

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

(814) 244-4063

stnicholasjtown@gmail.com

The Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (12.05.2021)

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 stanch'd. 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)

The present Gospel verifies the Lord Jesus Christ's ability to heal longstanding ailments and to restore life to the dead. God's Holy Church prescribes this Gospel to validate the hope in believers and to encourage faith and patience.

The woman with the issue of blood for twelve years had her hope and strong faith validated when she touched Jesus and was healed. Believers of every generation with long standing conditions find hope in this Gospel reading.

Jairus and his wife learned of Jesus' power over death when their daughter was restored to life. Believers always can turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in hope when death affects a loved one.

Holy Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: " But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." (IThess.4:13)

The Orthodox Funeral service is a service of hope in the Resurrection. Every Sunday in God's Holy Church is a celebration of Jesus Christ's Resurrection. The Gospel reading for today makes clear Jesus' power over death.

Moments of gloom and negativity arise in the world with regularity. The present Gospel is a Gospel of hope overcoming despair. Believers with illnesses and struggling with the death of a loved one have reason always to hope.

When circumstances arise in life that are challenging, the Lord Jesus Christ brings light to the darkest moments of life. The Lord Jesus Christ lifts believers from despair and depression to hope and internal peace.

The woman with the long-standing issue of blood acted on her hope and faith. She reached out to Jesus and she was healed. Persons of every generation are able to learn from this woman to reach out to Jesus in strong faith and hope.

Jairus turned to Jesus and besought Jesus to heal his daughter who was dying. Jairus hope in Jesus was not in vain. Even after the report of the daughter's death, Jairus had reason to hope and found joy in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ brings joy in the most difficult circumstances of life for those turning to Christ in faith and hope. Jesus Christ does not disappoint believers dealing with difficult illnesses and even death.

Jesus Christ brings peace and order to life. Jesus Christ brings newness to life out of the darkest moments of life. The present Gospel is a lesson for believers to always keep in mind.

Hope and faith in Christ always have a place in life. During this time of the Nativity Fast, believers have the opportunity to strengthen personal faith and hope.

The Holy Gospel is filled with lessons of hope in Christ.

Nourishment for the soul rests in the Holy Gospel. The Divine services of the Church keep serious believers' hope and faith strong. The Lord Jesus Christ did not disappoint the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus.

During this time leading to the Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, the Nativity Fast is an opportunity for believers to strengthen personal faith and hope in Jesus Christ.

Being attentive in the Church's Divine services, reading the Holy Scriptures, fasting and prayer prepare a believer for the difficulties arising in life. Honoring the Nativity Fast is a most beneficial investment.

Strength to deal with the difficulties in life comes best from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus taught the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus the value of continuing to have hope and strong faith.

The present Gospel verifies that Jesus is stronger and dominant over longstanding illness and death. Order and hope for life are revealed in the present Gospel.

The present Gospel enables believers to have a positive outlook in life at all times. Joy in life is always present in Jesus Christ. The Holy Gospel is a constant message of faith and hope at all times and in all places.

The Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostles Philemon, Apphia and Archippu; Holy Marty Cecilia. November 22/December 5, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid
St Nikolai Velimirovic of Zhicha and all Orthodoxy

1. THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR CATHERINE

Catherine was the daughter of King Constus. After the death of her father, she lived with her mother in Alexandria. Her mother was secretly a Christian who, through her spiritual father, brought Catherine to the Christian Faith. In a vision, St. Catherine received a ring from the Lord Jesus Himself as a sign of her betrothal to Him. This ring remains on her finger even today. Catherine was greatly gifted by God and was well educated in Greek philosophy, medicine, rhetoric and logic. In addition to that, she was of unusual physical beauty. When the iniquitous Emperor Maxentius offered sacrifices to the idols and ordered others to do the same, Catherine boldly confronted the emperor and denounced his idolatrous errors. The emperor, seeing that she was greater than he in wisdom and knowledge, summoned fifty of his wisest men to debate with her on matters of faith and to put her to shame. Catherine outwitted and shamed them. In a rage, the emperor ordered all fifty of those men burned. By St. Catherine's prayers, all fifty confessed the name of Christ and declared themselves Christians before their execution. After Catherine had been put in prison, she converted the emperor's commander, Porphyrius, and two hundred soldiers to the true Faith, as well as Empress Augusta-Vasilissa herself. They all suffered for Christ. During the torture of St. Catherine, an angel of God came to her and destroyed the wheel on which the holy virgin was being tortured. Afterward, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared to her and comforted her. After many tortures, Catherine was beheaded at the age of eighteen, on November 24, 310 A.D. Milk, instead of blood, flowed from her body. Her miracle-working relics repose on Mount Sinai.

2. THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR MERCURIUS

When Emperor Decius once waged war against the barbarians, there was in his army the commander of an Armenian regiment called the Martenesians. This commander was named Mercurius. In battle, an angel of the Lord appeared to Mercurius, placed a sword in his hand, and assured him of victory over his enemies. Indeed, Mercurius displayed wonderful courage, mowing down the enemy like grass. Following this glorious victory Emperor Decius made him chief commander of his army, but envious men reported Mercurius to the emperor for being a Christian, a fact which he did not hide but openly acknowledged before the emperor. Mercurius was tortured harshly and at length; he was cut into strips with knives and burned with fire. An angel of God appeared to him in prison and healed him. Finally, the emperor proclaimed that General Mercurius be beheaded in Cappadocia. When they beheaded him, his body became as white as snow and emitted a most wonderful incense-like fragrance. His miracle-working relics healed many of the sick. This most wonderful soldier of Christ suffered for the Faith sometime between the years 251 and 259 A.D. and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of his King and God.

3. THE HOLY VIRGIN MASTRIDIA

Mastridia lived in Alexandria and led a solitary life of prayer and handiwork. A young man, burning with bodily passion toward her, constantly harassed her. Not wanting to sin before God, and since she could not easily be rid of this unrestrained youth, St. Mastridia once asked him what attracted him most to her. He replied: "Your eyes!" Mastridia then took the needle with which she was sewing and put out her eyes. Thus, Mastridia preserved her peace and the young man's soul. The young man repented deeply, and became a monk.^{*)}

^{*)} This Mastridia apparently is not the same as the one who is commemorated on February 7. That Mastridia was from Jerusalem, while this one is from Alexandria. The former fled from scandal to the wilderness, while the latter put out her eyes.

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR CATHERINE

The wise Catherine, an earthly princess,
Became a martyr for Christ the Savior.
Foolish Maxentius offered her life:
If she would consent to become his wife!
The holy Catherine, pure as gold,
Replied to the emperor thus:
"My betrothed is the Risen Christ,
And I desire not the love of a corrupt man.
You seek my body: the rotten seeks corruption,
Even as the incorrupt spirit seeks immortality.
The physical covering must wither away,
The true man takes care for his immortal soul.
Do what you wish, and torture me--
Burn me in the fire, turn me on a wheel;
I cannot renounce my own soul,
Nor worship any but Christ as God.
Remember, O Emperor, soon you will die,
And worms will erupt from your corpse--
Worms will glorify you, worms will eat you,
A curse will accompany you, and a curse will meet you:
For you dare wage war against Christ, Who is mightier than death.
You stand under the Rock, and He will crush you."
Holy Catherine, Christ's virgin,
You despised the throne for eternal truth's sake;
And thus now reign in the Kingdom without end,
And sing with the angels, in the midst of sweet Paradise.

