

**Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church**  
*971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905*  
Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic  
**(814) 244-4063**

**The Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**(12.08.2024.)**

**Luke 8:41-56**

And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchd. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done. **(KJV)**

**Apodasis of the Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple**

**Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28**

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. **(KJV)**

We gather today in God's Holy Church on the Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. This is the time to consider the condition of our souls and seek nourishment from the Lord God.

Today also is the Leave-taking of the Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple. The celebration of the Feast concludes today. Lessons from the Feast of the Mother of God continue throughout life.

Both Gospels for today offer nourishment for the soul. Both Gospels provide wisdom for renewal of the life in Jesus Christ. Attentive believers take the Gospel messages to heart and make them a part of daily life.

The Gospel for the Twenty Fourth Sunday is clear on expressing the value of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jairus' faith in turning to Jesus Christ for the healing of his daughter was well-placed.

The woman with the issue of blood for twelve years was healed immediately when she reached out to Jesus in faith. Skeptics exist in today's world about the ability of Jesus Christ to heal. Skeptics have always existed.

Believers may have doubts deep within the recesses of their hearts and minds about Jesus' power to heal. The Gospel for the Twenty Fourth Sunday is clear and convincing. The Gospel for today has endured through the centuries.

Healing by Jesus Christ is determined by Christ and the power of Christ. Jesus determines the appropriate healing for each person turning to Him in faith. Believers have the responsibility to understand Jesus' response to their desires.

Trusting in the ultimate wisdom of Jesus is the believer's responsibility. Initially it looked as if Jairus' daughter was dead and would remain dead. Jesus transformed the daughter's death into new life for her.

Jesus offers new life for each person dying in sin and seeking renewal in Christ.

The Nativity Fast is an opportunity to seek renewal in Christ. The Mother of God offers a permanent inspiring example of a life lived in purity.

The Gospel for the Leave-taking of the Feast of the Entry affirms the value of heeding the word of God and keeping it. This same Gospel message is common to all the feasts of the Mother of God. The same lesson is for all of life.

Every day is a challenge in life. Believers face trials and temptations capable of corrupting the soul. The Lord God is ever-present to provide hope and the path to the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

Today's Gospel readings and the readings for each day offer nourishment and guidance. Serious believers heed the daily Scriptures readings and seek to live by them.

Jesus Christ did not disappoint Jairus. Jesus did not disappoint the woman with the issue of blood reaching out in faith. Jesus will never disappoint individuals turning to him in complete faith.

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**The Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. The Apodasis of the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos in the Temple. Holy Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome. November 25/December 9, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic**

## **THE MORNING STAR WHO HERALDS THE SUN A Homily for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos Into the Temple**



We are now celebrating the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos Into the Temple, which the Church calls the good favor of God by the transfiguration and preaching of human salvation. As the appearance of the [morning](#)

[star](#) indicates the imminent appearance of the sun, so the Most Holy Virgin—the God-chosen Maiden, by her entrance into the Temple, heralds Christ to all, thereby loudly crying out to all: Behold, the promised and awaited Deliverer of all—the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God is nigh!

Night preceded this benevolent dispensation of God, and the people sat in darkness and shadow. Only in the nation of Israel did prophetic promises scatter this darkness a little, appearing at times on their spiritual horizon, like stars illuminating the nighttime darkness. These promises began already in Paradise, immediately after the fall, and they've been repeated with greater frequency ever since, identifying more and more the power of the expected deliverance of God and more clearly identifying the coming of the King, Prophet, and Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, with all the circumstances of His appearance, His miracle working, His teaching, His death, His Resurrection, and His Ascension into Heaven and session at the right hand of the [God the Father](#). It was like the Milky Way in the night of the Old Testament canopy. Before the appearance of the Lord, the prophecies ceased, as the stars disappear before the dawn. And as only the morning star remains here in the end, shining and foreshadowing and portending the imminent appearance of the sun, so there shone the Most Pure Maiden, born and borne into the Temple, who foretold of Christ.

Then the Sun of Righteousness itself appeared, dispersing the darkness and enlightening all. Now Christ the Lord Himself shines a full light on the Christian world and enlightens every man who comes into the world. Glory to Thee, Who hast shown us the light! The holy Prophet Isaiah foresaw this blessedness of ours and, comforting Israel, foretold: *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem* (Is. 2:2-3). This mountain is the Church of Christ. All nations have gathered and are still gathering in it. They were and are drawn by their thirst for spiritual light. Entering the Church, they satisfy this thirst, finding in the Christian law everything the soul can seek and desire. Among others, we Russians came and accepted the law of Christ and have followed it. Now we walk in the light of the face of God and rejoice in His name!

Glory to Thee, O Lord! As you know, the faith of Christ, which is the light of Christ, now reigns over us. Everywhere there are churches of God, everywhere the services are held freely and the preaching of the word of God is heard. The light shines. But has each of us in particular received this light and been enlightened by it? As at midday, a man sees nothing if he closes his eyes or goes into a dark place, so amidst the broad daylight of Christ shining above us, it may happen that some abide in darkness and walk in darkness. Let us be careful, brethren, that we not fall into their ranks!

The holy Apostle Peter wrote to the Jews: *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts* (2 Pt. 1:19). This is what he says about the prophetic light, assuring the Jews that it existed, now as a light in the darkness, now as the dawn, now as fullness of day. But what the prophetic light was for the Jews, so the light of Christ, or the teachings of Christ, is for us. It's also a lamp in the darkness for us, the sunrise, the full light of day. These are the inevitable indications when entering into the light of Christ! And he who has yet to experience them on his way has yet to see the light of Christ.

