the darkness comprehended it not* (John 1:5). First of all, death and sin represent darkness. That darkness did not overcome the Son of God. The whole created world itself is darkness before God, yet in this darkness shines the Word of God, the Wisdom of God, rational, intelligent and majestic. All of creation would be in utter darkness if the mystical light of the Son of God--by Whom all things were created--did not illuminate it.

It [the Word] was in the beginning in God--then what happened? And the Word was made flesh (John 1:14). The history of the creation of the world leads up to this point, and from this point the history of man's salvation begins. In taking on flesh, the Word of God did not estrange Himself from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit--for the Divine Trinity is undivided--but, rather, He clothed Himself in the body and soul of man, so that, in the shadow of the body, He, the Sun of suns, could draw near to men and save men

O my brethren, how sweet and inexpressibly wonderful is the mystery of the Incarnation of God. If we embrace this mystery with our heart, it will be easier to approach it with our mind. O Lord, gentle Savior, the glory of the Father and the joy of the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us and save us.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- **Saturday (09.21.2024.)**
 - **Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos**
 - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*
- **13th Sunday after Pentecost (09.22.2024.)**
 - **Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Ana**
 - *Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 AM*

Donations September 1, 2024

Offering - \$1,005.00 Candles - \$51.00 Dues - \$50.00

Donations September 8, 2024

Offering - \$1,288.00 Candles - \$57.00

Donations

\$25 donation to the Sunday School from Eli Cvijanovich. Thank you
Carole McAllister

Building Fund

In Memory of David Mrkich from Christopher & Dorothy Witt - \$100
In Memory of Shawn Novotny from Parents, Rose & Joe Novotny - \$100
In Memory of Shawn Novotny from Sister Lindy, Brother-in-law Mike,
Nephew Jacob, & Niece Emma - \$100
In Memory of Protinica Grgurevich from Gloria Cernic - \$50

Large Candles

(5) For Health of Olga Lucas from Sharon & Jim Urban
IMO Cecilia Gresh Shuman from Olga Bulich

Many of you have inquired in regards as to where to send your sympathies and donations for our beloved +Protinica Dubravka Grgeruvich. We have spoken to her son Stefan Grgurevich and he has agreed to donate where you wish. Included below are Stefan and Svetozar’s addresses to extend your sympathies or donations, as well as St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church or our St. Nicholas Building Fund.

Stefan Grgurevich
5904 Mount Eagle Drive
Apt. 315
Alexandria, VA 22308-2536

Svetozar & Mary Grgurevich
Luka, Marko & Maya
107 Desimone Drive
Marlborough, MA 01752

St. Luke Serbian Orthodox
Church,
10660 River Road,
Potomac, MD, 20854

Please visit the site below to view Protinica’s obituary and a few photos from the burial at Libertyville.

<https://svetagora.com/protinica-dubravka-grgurevich-1937-2024/>

UPCOMING EVENTS



Johnstown Slavic Festival – September 20-21st

We will be selling;

Lamb Sandwiches, Cevapi, Sarma, Pomfrit (Fresh Cut Fries), Baklava and Nutroll

KOLO SLAVA CELEBRATION – Sunday, September 29th

FISH FRY – Friday, October 4th

BASKET PARTY
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024
DETAILS COMING SOON

St. Petka Slava Celebration – Sunday, October 27th