

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

(814) 244-4063

The Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost

(11.13.2022.)

Luke 16:19-31

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. *(KJV)*

Believers are blessed to hear the Holy Gospel throughout the year in the Divine Liturgy. The Church exists for believers to live the fulness of life in Christ.

The final goal for all believers is the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

During the course of the Church year, believers are exposed to lessons arising from the lives of Moses and the Holy Prophets. Attentive believers will be nourished by Moses and the Prophets.

The present Gospel makes clear the value of the wisdom in Moses and the Prophets. The wisdom is great and has lasting benefits. Abraham told the suffering rich man that his brothers would benefit from hearing Moses and the Prophets.

Believers each day choose to what they listen to and what they hear, Blessed teachings exist in God's Holy Church. The teachings when taken to heart will nourish the soul and transform the believer.

Guidance for daily life is located in the Holy Scriptures and teachings of the Church. Wise believers invest in reading and studying the Scriptures, the lives of the saints and the teachings of the Church.

The time of life comes only once. Wise use of time will lead a believer to God's Kingdom and eternal life. The rich man in the current Gospel did not make good use of his time or his life.

The rich man ignored poor Lazarus who was suffering nearby. The rich man did not avail himself of the wisdom of Moses and the Prophets. In the end, the rich man suffered eternal torment.

Poor Lazarus was taken into Abraham's bosom. Lazarus was comforted. The rich man could have changed the outcome of his life if he was merciful to Lazarus and shared some of his wealth.

Poor persons are suffering in neighborhoods of every parish. Within every parish, there are families and individuals who could benefit from loving outreach.

Reaching out to help the needy benefits those reaching out and those being helped.

Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Daniel, Micah and the other prophets have lasting lessons to be taken to heart. Believers baptized into Christ benefit when active in learning about the Lord God through the Holy Prophets.

The soul needs nourishment throughout life. Heeding the content and teachings in the Holy Scriptures is an investment in the Kingdom of God. Believers exercise wisdom when actively planning not only for retirement but also for eternity.

The rich man in the current Gospel was consumed by his life in luxury. He did not give thought to where he would spend eternity. Too many people today focus on worldly goods and cares and fail to prepare for live everlasting.

God's Holy Church is where learning takes place about the Kingdom of God and eternal life. God's Church is where the wisdom of Moses and the Holy Prophets is learned.

The lessons of the Resurrected Christ are constantly available in God's Holy Church. The Church teaches the lessons that lead to eternity. Hunger in the soul will motivate the believer to study and benefit from the lessons available.

The rich man in the present Gospel learned too late that he had wasted the time of his life. The Church encourages believers throughout life to prepare for the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

Wise individuals seek to hear the Church's message of the Kingdom of God and the road to eternal life. Life in God's Holy Church calls for continuous action from believers.

Being a passive spectator in the Church and not an active seeker of the Kingdom of God deprives the person of the full life in Christ. Benefit from the current Gospel by becoming active in seeking the Kingdom of God.

Heed the suffering of individuals nearby. Be charitable in loving outreach by offering help. Sacrifice and share to help the needy. Let love abound in the heart, mind and soul.

Be grateful for the presence of God's Holy Church. Give thanks to God for life's lessons. Joy exists and is available in the Church for heeders of the Gospel and seekers of God's Kingdom.

The Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostles: Stachys, Amplias, Urban, Aristobulus and other with them. October 31/November 13, 2022.

Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid *St Nikolai of Zhicha*

1. SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN

Cosmas and Damian were unmercenaries and miracle-workers. They were brothers both in the flesh and in the spirit, born somewhere in Asia Minor of a pagan father and a Christian mother. After their father's death, their mother Theodotia devoted all her time and effort to educating her sons and raising them as true Christians. God helped her, and her sons matured as sweet fruit and luminaries of the world. They were learned in the art of medicine and ministered to the sick without payment, not so much with medicine as by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were called "unmercenary physicians," that is, unpaid physicians, for they healed freely and thus fulfilled the commandment of Christ: *Freely ye have received, freely give* (Matthew 10:8). So careful were they in healing men free of charge that Cosmas became very angry with his brother Damian because he accepted three eggs from a woman, Palladia, and ordered that he not be buried alongside his brother Damian after his death. In fact, St. Damian did not accept these three eggs as a reward for healing the ailing Palladia, but rather because she adjured him in the name of the Most-holy Trinity to accept these three eggs. Nevertheless, after their death in the town of Fereman, they were buried together according to a revelation from God. The holy brothers were great miracle-workers both during their life and after their death. A snake crawled through the mouth and into the stomach of a certain farm laborer during his sleep, and the unfortunate man would have died in the greatest pain had he not, in the last moment, invoked the help of Saints Cosmas and Damian. Thus, the Lord glorified forever the miracle-working of those who glorified Him on earth by their faith, purity and mercy.

2. THE HOLY MARTYR HERMENEGILD THE HEIR

Hermenegild was the son of the Gothic King Leovigild who adhered to the Arian heresy. However, Hermenegild did not turn away from Orthodoxy in spite of all the flatteries and

threats of his cruel heretical father. His father cast him into prison and, early on Pascha, sent a heretical bishop to administer Communion to him. But the God-pleaser refused to receive Communion at the hands of a heretic, and the heretical bishop informed the king about this. The king became angry and ordered the executioner to behead Hermenegild in the year 586 A.D. Leovigild later repented that he had killed his son; he renounced his heresy and returned to Orthodoxy.

3. THE VENERABLE MARTYR JAMES WITH HIS DISCIPLES JAMES AND DIONYSIUS

James was born in the Diocese of Castoria of parents named Martin and Parasceva. Working as a shepherd James became wealthy, and by this incurred the envy of his brother, who maligned him to the Turks as having found some treasure in the ground. James fled to Constantinople where he again became very wealthy. Once, James was the guest of a Turkish Bey. The Turks ate meat and James fasted. Then the Bey said: "Great is your Christian Faith!" And he related how his wife had been mentally ill and how he, after all the physicians and cures had failed, took her to the patriarch for prayers to be read over her. As soon as the patriarch opened the book to read, a heavenly light shone forth in the church. After the completion of the prayer, his wife was made whole. Hearing how the Turk extolled the Christian Faith, James distributed all his goods and went to the Holy Mountain, where he was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of Iveron. He lived a life of asceticism on the Holy Mountain and suffered for the Faith at the hands of the Turks in Jedrene on November 1, 1520 A.D. His miracle-working relics and those of his disciples, James and Dionysius, repose in the Monastery of St. Anastasia in Galakistou near Thessalonica.

HYMN OF PRAISE

SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN

The Church glorifies the miracle-working physicians,
Shining stars that shine with the Lord,
St. Cosmas and St. Damian,
Two Christians, wondrous giants.
Theodotia was the mother of these sons;
She nourished these giants.
The glorious brothers fulfilled the law,
And by their mercy pleased Christ.
They pleased Christ, the Merciful One,
The greatest Unmercenary Physician.
They received the gift, and became physicians;
They received the gift, but did not sell it.
They gave the gifts of God to the poor,

And in the name of Christ healed them.
Time has not covered God's saints with darkness;
Thus it has always been, and thus it is now.
Nor has it covered the wonderworking physicians;
They shine today as they once did,
And help the infirm and the unfortunate
By mighty and willing prayers
Before Christ's heavenly throne.
Honor and glory to the wondrous physicians!

