

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905
Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic
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Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
(10.22.2023.)

Luke 7:11-16

And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people. (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)**

Believers come to the Divine Liturgy seeking direction, healing of the soul and nourishment from the Lord. The Divine Liturgy offers direct experience with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Gospel unites the believer with Christ and fills the attentive heart, mind and soul. The Precious Body and Blood of Christ circulates through the believer's body and transforms the believer.

The believer with a heart, mind and soul to open to Jesus Christ cherishes each Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy manifests and is proof of Jesus Christ's love for each person.

The Divine Liturgy celebrates Jesus Christ's Resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ is alive in the Divine Liturgy. Open hearts, minds and souls experience Jesus Christ's love and are immeasurably grateful.

The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated His power over death when he restored life to the dead son of the widow of Nain. He demonstrated power over death when He called the dead Lazarus from the tomb. (John 11:43)

Jesus Christ's most convincing power over death was when He was crucified and rose from the dead. The Gospel provides the details of Jesus' arrest, trial, death on the Cross and Resurrection.

Death is not the end for believers. When believers reach situations in life and there appears no satisfying solutions, the Lord Jesus Christ creates solutions leading to great joy.

At times in life job situations may seem to be at a dead end. Faith in Christ will open a new satisfying pathway. Marriages may seem to be at a most difficult point and faith in Jesus Christ will restore and strengthen the marriage bond.

The widow of Nain had reason to mourn and feel her son was gone from earthly life. The funeral procession was underway. Jesus transformed life for the mother, the son and the others present. Jesus brought life and joy to the situation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is ever-present to transform relationships that appear to be at their end. St. John's Gospel makes clear that Jesus offers eternal life. Jesus opens and overcomes barriers that seem to be life-ending

Believers are challenged in faith to find through Jesus Christ the steps to take to experience Divine joy. God's Holy Church and the Divine Liturgy are the best places to search for solutions to life's difficulties.

Eternal life begins with the earthly life in Christ and continues after death. Eternal life is the triumph in Christ over the graves and tombs of earthly life. The Apostle Peter gave the solution centuries ago.

Persons finding themselves in seemingly dead-end situations do well to heed the Apostle Peter's words. Simon Peter said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (Jn.6:68)

A careful search of Jesus' words will lead to the pathways of eternal life. The hunger in the soul motivates serious believers to be immersed in Jesus' words. Jesus' words address the soul's hunger and bring peace.

Reading and carefully considering Jesus Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapters 5-7 is certainly helpful when faced with life's most difficult situations.

The life in Christ is intended to bring peace and joy. The Divine Liturgy offers Christ's peace and love. Jesus Christ's triumph over death is the ultimate demonstration of love and pathway to peace and joy.

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost. The Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 7th Council. October 9/22, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

THE THEOLOGY OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN IS THE NORM OF ORTHODOX

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist John is preeminently called a theologian before the other Apostles by reason of his most obvious confession of God the Word as God, and the heights of his contemplation and depths of his knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the day dedicated to his memory is most appropriate for studying theology, and studying it precisely with him.

Blessed are those who heard his word by mouth in Jerusalem, Cyprus, Ephesus, Patmos, and in the churches of Asia Minor. But we also have the opportunity to join the ranks of his disciples. We have before us his Apostolic epistles. Let us open them and internalize the truths contained in them. We will thus receive an entire course of Christian theology in its essential features. If all the truths contained in the epistles of St. John the Theologian are brought together, then they could be summarized in the following order (come and listen as though you were standing before his own pulpit).

According to his nature and the character imprinted in him, man is intended to be in communion with God. This is his Eternal Life, his life full of joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4). But *God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all* (1 Jn. 1:5). Therefore, in order to be in communion with Him, we must walk in the light, *as He is in the light* (1 Jn. 1:7). He who walks in darkness ceases to have communion with God, and if he says that he has this communion, he *does not the truth* (1 Jn. 1:6).

As long as our forefathers walked in the light of God's will, they were in communion with God; but when they came to love the darkness of their own desires, they fell into sin and ceased to be

in God. And in them we also fell into the same darkness and away from communion with God. This is such an immutable truth that he who does not confess it, who says *that we have not sinned*, makes God Himself a liar, and *His word is not in him* (1 Jn. 1:10). No. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (1 Jn. 1:8).

But in sin there is death and destruction. What does the love of God do? *The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world* (1 Jn. 4:14). *God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him* (1 Jn. 4:9). Behold, God's love for us! We couldn't endure in love, but He never stopped loving us, *and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (1 Jn. 4:10). Now, *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world* (1 Jn. 2:1-2). He appeared *to take away our sins and destroy the works of the devil* (1 Jn. 3:5, 8). In Him is life, and *He was with the Father, and was manifested unto us* (1 Jn. 1:2).

Thus, *God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son* (1 Jn. 5:11). From now on, such is the law of God's righteousness and love, that *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life* (1 Jn. 5:12). For he who has the Son has both the Father and the Spirit (1 Jn. 2:23, 3:24, 4:13)—God is Triune, in Whom is the fount of Life.

