

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost (11.14.2021)

Luke 8:5-15

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. (KJV)

We are blessed to hear the word of God at each Divine Liturgy. We have the opportunity to read the word of God in the comfort and privacy of our homes. The word of God is proclaimed over the airways and on the internet.

Churches offer classes to teach believers more about the word of God. The hunger in the soul yearns for the nourishment provided by the word of God. Too often the word of God falls on deaf ears and is put aside.

When a believer is baptized and takes up the life in Christ, nourishment to grow in Christ is necessary for the remaining days of life. The present Gospel describes what often happens when the word of God is proclaimed.

At times, the word of God falls by the wayside. At other times, the word of God is received but does not have a lasting effect. When the word of God is taken to heart and applied to daily life with patience, fruit is brought forth in life.

God's Holy Church offers the environment to foster the patience and the value of making the word of God a part of daily life. The Church teaches the value of the word of God in the believer's life.

The saints and martyrs through the centuries bear witness to the value of heeding the word of God and keeping it. These are troubling times in the world and the word of God provides sound direction for the pathways of life.

The word of God provides constant and lasting nourishment for the soul. The word of God provides strength to ward off temptations and inclinations to sin.

Reading the word of God regularly strengthens the believer.

Hearing the word of God can keep the believer's attention away from perilous thoughts. Coming to church and hearing the Epistle and Gospel readings provides very real lessons for daily life.

The word of God is always timely and relevant. Reading the word of God with regularity is an investment in the Kingdom of God. God's Holy Church prescribes the present Gospel to be read each year because it has lasting value.

The word of God teaches believers about life and life everlasting. The word of God condemns sin and fosters and encourages love. Forgiveness and charity are fundamental to the word of God.

Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection are central to the proclamation of the word of God. The path believers are to take up and follow are contained in the word of God.

The value of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are integral to the word of God. The lives of the prophets, the apostles, and martyrs are embedded in the word of God. Miracles and teachings abound in the word of God.

Believers choose the way daily life is to be lived. Believers decide what is to be read, watched and heard. Much time in daily life is wasted. The time of earthly life is limited and never returns.

Taking time to listen carefully to the word of God and study the word of God is always beneficial. Earnestly applying the word of God to daily life takes initiative, effort and commitment.

Conscious decision-making is involved in applying the word of God to daily life. Each person hearing the Gospel in the church has the opportunity to make the Gospel lesson a part of the days of life.

Love of God is manifested when a believer cherishes the word of God. Love of God is demonstrated when the believer earnestly puts the word of God into practice each day.

God's Holy Church is where to best hear the word of God. God's Holy Church is best where to learn about the word of God. God's Holy Church celebrates the word of God.

Each year on Pascha, believers hear the reading from the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John. St. John's Gospel begins in this way: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1)

The Church's Feast of Feasts celebrates the Paschal Divine Liturgy focusing

on the Word as God. When the believer makes the word of God an integral part of life, God is experienced and the believer becomes new in Christ.

The Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian. November 1/14, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid

St Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic

1. THE HIEROMARTYR ACEPSIMAS, BISHOP OF NAESON, AND OTHERS WITH HIM

The eighty-year-old Acepsimas, filled with every Christian virtue, was sitting one day in his home with guests. Just then a child, filled with the Spirit of God, ran up to the aged bishop, kissed him on the head and said: "Blessed is this head, for it will receive suffering for Christ." This prophecy was soon fulfilled. King Sapor raised a bitter persecution of Christians throughout Persia, and St. Acepsimas was apprehended. He was brought before a prince who was also a pagan priest. As the bishop was arrested and bound, a member of his household asked him what should be done with his home if he were martyred. The saint replied: "It is no longer my home. I am going to a home on high and will not return." After prolonged interrogation he was thrown into prison. The following day Joseph, a seventy-year-old presbyter, and Aithalas, a deacon, were also imprisoned. After three years of imprisonment and many tortures, Acepsimas was beheaded. Joseph and Aithalas were buried up to their waists in the ground, and the soulless pagans forced Christians to stone them. That night, by God's providence, Joseph's body disappeared, and a myrtle tree grew over Aithalas's body that healed every kind of disease and pain of men. This tree stood for five years before the wicked and envious pagans cut it down. These soldiers of Christ suffered in Persia in the fourth century, during the time of the pagan King Sapor.

2. THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR GEORGE

On this day we commemorate the translation of the relics of St. George, from Nicomedia, where he suffered at the time of Emperor Diocletian, to the city of Lydda in Palestine. The suffering of this wonderful saint is described on April 23. Anticipating his martyrdom, St. George begged his servant to take his relics to Palestine, where his mother had been born, and where he had distributed his large estate to the poor. The servant did so. During the reign of Emperor Constantine, pious Christians built a beautiful church to St. George in Lydda and, upon the consecration of that church, the relics of the saint were interred there. Innumerable miracles have occurred from these miracle-working relics of St. George, the great-martyr of Christ.

3. THE VENERABLE ELIAS THE EGYPTIAN

Elias labored in asceticism near Antinoe, the principle city of the Thebaid. For seventy years, he lived among the arid and inaccessible rocks of the desert. He ate only bread and dates and, in his youth, fasted for weeks at a time. He healed all manner of pains and ailments of the people. He eventually became very shaky in his old age, and entered into the joy of his Lord at the age of 110. Elias said: "Guard your mind from evil thoughts concerning your neighbors, knowing that the demons put them there, aiming to blind you to your own sins and prevent you from directing yourself toward God."

