

## ***Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church***

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### ***The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost (10.17.2021)***

#### ***Matthew 15:21-28***

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (KJV)

The Lord God is amazing and well beyond the human imagination. God is bigger and greater than the human mind can fathom. God created the mind and put the mind into the human. Believers are to use the mind, heart, and soul for the glory, understanding and love of God. A glimpse of the greatness and healing power of God exists in the present Gospel reading. This mother with a daughter vexed by the devil appealed to Jesus for healing. The mother's faith was resolute. She perceived in Jesus Christ the power to heal her daughter.

The mother was resolute in her approach to Jesus. The mother's love of her daughter was beyond measure. The hope and desire for healing were clearly evident. The Lord Jesus Christ recognized the strength of faith in the mother.

Jesus healed the daughter. Jesus' healing of the daughter vexed by the devil has withstood the test of time. The proclamation of the healing from St. Matthew's Gospel takes place in God's Holy Church each year.

Around the world and through the centuries, parents with children vexed by the devil have found hope for their sons and daughters in present Gospel reading. Jesus Christ remains the ultimate hope and healer for parents.

Too often parents turn to other than Jesus Christ in search of solutions. Often parents do not even think of Jesus Christ as the Solution to the problems being experienced with a

son or daughter. Jesus' healing power is evident in the current Gospel. Jesus' healing power is readily visible to believers with eyes to see. Attentive believers will hear of Jesus' power to love and to heal.

Serious believers rejoice in Jesus Christ. Serious believers are grateful for the healing power of Christ and the love Jesus expresses by healing. When Jesus' heals, the devil's presence is expelled.

A firm and continuing relationship with Jesus Christ reveals the Lord's immeasurable greatness. The greatness of Jesus Christ continues to unfold and is revealed as the relationship with the believer matures.

Jesus Christ is to be the believer's most serious relationship. The intended life-long relationship with Jesus Christ is established at baptism. The believer has the responsibility to renew the relationship throughout life.

The mother and daughter in the current Gospel developed a new relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus transformed the mother and daughter. The mother and daughter would no longer be viewed as they were.

The mother had a great weight lifted from her life. The daughter had a great weight lifted from her life. Both the mother and daughter were renewed. They would change in their basis for daily relationships and going forward in life.

Every person can begin anew in Jesus Christ. Every person can turn to Jesus Christ with firmness of faith and hope. The mother and daughter in the present Gospel are enduring examples that healing can occur and the devil be defeated.

Every person is vexed with attacks from the devil. Jesus Christ is the power to defeat the devil. Jesus Christ is the power to grant new life to the believer. New life begins at baptism and continues as believers renew the relationship with Christ.

Following their experience with Christ, the mother and daughter were new in their community. The mother and daughter became a family in a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ. The devil no longer dominated their lives.

Jesus brought health to the daughter. Jesus removed the stress from the mother. The mother and daughter had great reason to be grateful to Jesus Christ for the healing.

Each person has reason to show gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ when healing takes place in life. The Lord Jesus Christ is due unending gratitude when healing occurs.

Attentive believers learn of the power of faith in the present Gospel. Parents of every generation find hope in the Gospel. The possibility of healing exists for believers turning to Jesus in hope and with resolute faith.

The relationship with Jesus Christ continues throughout life. Each person determines the degree of interest in growing in the relationship. The mother and daughter in the Gospel reveal the joy of turning to Jesus Christ in faith and hope.

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***The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. Sts. Stephen and Helena (Stiljanovic)  
October 4.17, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic***

## *The Prologue from Ochrid* *St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic*

### **1. THE HOLY APOSTLE THOMAS**

Thomas was one of the Twelve Apostles. Through his doubt in the Resurrection of Christ the Lord, a new proof was given of that wonderful and saving event. The resurrected Lord appeared to His disciples a second time, in order to convince Thomas. The Lord said to Thomas: *Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.* And Thomas replied: *My Lord and my God* (John 20:27-28). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles cast lots to see where they would each go to preach, the lot fell to Thomas to go to India. He was a little saddened that he had to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and encouraged him. In India, St. Thomas converted many, both aristocrats and poor, to the Christian Faith, and established the Church there, appointing priests and bishops. Among others, Thomas converted two sisters to the Faith--Tertiana and Migdonia--both wives of Indian princes. Because of their faith, both sisters were ill-treated by their husbands, with whom they no longer wanted to live after their baptism. Eventually, they were allowed to go. Being freed of marriage, they lived God-pleasing lives until their repose.

