

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 5:1-11

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him (KJV)

Holy Fathers of the Seventh Council

John 17:1-13

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I

am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (KJV)

Today's Gospel of St. Luke verifies the value of beginning each undertaking by listening to the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter and those with him had spent the whole night on their own fishing without success.

After listening to Jesus to try fishing again, Peter was successful to a degree that he became astonished. When he saw the results, Peter acknowledged the Lord and Peter declared his own sinfulness. James and John were equally affected.

Peter, James and John were so overtaken by the Lord Jesus Christ they left all and followed Him. Peter, James and John gave up their work as fishermen. They followed Jesus and became fishers of men.

Peter, James and John demonstrated the personal experience with Jesus Christ is enriching and life-changing. Believers of every generation personally experience Jesus Christ in Holy Baptism.

The relationship with Jesus Christ established at Baptism is renewed during the course of life with Holy Confession and Holy Communion. Prayer, fasting and participating in the Divine services keeps the relationship strong.

The relationship with Jesus Christ is the paramount relationship for believers. All other relationships are defined and exist according to the relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ's love for each believer is manifested in His death on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection. Today's Gospel from St. John contains Jesus' words as His earthly ministry draws to conclusion.

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus speaks of His unity with God the Father and Jesus' love and care for His followers. Eternal life is a central theme in Jesus' words.

Serious believers have a clear interest in eternal life. Keeping Jesus Christ first and foremost in the heart, mind and soul are essential for eternal life. Recognizing, repelling and repenting of personal sin are needed for eternal life.

The Church fosters and encourages believers to repent. The Church nourishes and guides believers in the life in Jesus Christ from Baptism until departure from this life.

Hunger in the soul leads believers to the Church and keeps believers united with the Christ in the Church. Dangers and perils existing in the world constantly attempt to take believers away from the Church.

The mind, heart and soul are to be vigilantly guarded to keep the believer on the narrow path to eternal life and God's Kingdom. The proclamation of the Gospel at each Divine Liturgy serves to nourish and guide believers.

Partaking of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ strengthens, fortifies and unites believers with Christ. Daily life in the world involves the constant battle against sin and temptations.

Daily life for serious believers includes the conscious unity with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Primary Goal and the Love of serious believers. Serious believers' love for Jesus Christ is manifested in all daily actions and relationships.

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council. Holy Apostle Philip; St. Theophanes the Confessor, October 11/24,2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid
St. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic

1. THE VENERABLE PARASCEVA [PETKA]

This glorious saint was of Serbian descent, and was born in the town of Epivat between Selymbria and Constantinople. St. Parasceva's parents were wealthy, devout Christians. They also had a son, Euthymius, who was tonsured a monk during his parents' lifetime, and later became the famous Bishop of Madytos. The virgin Parasceva always yearned for the ascetic life for the sake of Christ. After her parents' repose, she left her home and went first to Constantinople, then to the wilderness of Jordan, where she lived the ascetic life until old age. Who can express all the labors, sufferings and demonic temptations that St. Parasceva endured in the course of her many years? In her old age, an angel of God once appeared to her and said: "Leave the wilderness and return to your homeland; it is necessary that you render your body to the earth there, and your soul to the habitation of the Lord." St. Parasceva obeyed, and returned to Epivat. There she lived for two years in ceaseless fasting and prayer, then gave up her soul to God and took up her abode in Paradise. St. Parasceva entered into rest in the eleventh century. Over the course of time her relics were translated to Constantinople, to Trnovo, again to Constantinople, and then to Belgrade. Her relics now repose in Romania, in the town of Iasi. In Belgrade, the well of St. Petka miraculously heals the sick who draw near with faith in God and love for this saint.*)

*) The Greek Synaxarion records the miraculous assistance of St. Parasceva on the island of Chios in the year 1442 A.D. A certain Hieromonk Ambrose was celebrating vespers in the Church of St. Parasceva. There was no one else present in the church. Toward the end of vespers, a terrible storm struck with a great roar, and it rained torrentially the entire night. Ambrose was unable to leave the church. Thinking that the whole island would be flooded and everyone would perish, he began to pray to St. Parasceva to save his homeland and to appease God's righteous wrath. Before dawn, sleep overcame Ambrose. It seemed to him as though the roof of the church disappeared, and he saw a cloud of light in the heights, and within it stood a noble-looking woman at prayer before God. After her prayer, she said to the priest: "Ambrose, do not be afraid, your

homeland is spared," and the rain ceased immediately. From that time on, St. Parasceva continues to be celebrated very solemnly on the island of Chios.

