

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost-The Nativity Fast (12.12.2021)

Ephesians 4:1-7

BRETHREN, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

The Gospel According to Luke 10:25-37

At that time, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Please pray for our father Rodney! May the Lord grant him a speedy recovery and strength, that he may always send us his beautiful sermons.

Commentary on the Gospel of Luke Sermon 68

By St. Cyril of Alexandria

2/5 Luke 10:25-37 And see, a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And He said to Him, What is written in the law? how do you read? And he answered and said, That you shall love the Lord your God from all your heart, and from all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind: and your neighbour as yourself. And He said to him, You have answered rightly: this do, and you shall live. But he, wanting to justify himself said to Jesus; And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answered, and said; A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who, when they had stripped and beaten him, went away, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed him by. And in like manner also a Levite, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed him by. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to him; and when he saw him, he felt pity: and he went to him, and bound up his wounds, and poured upon them oil and wine. And having mounted him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the day after he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, Take care of him: and if you spend any thing more, when I come again I will repay you. Which therefore of these three do you think was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said; He that was merciful to him. And Jesus said to him, Go, and do likewise. A most base pest, my beloved, is double-dealing and hypocrisy in our actions and conduct; and for a man to make pretence of pleasant-spoken words, and of a tongue anointed, so to speak, with the honey of deception, while the heart is full of utter bitterness. Of such we say, in the words of one of the holy prophets, "Their tongue is a piercing arrow: the words of their mouth are deceitful: he speaks peacefully to his neighbor, and enmity is in his heart." And again; "Their words are smoother than oil, yet are they arrows:" by which is meant that they have the force of darts falling violently and shot forth from bows. The proof of my assertion is close at hand: for let us examine the lawyer's words: let us strip off his borrowed countenance: let us lay bare his scheming: let us view his pleasant words sprung from deceit, and the guile which they conceal. "For see," it says, "a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" By a lawyer, the blessed evangelist here meant, according to the custom of the Jews, one acquainted with the law, or at least having the reputation of knowing it, though in reality he knew it not. This man imagined that he could entrap Christ; and in what way I will mention. Certain tale-makers, accustomed to talk at random, went about everywhere in Judaea and Jerusalem itself, accusing Christ, and saying, that He taught that the commandment given by Moses was of no use, and refused to pay any attention to the law given of old to the fathers, while He Himself introduced new doctrines, and spoke to all who would fear God things out of His own mind, which were not in accordance with the law that was given of old. There were even then believers, who resisted the words of these men, everywhere accepting the saving tidings of the gospel. The lawyer therefore wishing, or even expecting to be able to 3/5 entrap Christ, and get Him to say something against Moses, and affirm that His own doctrine was far better than the commandment of which Moses was the minister, drew near tempting Him, and saying, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" But any one who thoroughly understands the mystery of the Incarnation may well say to him, If you had been skillful in the law, and in the meaning of its hidden teaching, it would not have escaped you Who He is you venture to tempt. For you thought that He was a mere man, and that only; and not rather God, Who appeared in human likeness, and Who knows what is secret, and can look into the hearts of those who approach Him. In manifold ways is the Emmanuel depicted to you by the shadowing of Moses. You saw Him there sacrificed as a lamb, yet vanquishing the destroyer, and abolishing death by His blood. You saw Him in the arrangement of the ark, in which was deposited the divine law: for He was in His holy flesh like as in an ark, being the Word of the Father, the Son that was fathered of Him by nature. You saw Him as the mercy-seat in the holy tabernacle, around which stood the Seraphim [Cherubim]: for He is our mercy-seat for pardon of our sins. Yes! and just like man, He is glorified by the Seraphim, who are the intelligent and holy powers above; for they stand around His divine and exalted throne. You saw Him as the candlestick with seven lamps in the Holy of Holies: for abundant is the Savior's light to those