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR GEORGE

O George the martyr,
O George the victor:
Through suffering, you conquered,
And through death you have been glorified.
You held all things to be of less value
Than truth, O George.
You gave up earthly power and honor,

And stood beside the Living Christ.

O George the martyr,
O George the victor:
Pierced and broken with horrible tortures,
You were sustained by God's hand.
All your pains were as nothing--
By the power of God's mighty hand.
We all bow down before you
And glorify your name.

O Martyr George,
O Victor George:
Have mercy on us now,
By your prayers, protect us
Before the throne of Christ God,
Our Almighty Savior;
And pray that we not fear torture,
And that, by patience, we conquer!

REFLECTION

Among the countless miracles of St. George, this one is recorded: On the island of Mytilene there was a church dedicated to St. George the Great-martyr and Trophy-bearer. All the inhabitants of the island would come to this church on the annual feast of their patron saint. Knowing of this, the Saracens of Crete once attacked this island on its feast day, pillaged the island, and enslaved its inhabitants, taking many of them back to Crete. Among the enslaved was a handsome young man, whom the pirates gave to their prince. The prince made him his servant. The young man's parents were overwhelmed with great sorrow for their son. After a year had passed and St. George's day came again, the grieving parents, following the ancient custom, prepared a table and entertained many guests. Remembering her son, the poor mother went to the icon of the saint, fell to the ground and began to pray that he somehow deliver her son from slavery. The mother then returned to her guests at the table. The host raised a glass and drank a toast to the honor of St. George. Just then their son appeared among them, holding a decanter of wine in his hand. In amazement and fear, they asked him how he had managed to come to them. He replied that as he was about to serve his master wine in Crete, a knight on horseback appeared before him, pulled him up onto the horse and carried him instantly to his parents' home. All were amazed, and glorified God and His wonderful saint, George the Commander and Victory-bearer.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous deliverance of Paul and Silas from prison (Acts 16):

1. How these holy apostles were cast into the inner prison and their feet were placed in stocks;
2. How they were at prayer, praising God at midnight;
3. How the earth quaked, the chains fell off those who were bound, and the doors of the prison were opened.

HOMILY

on Christ as the Head of all the saints

That ... He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth (Ephesians 1:10).

Sin causes panic and confusion. A man drowning in sin and vice is like a chicken with its head cut off which, dying, thrashes about convulsively and rushes to and fro. Before Christ's Incarnation, the whole pagan world was a confused, headless body, dying in convulsions. Christ joined the severed head with the benighted trunk and brought the body of the human race back to life. He is the Head of the heavenly host, and He has always been. And, as the Creating Word of God, He was from the beginning the Head of everything created in the visible world, especially the human race. But sin, like a sword, separated the sinful trunk of Adam from his Head. However, the Lord reconciled heaven and earth in His Incarnation, bringing heaven to earth, and raising earth

to heaven, and establishing all of it under His mind, under His headship. Through Christ we are reconciled with the Holy Trinity and the angels of God, with one another, and with the created nature around us. The lost Head has been found and all has been harmoniously arranged beneath it. The Apostle says: *We have the mind of Christ* (I Corinthians 2:16). As the head is to the physical man, so the mind is to the spiritual inner man. Therefore, if we are Christ's, we must think and judge in all things according to our Head, Jesus Christ, and Him alone. Thinking and judging by Him, we will perceive ourselves as organs of one body that includes other men and the angels: one body, whose Head is Christ. Hence, our love for God is enkindled, and our faith strengthened, and our hope enlightened. Only a sleeping body feels no link with its head. Let us awaken, my brethren, let us awaken while we have time.

O Lord Jesus Christ, our All-wise Head, unite us with Thyself.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

**Dedication of the Church of the Great-martyr George in Lydia (Tuesday, -November 16th)
– Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM**

22nd Sunday after Pentecost – Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and others Bodiless Powers (Sunday, November 21st) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Donations Sunday October 31, 2021

Offering - \$1,347.00 Candles - \$46.00 Parastos - \$25.00 Dues - \$250

Building Fund

In Memory of Linda Locher Lecrone – from Dianne & Dan Tomak - \$25

Sunday School

In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Kathleen McDowell - \$100

Altar Boy Robe Fund

In Memory of Parents, Milos & Milka Tumbas- Kathleen McDowell - \$100

Donations

Rita Merriman - \$50

In Memory of Parents, Milos & Milka Tumbas – Dianna Dunnington - \$100

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Vincent Czubak from Olga Bulich

In Memory of Irene Marinkovich from Olga Bulich

In Memory of Joanne Pavich from Joe & Connie Bartis

In Memory of Zivkovich Family from Janice Fall Urchek

In Memory of Parents Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Robert & Milica Knepp

**IMPORTANT DATES TO PLACE ON YOUR
CALENDAR**

*** TODAY - Sunday, November 14th**

Men's Club Pancake breakfast following Divine Liturgy

* Next Fish Fry –Friday, December 3rd

* Sunday, December 5th -Annual Congregational Meeting – Liturgy will begin at 9:00 AM

* Sunday, December 12th

, - St. Nicholas Slava

Celebration! Blessing of Slavski Kolac with Honored Kumovi Peter & Joanne Todorich followed by Banquet in the Church Hall! Please mark your calendars!

Anyone interested in running for and/or remaining on the St Nicholas Church Council for 2022 must submit their name and intent in writing to a member of the nominating committee (Natalie Ofsanko, Carole McAllister and Joseph Golden) – You may also leave this information in the Candle Room to the attention of the Committee.