Dionysius and Pelagia were betrothed, but when they heard the apostolic preaching they did not marry, but devoted themselves to the ascetic life. Pelagia ended her life as a martyr for the Faith, and Dionysius was ordained a bishop by the apostle. Prince Mazdai, Tertiana's husband, whose son, Azan, was also baptized by Thomas, condemned the apostle to death. Mazdai sent five soldiers to kill Thomas. They ran him through with their five spears, and thus the Holy Apostle Thomas rendered his soul into the hands of Christ. Before his death, he and the other apostles were miraculously brought to Jerusalem for the burial of the Most-holy Theotokos. Arriving too late, he wept bitterly, and the tomb of the Holy Most-pure One was opened at his request. The Theotokos' body was not found in the tomb: the Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly habitation. Thus, in his tardiness St. Thomas revealed to us the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God, just as he had once confirmed faith in the Resurrection of the Lord by his unbelief.

### **2. THE VENERABLE NEW MARTYR MACARIUS**

Macarius was born in the town of Kios, in Bithynia. His parents, Peter and Anthusa, were Christians, and he was baptized with the name of Manuel. In his youth, he was sent to learn tailoring as a trade. In the meantime, his father embraced Islam and moved to Brussa. There came a time when Manuel came to Brussa on business, and his father found him and exerted great pressure on him to become a Moslem. Manuel resisted in vain: the Turks circumcised him by force. Manuel then fled to the Holy Mountain and was tonsured a monk in the Skete of St. Anna. His monastic name was Macarius. For twelve years he was an

excellent monk, but he never had peace of soul. *Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven* (Matthew 10:33)--Christ's words continually echoed in Macarius's mind. Finally, with the blessing of his elder, he went to Brussa and openly confessed his Faith in Christ before the Turks, calling Mohammed a false prophet. After being flogged for 130 days and enduring other harsh tortures, he was beheaded there, on October 6, 1590 A.D. A part of his miracle-working relics is preserved in the Skete of St. Anna on Mount Athos.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE** **THE HOLY APOSTLE THOMAS**

The Apostle Thomas, by his unbelief,  
Strengthened his faith: the Lord appeared to him.  
Thomas witnessed Him and rejoiced,  
And joyfully glorified Christ.  
India became Thomas's vineyard,  
And he cultivated that land with the Cross:  
Preaching Christ to the mighty and the lowly,  
Preaching His wisdom and His works.  
O wise sons of India,  
Your wisdom is but a snake in the grass.  
Lo, true Wisdom has descended from heaven for you--  
The Wisdom of God has appeared in the flesh!  
Thomas spoke and worked miracles,  
And a multitude of people followed him,  
In hearing his wisdom, and beholding the wonders  
That Thomas worked in the name of the Lord.  
Thomas endured great torments,  
But shattered the gates of the darkness of idolatry,  
And suffered, like Christ, five cruel wounds,  
Which he received in his body for the sake of the truth.  
Five bitter wounds, for the number of the senses--  
Which is a lesson in mystical wisdom:  
He who subdues not all his senses  
Will taste of no spiritual sweetness.

### **REFLECTION**

*We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens* (II Corinthians 5:1), says the discerning Apostle Paul. All our efforts for God on earth have this purpose: to merit, according to our power, this eternal house in the heavens not made