Such are the laws of communion with God, and these are its advantage and fruits: Those who dwell in God are called and are *sons of God*, who, as *born of God doth not commit sin* (1 Jn. 3:1, 9, 5:18). For His light abides in them (1 Jn. 2:24), and they always bear the fruit of righteousness according to their nature. If anyone sins, the Blood of the Son of God cleanses him *from all sin* (1 Jn. 1:7). He who confesses his sins is absolved of them, and he is cleansed *from all unrighteousness* (1 Jn. 1:9). Therefore, those who abide in Him, when He appears, will *not be ashamed before Him at His coming*, but will have *boldness before Him in the Day of Judgment* (1 Jn. 2:28, 4:17), for *this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life* (1 Jn. 2:25).

Such is the blessed end of communion with God! Having been vouchsafed this gift, let us make an effort to remain in Him. He who wants to be in unceasing communion with God must *keep His word* (1 Jn. 2:5). Only *he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him* (1 Jn. 3:24). *And His commandments are not grievous* (1 Jn. 5:3). *And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment* (1 Jn. 3:23).

The first commandment: Let us believe in the Son of God. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God* (1 Jn. 4:15). Whoever wants to please God without the Lord Jesus Christ, let him hear the judgment against him—only he who has the Son has the Father. And *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*. So he who rejects that Jesus is the Christ, rejects the Father and the Son. And *He is antichrist* (1 Jn. 2:22-23). Whoever does not believe in the Son, makes a “liar” out of God Himself, *because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son* (1 Jn. 5:10). So, all that you have heard from the beginning—may it abide in you! *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father* (1 Jn. 2:24). For *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son* (2 Jn. 1:9).

The second commandment: Let us love one another. He who abideth in Christ *ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked* (1 Jn. 2:6). And *He laid down His life for us* (1 Jn. 3:16). Thus, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another* (1 Jn. 4:11). *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (1 Jn. 4:16). He deceives himself who says: “I love God, and that’s enough.” No. The commandment is such that he who loves God must also love his brother. *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?* (1 Jn. 4:20).

He also deceives himself who says: “I will love the brethren, and that’s enough.” No. The law is such that only he who loves God truly loves the sons of God (1 Jn. 5:2). *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Therefore, We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ... hath no eternal life abiding in him* (1 Jn. 3:14–15). Thus, brethren, it is only when *we love one another [that] God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us* (1 Jn. 4:12). *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good, knowing that he that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God* (3 Jn. 1:11). *But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word ... but in deed and in truth* (1 Jn. 3:17–18).

Such is the bright, blessed brotherhood of the sons of God. Those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who do not receive His teachings, or receive them but are alien to His spirit in life and disposition of heart, constitute the pernicious world, which *lieth in darkness* (1 Jn. 5:19), which thinks evil, works evil, and teaches others to do evil. Brethren! *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever* (1 Jn. 2:15–17).

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 Jn. 4:1–3). *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ... They went out from us, but they were not of us* (1 Jn. 2:18–19). Whoever comes to you from such and does not bear the true teaching of Christ, receive him not into your house and do not rejoice in him, so as not to become partner to his evil deeds.

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (1 Jn. 4:5–6). That which we have heard with our ears, what we have seen with our eyes ... and our hands have handled, we announce to you *of the Word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life... That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ* (1 Jn. 1:1–3).

And God Himself testified of Him. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. Everyone that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself (1 Jn. 5:9-10). He who stands in the truth knows the truth. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things (1 Jn. 2:20). But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him (1 Jn. 2:27).*

This, brethren, is the entire course of Christian theology, in brief! Having received it as from the mouth of the Apostle himself, let us hold fast to it. Now we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God, and eternal life (1 Jn. 5:20). And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 Jn. 2:28). Amen.*

St. Theophan the Recluse
Translation by Jesse Dominick

Services this Week

- ❖ **Friday 10.27.2023. – Venerable Mother Parasceva the Serb – Sv Petka - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **21st Sunday after Pentecost - 10.29.2023.- Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion - 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

Donations October 15, 2023

Offering - \$ 984.00 Candles - \$173.00 Dues - \$50.00

Donation

Melissa Winburn - \$500

Building Fund

In Memory of Millie Moncilovich from Gloria Cernic- \$15.00
In Memory of George Moncilovich from Gloria Cernic- \$15.00
In Memory of Linda Palmer from Gloria Cernic- \$15.00
In Memory of Irene Martinovich from Gloria Cernic- \$15.00

Large Candles

In Memory of My Wife, Martha Banda from Husband Nick
In Memory of Parents, Andrew & Mildred Banda from son Nick

We are again taking donations
for Large Candles, please visit the candle room.

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.

Anyone interested in running for and/or remaining on the St Nicholas
Church Council for 2024 must submit their name and intent in writing to a
member of the nominating committee (Helene Gleason, Joseph Golden and
Carole McAllister) - You may also leave this information in the Candle Room
to the attention of the Committee. All intentions due no later than Sunday,
November 12, 2023.

KOLO NEWS

The Kolo is having their annual basket party on Sunday, October 29th. Doors
open at noon, drawing begins at 2p. Tickets are \$12. We are accepting
baskets and monetary donations. Please bring anything you wish to donate
to the church AFTER the fish fry on Friday, October 20th. See Kristina or
Rose with any questions or to purchase/reserve your tickets. Only 120
tickets will be sold.

The Kolo is taking orders for our famous PUMPKIN ROLLS! \$12 each. See any
Kolo member. Order forms are in the hall by the coffee pot. Order by
November 5th. Pick up and pay after church November 19th.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BASKET PARTY

Sunday, October 29, 2023

FISH FRY

Friday, December 8, 2023

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 10, 2023

St. Nicholas Slava Celebration!!!

Sunday, December 17, 2023