REFLECTION

A tale of Elder Barlaam to Iosaph: The citizens in a certain town had a custom of choosing as king a stranger who did not know their laws and customs. After they had crowned him king, they clothed him in beautiful robes, fed him abundantly and surrounded him with every luxury. However, as soon as one year had elapsed, they deposed their king, stripped him of all his goods and his clothes, and drove him completely naked to a distant island, where he had neither bread nor roof nor companions, and where he would die in misery and humiliation. The citizens of this town would then choose another king, also a stranger and also for one year; then a third, then a fourth, then a fifth and so forth. But it once happened that they chose a very wise and cautious man. He learned from his servants what had happened to the kings of this town after their year. Therefore, over the course of the whole year he zealously gathered food and goods and daily sent them to that island. When the year had run out and when he was stripped of his clothing and cast onto the island, he found himself amidst an enormous quantity of food, silver, gold and precious stones, and continued to live there even better than he lived as king in that town. The interpretation is this: The town represents the world; the citizens represent the evil spirits; the kings are men, either foolish or wise. The foolish men think only of the pleasures of this life, as if it were eternal; but in the end, death cuts everything off and they, naked of all good works, go to hell. The wise, however, perform many good works, and send these good works ahead of them to the other world. At their repose, the wise kings--the good men--depart to that world where their accumulated riches await them, and where they reign in greater eternal glory and beauty than they reigned here on earth.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2):

1. How God brought all animals, birds and beasts before Adam, to see how he would name them;
2. How Adam gave a name to every animal and every bird and every beast.

HOMILY

on Him Who descended and ascended

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things (Ephesians 4:10).

In His love for man, the Lord Jesus Christ lowered Himself so low that He could go no lower; and then raised Himself so high that, in truth, He could go no higher. He descended *into the lower parts of the earth* (Ephesians 4:9): into hades itself, where He freed the forefathers, prophets and righteous ones, and led them into the Kingdom of Heaven. Completing His work both on earth and in hades, He ascended *far above all heavens*. The same One Who ascended is the very same One Who descended without any change, except that He descended without a body, and ascended with a body. Therefore, there are not both a Son of God and a Son of Man as heretics have said, but Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of Man--one and the same Person--one and the same God-man, our Savior Jesus Christ. As He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, so He is the same in the depths and in the heights: on earth, in hades, and in the heavens. He abased Himself lower than all men, and raised Himself above all the angelic powers, to show by example the truthfulness of His words: *And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted* (Matthew 23:12). If we are not humbled by virtues, then sin will humble us. Virtue leads to voluntary and temporary abasement, but sin leads to irreversible and eternal abasement.

O Lord Jesus, Who fills all by Thy power, fill us with the spirit of true humility.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

**-Holy Great-martyr Catherine of Aleksandria (Tuesday, December 07th) – 09:00 AM
Divine Liturgy**

**-Holy Hieromart. Clement, Popoe of Rome (Wednesday, -December 08th) – Divine Liturgy
09:00 AM**

**-Venerable Father Alypius the Stylite (Thursday, -December 09th) – Divine Liturgy 09:00
AM**

25th Sunday after Pentecost (Sunday, December 12th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Donations Sunday November 28, 2021

Offering - \$1,130.00 Candles - \$55.00 Pomen - \$70 Dues - \$350

Donations

In Memory of Bill Stevens from Frank Palmer - \$100

In Memory of Milos & Milka Tumbas from 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, December 5th -Annual Congregational Meeting – Liturgy will begin at 9:00**

*** 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!****

Tickets may be purchased in the Lobby Area

HOLIDAY ROLLS

The kolo is selling Nut, Poppysed, Apricot and Lekvar - \$12/each

Please see Donna Zimmerman to place your order or call her at (724) 757-4189

We will be preparing and baking the rolls on Tuesday, December 14th beginning at 9:00 AM – ALL HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!



POINSETTIAS

Please contact Suzette Gardenhour if you are interested in purchasing a Poinsettia to decorate the Iconostas for Christmas. We will be supporting SEADS Garden Center.(SEADS Garden Center is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide Sustainable Employment for Adults with Disabilities – located at the former Flower Barn) Last day to place your order is Sunday, December 12th.

Red - 6 1/2 Inch Pot - \$10.50

Checks made payable to St Nicholas Serbian Orthodox



Name _____

Quantity _____ Total Due _____

In Memory Of _____