by hands. The Indian King Gundafor decided to build himself a magnificent palace, unlike any other on earth. When Abban, his envoy, sought a skilled craftsman to build the king's palace, he met the Apostle Thomas by God's providence. St. Thomas told him that he was a craftsman, and that no one else could build what the king wanted. Thomas therefore received much gold from the king for the building of this palace. As soon as he departed from the king, he distributed all the gold to the poor. The palace site was some distance from the king's capital, and after two years the king sent servants to ask Thomas if the palace was completed. Thomas replied: "Everything is ready except the roof," and he sought more money from the king; and the king gave it to him. Again, Thomas distributed it all to the poor, and went throughout the kingdom doing his work, preaching the Gospel. The king, learning that Thomas had not even begun to build the palace, seized him and threw him into prison. That night, the king's brother died, and the king fell into great sorrow. An angel took the soul of the deceased and, leading him through Paradise, showed him a magnificent palace, such as the mind of man could not imagine. The soul of the deceased wished to enter that palace, but the angel told him that he could not, for it was his brother's palace, which the Apostle Thomas had built with his alms. Then the angel returned the brother's soul to his body. When he came to himself, he said to the king: "Swear to me that you will give me anything I ask." And the king swore. Then the brother said: "Give me the palace that you have in the heavens." The king was amazed that he had a palace in the heavens. When the brother described everything in detail, the king believed and immediately released Thomas from prison. Then, when he heard the apostle's preaching of salvation and eternal life, the king and his brother were baptized. King Gundafor undertook new works of charity, and built an even more magnificent palace in the heavens for himself.

### CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the injustice of King Amon and God's punishment of him (II Chronicles 33):

1. How Amon, the son of Manasseh, turned from God and did that which is evil in the sight of the Lord;
2. How he reigned for only two years, and was slain by his servants.

### HOMILY

#### **on the king's repentance**

I am weary with my groaning; all night I wash my bed; I water my couch with my tears (Psalms 6:6).

Day replaces night, and night replaces day. Let our daily repentance be succeeded by nightly repentance, and our nightly repentance by daily repentance. Daily repentance is shown primarily in good works; and nightly repentance in prayer, sighing and weeping. Thus, we repay our debt both day and night, by filling them with that which is most worthwhile before the Lord, and that which will go with us to the Judgment of God. Look

at King David and behold an example of true repentance. It is not enough to confess one's sin before a priest and consider it forgiven. Behold, even David acknowledged his sin before the Prophet Nathan, saying: *I have sinned against the Lord* (II Samuel 12:13). However, the great king did not consider this enough, but continually sighed in prayer before God, and washed away his sin every night with tears of repentance. Even lying in bed did not serve as rest for him, but as exhaustion from tearful repentance and tearful sighing. Do not say: "David committed murder and adultery, and therefore he had much to repent for." Do you not kill men by your hatred, and commit adultery by your impure thoughts and desires? Brethren, this life is not to justify ourselves but to condemn ourselves. Blessed is he whom God will justify at the Dread Judgment.

Repentance is not a matter for one hour or for one day. Repentance should be our inner occupation to the end of life. *All night I water my couch*, said King David. That does not mean that there is no need for repentance during the day, but that the outpouring of spiritual repentance is more suited to the night than the day. In the stillness of the night, both our sins and God's judgment come more clearly into focus. Doesn't the night remind us more clearly of death than the day? Doesn't the bed remind us of the nearness of the grave?

O Lord, just and wonderful, truly we cannot repent without Thy help. Help us, O All-good One, that we might see our sinful wounds, and smell the stench from them, and weep over ourselves--before our kinsmen begin to weep over our dead bodies, and before our guardian angels begin to weep over the carrion of our souls, when they are cast into the unquenchable fire. Help us and save us, O our God.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

### *Services this Week*

- **Holy Apostle Thomas ( Tuesday , October 19th) – 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy**
- **Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus (Wednesday, -Oktober 20th) – Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM**
- **18th Sunday after Pentecost (Sunday, Oktober 24th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

***Donations Sunday October 10, 2021***

***Offering - \$1922.00 Candles - \$48.00 Donations - \$50.00***

***Building Fund***

***In Memory of Parents Michael & Evelyn Raich – from children***

***Ann Luy,***

***Ev & Steve King and Michael & Mary Raich - \$500***

***In Memory of Edward Gartrell –***

***Frank & Linda Paolillo - \$100, Eli Cvijanovich - \$25, Gary, Rose &  
Kristina***

***Marinkovich - \$20, Lazo Gjurich - \$20***

***In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich – Kathleen Dreisbach - \$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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***“Family Night” with the Sunday School has been rescheduled  
to Sunday, October 24, 2021 following Divine Liturgy***

***Everyone is welcome***

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***Fish Fry – This Friday, October 22,***

***3:00 PM to 6:30 PM***

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***SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2021***

***DIVINE LITURGY WILL NOT BE SERVED due to the  
Diocesan Centennial Celebration at Holy Trinity***

***Cathedral in Pittsburgh, PA***