2. THE HOLY MARTYRS NAZARIUS, GERVASIUS AND PROTASIOUS

Nazarius was born in Rome of a Jewish father and a Christian mother. His mother, Perpetua, was baptized by the Apostle Peter himself. Confessing his mother's Faith, Nazarius sincerely fulfilled all the precepts of the Church. Fearlessly preaching the Gospel, Nazarius went to Milan. There, he found the Christians Gervasius and Protasius in prison, and ministered to them with great love. Learning of this, the local eparch ordered Nazarius to be beaten and driven from the city. His mother came to him in a vision and told him to go to Gaul, and to preach the Gospel there; and this is what Nazarius did. After several years, Nazarius returned to Milan--this time with a disciple, the young man Celsus, whom he had baptized in Gaul. There he found the brothers Gervasius and Protasius still in prison, and he was soon thrown in with them by the governor Anulinus. Christ's martyrs rejoiced because of this reunion brought about by God's providence. Emperor Nero ordered Nazarius slain, and the governor brought Nazarius and Celsus out of prison and beheaded them. Soon after that, General Astazius, passing through Milan en route to battle against the Moravians, beheaded St. Gervasius along with St. Protasius. He had heard that these two brothers would not sacrifice to idols, and fearing that he might lose the battle by losing favor with his false gods, he commanded that they be executed immediately. Gervasius and Protasius were twins, born of the blessed parents Vitalius and Valeria, who were also martyred for the Faith. The relics of St. Nazarius were translated by St. Ambrose from a garden outside the city to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The relics of St. Gervasius and St. Protasius were revealed to him in a miraculous vision.

HYMN OF PRAISE **THE VENERABLE PARASCEVA--SAINT PETKA**

"The Lord desires a pure heart":
Thus says the Gospel.
A pure virgin you remained,
And you gave your pure heart to God--
O most wonderful saint,
Saint Parasceva, our ideal!

The Lord seeks a most pure mind,
Without fancy and without falsehood;
And you presented Him your most pure mind,
Like that of an angel, of the same kind.
O most wonderful saint,
O Saint Parasceva, hearken to our petitions!

The Lord seeks a pure soul,

As a heavenly shrine;
You perfected such a soul,
And now shine in heaven.
O most wonderful saint,
Parasceva, help us!

By your prayers, help us
In the misfortunes of life.
Through the clouds of earthly sorrow
Bring us light, like a rainbow--
O chaste virgin, most wonderful,
Holy Mother Parasceva!

REFLECTION

Examples of how the saints themselves reveal their hidden relics to men justify the honor rendered to the relics of the saints--not to mention the miraculous action of these relics, which doubly justifies them. For a long, long time, no one could locate the grave of St. Parasceva. Then it happened that a sailor died, and his body was carelessly laid in the proximity of the saint's grave. When the body turned into carrion and began to emit an unbearable stench, a monk who lived nearby summoned the peasants to help him bury the corpse. It happened that they buried him in St. Parasceva's own grave. That night, St. Parasceva appeared in a dream to one of those peasants (George by name) who had buried the corpse. She appeared as a beautiful and exquisitely-adorned queen, surrounded by many glorious soldiers. She said: "George, exhume my relics at once, and lay them in another place; for I can no longer endure the stench from that corpse." Then she told him who she was, and where she was from. The same night a local peasant woman named Euphemia had the same dream. The next day, the peasants began to dig and in fact found the relics of St. Parasceva. They were extraordinarily fragrant, and soon proved to be miracle-working.