For the Apostle Peter, the starting point for movement towards the light is the vision of light: *Ye take heed*. Those who are surrounded by darkness will notice the light, will follow its indications and come first to such a light that can be compared with the dawn, or a sunrise, and then to a light that's likened to broad daylight. Let's clarify this comparison.

The sinner who labors according to his [passions](#) and neglects his salvation is in darkness, in a dark place. But if he hears a word, or reads something, or sees something, or the circumstances of his life arrange themselves so that he comes to himself, comes to his senses, and begins to concern himself with the danger of his situation and the need to amend himself, then this thought is, like a lamp in a dark place, lit in his soul. The more he hearkens to it, the more the light shines and the more forcefully the need, the demand, and the desire to amend himself

flares up within him. Unless some form of distraction comes, this work of attention to the light of grace shining in his heart, calling him to correction, ends with a firm determination to leave the sin of passion, negligence, and all evil deeds, and begin to live properly according to the law of Christ. This time from the first thought of correction to the final determination to correct oneself is a period of repentance, the first step into the realm of the light of Christ, quite like how someone walks towards a light seen somewhere in the darkness.

Then the penitent begins to live properly, as he wanted, as he resolved to do, making a vow in spirit. He wants to do good, but the old habits, inclinations, and passions rise up and attempt to divert him from the good. Not wanting to submit to them, he fights with them, and it's only through this struggle that he manages to do good. It's so inevitable that no matter what good deed a man has conceived, he immediately meets resistance either within himself or from without, and he must by all means fight to stand firm in the good. It's difficult, of course, but it's comforting that the more a man stands in this struggle and fights more resolutely, the easier this struggle becomes. The passions weaken, and the good dispositions take precedence. Finally, the latter are so intensified that the former are nearly imperceptible. Holy feelings and dispositions are so deeply embedded in the heart that they as if become his natural state, and then man exercises the virtues as freely as he breathes.

This period from repentance to the purification of the heart, the period of battling with the passions and lusts is that which the Apostle calls the dawn, or sunrise: *Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*. The passions are like a fog. As in nature, the longer the sun stands on the horizon, the less fog there is, until finally the sun appears in all its beauty, so with us, the more we hold on through the battle with the passions before the Sun—Christ, the more the fog of the passions thins out, until finally it completely disappears and Christ the Lord—the full and pure Sun—shines in the soul.

From this time begins a blessed state of purity, in which God is contemplated, as the Lord says: *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God* (Mt. 5:8). God shines in the pure heart, as the sun in pure water or a clean mirror; as the heart is rational, it contemplates the God shining in it, and as God is blessedness, then it is blessed in Him. “He who has been granted such a state while still in the flesh,” says St. John Climacus, “always has God dwelling within him as his Guide in all his words, deeds and thoughts” (*Ladder* 29.11); for he no longer lives for himself, but Christ lives in him (cf. Gal. 2:20).

Thus, repentance, the battle with the passions and the acquisition of purity of heart—these are the three turns in the movement towards the light of Christ! Everyone look at yourself now and determine where you are. If you're on this path, glory to God; and if not, you must think about yourself and be afraid for yourself. You haven't yet seen the light of Christ, you're still walking in darkness, you're wandering on the paths of destruction and hastening to the bottom of hell. May the Lord deliver you all from this! And if any are truly entangled in the passions and overcome by carelessness, force yourself to arise from the snares in which devil has caught you alive and in which he firmly holds your mind and your heart, preventing the light of the glory of Christ from shining there (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4).

God, Who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, bring us all out of the darkness of sin into His wonderful light (1 Pt. 2:9). And may there shine in our hearts the light of the comprehension of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! And the morning star of the Sun is the Most Immaculate Virgin, who heralded Christ by bringing her morning light into the Temple. May she enlighten us who faithfully confess her to be the Theotokos! Amen.

*This homily was delivered on November 21, 1863.*

*St. Theophan the Recluse*

## Services this Week

- **Monday (12.09.2024.)**
  - Venerable Father Alypius the Stylite
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM.*
- **Friday (12.13.2024.)**
  - Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called (*After the Holy Liturgy, all those who wish may go to confession*)
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM.*
- **25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (12.15.2024.)**
  - Holy Prophet Habbakuk; St Urosh, King of Serbia; Ven. Joannicius of Decich
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 AM.*

**Donations December 1, 2024**

Offering – \$905.00      Candles – \$30.00  
Dues – \$100.00

**Large Candles**

IMO Grandparents Amelia & Pete Matovich from Richard Kondas  
For the Health of Joanne Todorich from Pete Todorich  
IMO Shawn Novatny from Dan & Diane Tomak  
IMO Lazo & Bosa Vuckovich from Helene Gleason  
IMO Parents Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Milica Tumbas  
IMO Bonnie Niemann from the Malich Family

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 **Please see attached form for Poinsette order!**   
**Due, to Suzette (or the candle room) Today, Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – SUNDAY,  
DECEMBER 8, 2024 – LITURGY BEGINS AT 9:30 AM**

**St. Nicholas Slava Celebration!!!**

Sunday, December 15, 2024

**\* Christmas Eve – Monday, January 6, 2025**

**\* Christmas – Tuesday, January 7, 2025**

**Fish Fry**

Friday, February 7, 2025

**\* Lenten Fish Fries**

Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday April 11, 2025



# POINSETTIAS

Provided by SEADS Garden Center

No.	Size	Price	Total \$
	5"	\$7	
	6.5"	\$13	
	8.5"	\$21	
	10.5"	\$25	
		Total =	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, December 8th.  
If you are out of town – payment and completed form can be mailed to:

St. Nicholas Church  
% Suzette Gardenhour  
1001 St. Clair Road  
Johnstown PA 15905

Or contact Suzette at 814-421-1276 or shliva16@gmail.com