REFLECTION

St. Hilarion of Meglin fought a great battle against the Bogomils. At one time, the leaders of the Bogomils met with Hilarion and began to debate with him about faith. The Bogomils taught that God created the spiritual world and that the devil created the material world. To this, Hilarion replied to them that in Holy Scripture it is written: *For God is the King of all the earth* (Psalm 47:7) and also: *The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness* (Psalm 24:1). The Bogomils claimed that the Old Testament is of the devil. To them, the saint replied: "If the Old Testament indeed proceeded from the devil would Christ have said, *Search the Scriptures ... and they are they which testify of Me* (John 5:39), and would He have acknowledged as the greatest commandments those about love toward God and one's neighbor which, at one time, were given through Moses?" The Bogomils also claimed that the body of Christ was brought from heaven. To this, St. Hilarion replied to them that had it been so, then the body of Christ would have felt neither hunger nor thirst, nor weariness nor suffering, nor would it have been susceptible to death. The Bogomils then expressed their disapproval of the sign of the Cross which Orthodox Christians use. The saint replied to them: "And what will you do when the sign of the Son of Man, His Cross, appears in the heavens, and when all nations of the earth who do not believe in the Cross will weep?" And he also said to them: "How is it that you say that all evil is from evil material, and meanwhile you do not reverence that Wood by which the whole material world was sanctified?"

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous power of the apostles' words (Acts 16):

1. How Paul and Silas spoke to the assembled women alongside the water at Philippi;
2. How the Lord opened the heart of the woman Lydia, and she and her household were baptized.

HOMILY

on the call to all Christians to become saints

To the saints which are at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1).

The Apostle calls the Christians in Ephesus saints. He does not call one or two of them saints, nor one group of them, but all of them. Is this not a wondrous miracle of God for people, not in

the wilderness but in a city--and an idolatrous and corrupt city--to become saints? That married men who sire children, who trade and work, become saints! Indeed, such were the first Christians. Their dedication, fidelity and zeal in the Faith as well as their holiness and purity of life, completely justified their being called saints. If in latter times saints have become the exception, in those earlier times the unholy were the exception. Saints were the rule. Therefore, we must not wonder that the Apostle calls all baptized souls in Ephesus "saints" and that he has an even loftier name for all Christians, i.e., "sons," the sons of God (Galatians 4:6). Christ the Lord Himself gave us the right to call ourselves such when He taught us to address God as *Our Father* (Matthew 6:9).

O my brethren, do we not say to God every day: "Holy God?" Do we not call the angels holy? Do we not call the Mother of God holy? And the prophets, apostles, martyrs and the righteous? Do we not call heaven holy and the Kingdom of Heaven holy? Who then is able to enter into the holy Kingdom but the saints? Therefore, if we have hope for salvation, we also have hope for holiness.

O Holy God, Who dwellest in the holy place and resteth among the saints and callest the holy to Thyself and showest mercy to them, help us also that we may become holy--in words, in thoughts and in deeds--to Thy glory and our salvation.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ *Monday – 11.14. '22. – Holy Wonderworker and Unmercenaries
Cosmas and Damian – 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *Wednesday – 11.16. '22 – Dedication of the Church of the Great-
martyr George in Lydia – 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ **Friday – 11.18. '22 – PARACLESIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION
TO SAINT NECTARIOS -05:00 PM – Confession**
- ❖ *The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost – November 20th – 10:00 AM
Divine Liturgy*

Donations November 6, 2022

Offering - \$ 1,398.00

Candles - \$62.00

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Dan & Dyne Tomak
In Memory of Steve & Stella Baich from Kathy & Gerry Szymd
In Memory of Connie Bartis from Rick Kondas
In Memory of Father, Mike Tumbas from Milica Knepp
In Memory of Linda Zedlar Griffiths from Milica Knepp
In Memory of Christine and Charles from Olga Bulich

NEXT FISH FRY

FRIDAY DECEMBER 9, 2022

Please see Donna Zimmerman or Suzette if you can help!

NUT ROLLS

FOR SALE - \$10

Anyone interested in running for and/or remaining on the St Nicholas Church Council for 2023 must submit their name and intent in writing to a member of the nominating committee

(Carole McAllister, Joseph Golden and Helene Gleason) You may also leave this information in the Candle Room to the attention of the Committee.

MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!!!!

<https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>

Thanks Brady (Malichi) Doyle for the Great update!