Concerning the relics of St. Gervasius and St. Protasius, St. Ambrose relates how their relics were discovered in a similar manner. One night, two handsome youths and an old man appeared to Ambrose, who was awake. He thought that the old man was the Apostle Paul. While the young men remained silent, the old man spoke to Ambrose concerning them, saying that they were Christ's martyrs, and that their relics lay in the very place where Ambrose was praying to God at that time. He went on to say that everything else concerning them would be revealed in a book that Ambrose would find in their grave. The following day, Ambrose recounted his vision and began to dig, and found the relics of both men. From the book that he found he learned that their names were Gervasius and Protasius. In the presence of St. Ambrose, a certain blind man named Severus touched these holy relics and immediately received his sight.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous healings worked by the holy apostles (Acts 5):

1. How many signs and miracles were performed through the hands of the apostles;
2. How many of the sick were healed just by the shadow of the Apostle Peter.

HOMILY

on how the angels do battle for the righteous

The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him and delivers them (Psalm 34:7).

The angel of the Lord will do battle for those who fear God. This has been clearly shown many times, as has been recorded; and it has occurred numberless times that have not been recorded. The Archangel Michael took up arms for Joshua, the Son of Nun. An angel did battle for the righteous King Hezekiah and, in one night, destroyed the army of the Chaldeans. How many times have angels visited the Christian apostles and martyrs in prison, strengthened them, and caused them to rejoice? The consolation of the righteous one comes from knowing that God is All-seeing, and sees his misfortune; that God is Omnipotent, and has power to save him from misfortune; that God is All-merciful, and will save him from misfortune. God will send His radiant angel to the aid of the righteous. The righteous one will not have to struggle against his tyrant, for the angel of God will do battle in his place. When God's angel takes up arms, what army dares confront him? What empire will wage war against him? In an earlier Psalm, the Prophet David says: *No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety* (Psalm 33:16-17).

Hence, it does not help at all if the unjust, the worldly, are allies. When God's angel takes up arms--all will burst as a bubble of water. Even when he was king, David remembered how, as a mere shepherd boy, he killed Goliath, a giant who was armed to the teeth, with a slingshot. On many occasions, David sensed the assistance of God's angel. That is why he could with confidence console the oppressed but righteous ones with these words of comfort and strength: the angel of the Lord encamps around all who fear the Lord, and who serve Him, and an angel of God will deliver them.

O my brethren, let us not doubt these words, but carefully consider, on a daily basis, how the angel of God leaves us in sorrow when we sin, and how he hastens to our assistance with joy and unspeakable power when we repent and implore God's mercy.

O Lord God, our Creator, the King of myriads of angels: forgive us, and save us, and protect us by Thy holy angels.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- **Venerable Mother Parasceva the Serb – St. Petka (Wednesday, October 27th) – 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy**
- **19th Sunday after Pentecost; Holy Ap. Evangelist Luke; St Peter I, Metrop. And Wonderworker of Cetinje (Sunday, Oktober 31th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

**Donations Sunday October 17, 2021
Offering - \$1257.00 Candles - \$49.00 Donations - \$50.00**

Building Fund

In Memory of Edward Gartrell –

**Delores Gartrell - \$350, Mary Kelly - \$100, Nick & Emma Saula - \$50,
Joseph Hurtack - \$50, Walter Karshin - \$30, Dan & Diane Tomak - \$25,
Richard & Suzette Gardenhour - \$20, Dan Gjurich - \$20, Non-Members- \$390**

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

**“Family Day” with the Sunday School has been rescheduled to
TODAY, Sunday, October 24, 2021 following Divine Liturgy**

Everyone is welcome

Next Fish Fry –Friday, December 3rd

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2021
DIVINE LITURGY WILL NOT BE SERVED due to the
Diocesan Centennial Celebration at Holy Trinity
Cathedral in Pittsburgh, PA**