who hurry into the inner tabernacle. You saw Him as the bread placed upon the table: for He is the living bread, that came down from heaven, and gives life to the world. You saw Him as the brazen serpent that was raised on high as a sign, and being looked upon healed the bites of the serpents: for though He was like us, in the form therefore of that which is evil, as being in our form, nevertheless He is by nature good, and continues to be that which He was. For the serpent is the type of wickedness; but yet, by being lifted up, and enduring the cross for us, He rendered powerless the bites of those rational serpents, who are no other than Satan, and the wicked powers under his command. But though the lawyer was invested with the reputation of being instructed in the law, nevertheless He Who is marked out by the shadowing of the law was completely unknown to him, even though He was proclaimed of old by the words of the holy prophets. For had he not been sunk in utter ignorance, how could he have drawn near to Him as to a mere man? Or how have ventured to tempt God, Who tries the hearts and reins, and to Whom nothing that is in us is hidden? For he says, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Do you call Him Teacher, when you wilt not submit to learn? Do you make a pretense of honoring Him, Whom you hope to entrap, and do you place as the bait upon your hook the pleasantness of words? But what would you learn? "For what, he says, shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Observe again, I pray, the malice in the lawyer's words. For he might have said, What shall I do to be saved, or to please God, and receive reward of Him? But this he passes by, and uses rather the Savior's expressions, pouring ridicule upon His head. For as it was the custom of our 4/5 common Savior Christ to speak constantly of eternal life to as many as drew near to Him, the haughty lawyer to ridicule Him, as I said, makes use of His own expressions. Now had you been truly desirous of learning, you would have heard from Him the things that lead on to eternal life: but as you wickedly tempt Him, you will hear nothing more than those commands only which were given to them of old time by Moses". For "What," says He, "is written in the law? How do you read?" And on the lawyer's repeating what is enacted in the law, as if to punish his wickedness, and reprove his malicious purpose, Christ, as knowing all things, says, "You have answered rightly: this do, and you shall live." The lawyer has missed his prey; he has shot wide of the mark, his wickedness is unsuccessful, the sting of envy has ceased, the net of deceit is torn asunder, his sowing bears no fruit, his toil gains no profit: and like some ship that misfortune has overwhelmed, he has suffered a bitter wreck. Let us therefore cry out against him in the words of Jeremiah, "You are found, and caught, because you have stood up against the Lord." But having, as I said, missed his prey, he falls headlong into vanity; he is hurried from one pitfall to another, from snare to snare, from deceit to pride: vices, so to speak, lend him to one another, and he is tossed about everywhere, one wickedness as soon as it has seized him thrusting him on to another, and carrying him wherever it may chance, and easily making him wander from destruction to destruction. For he does not ask in order that he may learn, but as the Evangelist said, "wishing to justify himself." For observe how from self-love as well as pride he shamelessly called out, "And who is my neighbor?" And is there no one, O lawyer, like you? Do you raise yourself above every one? Be less supercilious: Remember what the author of the book of Proverbs says, "that those who know themselves are wise." He exalts himself therefore, and breathes forth proud things, and boasts himself in vain imaginations: but he learnt of Christ, that as he was destitute of love towards his neighbors, the bare profession only of being learned in the law profited him in no way whatsoever. For God over all looks at works rather, and gives not praise to bare and merely fictitious professions. Very skillfully therefore does the Savior of all weave the parable of him who fell into the hands of thieves, saying, that when he was lying half dead, and in the last extremity of evil, a priest passed by, and in like manner a Levite, without feeling towards him any sentiment of humanity, or dropping upon him the oil of compassionate love; but rather, their mind was unsympathizing and cruel towards him. But one of another race, a Samaritan, fulfilled the law of love. Justly therefore He asked, which of these three he thinks was the sufferer's neighbor. And he said, "He that wrought mercy with him." And to this Christ added, "Go you also, and act in like manner." You have seen, O lawyer, and it has been proved by the parable, that it is of no avail whatsoever to any man, to be set up by empty names, and to pride himself upon unmeaning and ridiculous titles, so long as the excellence of deeds does not accompany them. For the dignity of the priesthood is unavailing to its owners, and equally so is the being called learned in the law, to those who are so reputed, unless they excel also in deeds. For 5/5 lo! a crown of love is being twined for him who loves his neighbor: and he proves to be a Samaritan. Nor is he rejected on this account: for he who was foremost among the disciples, even the blessed Peter, testified, thus writing, "In truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons: but in every nation, whosoever fears Him, and works

righteousness, is accepted by Him." For Christ, Who loves our virtues, accepts all who are diligent in good pursuits: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

The Prologue from Ochrid

1. THE VENERABLE SAVA THE SANCTIFIED

The unknown village of Mutalaska, in the province of Cappadocia, became famous through this great luminary of the Orthodox Church. Sava was born there of his parents John and Sophia. At the age of eight, he left the home of his parents and was tonsured a monk in a nearby monastic community called Flavian's. After ten years, he moved to the monasteries of Palestine and remained longest in the Monastery of St. Euthymius the Great (January 20) and Theoctistus. The clairvoyant Euthymius prophesied of Sava that he would become a famous monk and a teacher of monks and that he would establish a lavra greater than all the lavras of that time. After the death of Euthymius, Sava withdrew to the desert, where he lived for five years as a hermit in a cave shown to him by an angel of God. Afterward, when he had been perfected in the monastic life, he began by divine providence to gather around him many who were desirous of the spiritual life. Soon, such a large number gathered that Sava had to build a church and many cells. Some Armenians also came to him, and for them he provided a cave where they would be able to celebrate services in the Armenian language. When his father died, his aged mother Sophia came to him, and he tonsured her a nun. He gave her a cell located at a distance from his monastery, where she lived a life of asceticism until her death. This holy father endured many assaults from all sides: from those who were close to him, from heretics, and from demons. But he triumphed over them all: those close to him, by kindness and indulgence; the heretics, by his unwavering confession of the Orthodox Faith; the demons, by the sign of the Cross and calling upon God for help. He had a particularly great struggle with demons on Mount Castellium, where he established his second monastery. In all, Sava established seven monasteries. He and Theodosius the Great, his neighbor, are considered to be the greatest lights and pillars of Orthodoxy in the East. They corrected emperors and patriarchs in matters of the Faith, and to everyone they served as an example of saintly humility and the miraculous power of God. After a toilsome and very fruitful life, St. Sava entered into rest in the year 532 A.D., at the age of ninety-four. Among his many wondrous and good works, let it at least be mentioned that he was the first to compile the Order of Services for use in monasteries, now known as the Jerusalem Typicon.

2. THE VENERABLE MARTYRS OF KARYES

They suffered at the hands of the Papists at the time of the Union of Lyons [1274], which was the work of Emperor Michael Palaeologus (1260-1281) and the pope. The Protos of the Holy Mountain was hanged, and the others were beheaded. (For details about this, see October 10.)

3. THE VENERABLE NECTARIUS OF BITOLA

Nectarius was born in Bitola and lived a life of asceticism in the Monastery of the Holy Unmercenary Physicians Cosmas and Damian, together with his father, Pachomius, who was also tonsured. After that he went to Karyes, where he continued his asceticism in the Cell of the Holy Archangels under the guidance of Elders Philotheus and Dionysius. After conquering human envy, demonic assaults and difficult illnesses, he entered into rest in the Kingdom of Christ on December 5, 1500 A.D. His incorrupt and fragrant relics rest in this same cell.

4. THE VENERABLE KARION AND ZACHARIAS

Karion and Zacharias were father and son, and both were great Egyptian ascetics. Karion left his wife and two children and set off to become a monk. As a child, the young Zacharias was taken into the monastery, and in his ascetic labors he surpassed both his father and many other notable ascetics. When they asked Zacharias, "Who is a true monk?" he replied: "He who constantly applies himself to the fulfilling of God's commandments."

HYMN OF PRAISE

SAINT SAVA THE SANCTIFIED

Venerable Sava, chief of monks,
Spiritual commander of Christ's heroes,
Was glorified by fasting, vigils and meekness,
By prayer and faith and blessed mercy.
You taught the monks to not be concerned with bread;

You entrusted yourself to heaven, with labor and prayer.
You sought neither precedence nor rank of any kind.
Most rarely did you taste of oil and wine.
You kept all the services at the appointed time.
"Let the service be a joy and not a heavy burden,"
St. Sava told the monks,
And he showed this to all by his example.
Like a wise gardener, he enclosed the garden,
And carefully planted many young men.
The young men grew and brought forth fruit:
A regiment of monks, to the glory of Sava.
Fifteen hundred years have passed,
Yet Sava's spiritual garden still blooms:
One thousand monks, a hundred thousand,
Have been raised up by Sava's community up to now.
St. Sava, glorious recluse,
O God-pleaser, pray for us also.

REFLECTION

A man may be great in some skill, as a statesman or a military leader, but no one among men is greater than a man who is great in faith, hope and love. How great St. Sava the Sanctified was in faith and hope in God is best shown by the following incident: One day, the steward of the monastery came to Sava and informed him that the following Saturday and Sunday he would be unable to strike the semantron, according to tradition, to summon the brethren to the communal service and meal because there was not a trace of flour in the monastery nor anything at all to eat or drink. For this same reason, even the Divine Liturgy was not possible. The saint replied without hesitation: "I shall not cancel the Divine Liturgy because of the lack of flour; faithful is He Who commanded us not to be concerned about bodily things, and mighty is He to feed us in time of hunger." And he placed all his hope in God. In this extremity, he was prepared to send some of the ecclesiastical vessels or vestments to be sold in the city so that neither the divine services nor the brother's customary meal would be omitted. However, before Saturday some men, moved by divine providence, brought thirty mules laden with wheat, wine and oil to the monastery. "What do you say now, Brother?" Sava asked the steward. "Shall we not strike the semantron and assemble the fathers?" The steward was ashamed because of his lack of faith and begged the abbot for forgiveness. Sava's biographer describes this saint as "severe with demons but mild toward men." Once, some monks rebelled against St. Sava, and for this they were driven from the monastery by order of Patriarch Elias. They built themselves huts by the river Thekoa, where they endured privation in all things. Hearing that they were starving, St. Sava loaded mules with flour and brought it to them personally. Seeing that they had no church, he built one for them. At first, the monks received him with hatred, but afterward they responded to his love with love and repented of their former misdeeds toward him.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the sinful fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3):

1. How the All-gracious God called out to sinful Adam, *Where art thou?*
2. How God showed Himself to be the Good Shepherd, Who, even in Paradise, called out for His lost sheep;
3. How, even now, God calls out to every sinner, *Where art thou?* (desiring by these words to reproach him and to warn him).

HOMILY

on the absence of evil in God's works

And God saw that it was good (Genesis 1).

Brethren, the first revelation about this world that Holy Scripture communicates to us is that the world proceeded from good and not from evil, from God and not from some power contrary to God and not from some imagined primordial mixture of good and evil. The second revelation, brethren, about this world is that everything that the good God created is good. The light is good; the firmament of heaven is good; the land is good; the sea is good; the grass, the vegetation and the fruitful trees are good; the heavenly lights-- the sun,

moon and stars--are good; the living creatures in the water and the birds in the air are good; all living beings according to their kind are good; the cattle, the small animals and the beasts of the earth are good. Finally, man--the master, under the lordship of God, over all created things--is also good. *And God saw that it was good.* The appraiser of the value of this world is not and cannot be someone who views this world superficially and partially, but can only be He who views all of creation together and each part individually, He who knows their number, name, composition and essence incomparably better than all men on earth. *And God saw that it was very good* (Genesis 1:31). But, nevertheless, there have been men who have slandered the work of God, saying that this world is evil in its essence, that each individual creation is evil, and that matter, from which all earthly beings are formed, is evil. However, evil is found in sin, and sin is from the evil spirit; therefore, evil dwells in the spirit of evil and not in matter. This spirit, fallen from God, is the sower of evil in the world, from whence come the tares in God's wheat. The spirit of evil strives to use both the human spirit and material things in general as his weapons of evil. He is also the one who instills in the human mind the thought that the whole created world is evil and that matter, from which creation was formed, is fundamentally evil. He slanders God's works in order to conceal his own works; he accuses God in order not to be accused. O my brethren, let us guard ourselves from the cunning of the evil spirit. Let us guard ourselves in particular from the evil thoughts that he sows in our minds.

O Lord Jesus Christ, our true Enlightener and Savior, into Thy hands we give over our minds and our hearts. Do Thou illumine us with Thy true light.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called (Monday, December 13th) Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM
- Holy Greatmartyr Barbara (Friday, December 17th) – Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM
- Venerable Sabbas thr Sanctified (Saturday, December 18th) – Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM
- 26th Sunday after Pentecost – Serbian Children’s Day (Sunday, December 19th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Children will be able to learn all about this beautiful custom.

Donations Sunday December 5, 2021

Offering - \$979.00	Candles - \$28.00	Pomen - \$35.00
Dues - \$500.00		Donations - \$225.00

Donations

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Richard & Patricia Madzar - \$100
 Donation of a 14” Iron Skillet by niece Lara & Ari Giannakopoulos

Building Fund

In Memory of Connie Bartis

Marcus Simms - \$3.00
 Robert Stramanak - \$10, Loretta Nagy - \$10
 Stella Nitkulinec - \$15
 Pat Niel & Danica Wess - \$20, Ron & Sylvia Goff - \$20, Dan Gjurich - \$20
 Patty & Mike Devich - \$20, Darby Spincz - \$20, Melissa Babalonis - \$20,
 Lazo & Deb Gjurich - \$25, Sylvester Gjurich - \$25, Ed Spinda - \$25,

Nick & Emma Saula - \$25, Mary Kay Kelly - \$25, Rick Kondas - \$25

Dan & Dianne Tomak - \$30

Gary, Rose & Kristina Marinkovich - \$40, Linda & Tony Freidhoff & Family - \$40

Dan Lovrich - \$40, Anonymous - \$40

Brandon & Melana Simms - \$50, Tom & Carol McAllister - \$50,

Christopher & Ashley McAllister - \$50, Mr. & Mrs. Mickey Muslin - \$50

Myra Huss & Children - \$50

Michael & Mary Raich - \$100, Eli Cvijanovich - \$100,

Gerard & Katherine Szmyd - \$100, Melissa Radovonic - \$100,

William Morihlatko - \$100, Kelly & Bruce Barger - \$100,

Dick & Suzette Gardenhour - \$100, John & Patricia Pavich - \$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

Sretna Slava!!! Happy Slava!!!

*** Sunday, December 12th, - St. Nicholas Slava Celebration! Blessing of Slavski Kolac with Honored Kumovi Peter & Joanne Todorich followed by Banquet in the Church Hall! (\$12/Adults & Children are free)**

Poinsettia Orders are due today, Sunday December 12th

***Tuesday, December 14th**

Nut Roll Baking!! Beginning at 9:00 AM!

HOLIDAY ROLLS

The kolo is selling Nut, Poppyseed, 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)

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

Checks made payable to St Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

Name _____

Quantity _____ Total Due _____

In Memory Of _____

