

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

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The Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

The Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos

(12.04.2022.)

Luke 10:25-37

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (KJV)

The Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos 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)

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple. This feast is one of several focusing on the Mother of God. Her Nativity, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and Mary's Dormition are celebrated.

The Church also has a feast dedicated to the Protection of the Mother of God. Numerous miraculous icons of the Mother of God are also commemorated during the liturgical year.

The Icon of the Mother of God of Three Hands and the Icon of the Mother of God, the Milk-Giver are two icons well-known in the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Mother of God is always integral to worship in the Orthodox Church.

The icon of and Akathist to the Mother of God, the Joy of All Who Sorrow brings comfort and attention to the suffering in all parts of the world. Prayers go out from the Church to the Mother of God in every century.

Today the Church focuses on Joachim and Anna taking their young daughter Mary to the Temple at an early age. Joachim and Anna's parental actions are preserved in the Church down through the centuries for parents to learn from.

Joachim and Anna were blessed by God to give birth to Mary who was chosen among all women of every century to give birth to the Christ Child. Believers benefit by pondering the honor for Mary and her parents.

Persons today face the challenge of seeking eternal life as did the lawyer in St. Luke's Gospel. Jesus made known to the lawyer the importance of helping the suffering individuals encountered in daily life in order to achieve eternal life.

Fervent prayers to the Mother of God will guide believers in ways to help and to show love for the suffering in today's world. Turning to the Mother of God for direction and assistance in the journey to God's Kingdom is beneficial.

The troparion for today's feast identifies Mary as the True Temple. Wise individuals invest in learning more about Mary the Mother of God and the benefits of turning to her in prayer.

The Church offers believers the experience of journeying to God's Heavenly Kingdom. Being united in prayer with Mother of God facilitates the journey to God's Kingdom.

Feasts dedicated to the Mother of God during the course of the year strengthen and nourish the faith of believers. The Gospel readings for feasts of the Mother of God are clear in reminding believers of the importance of God's word.

The Gospel readings for feasts of the Mother of God emphasize hearing the word of God and keeping it. Focused and resolute faith are needed to hear the word of God and keep it.

Seeking strength from the Mother of God through prayer is a way to remain focused on hearing the word of God and keeping it. The Mother of God's purity and obedience to God serve as inspiration for believers of every century.

Today's feast is a time of great joy in God's Holy Church. The feast is celebrated in Orthodox Churches around the world. Faithful join together in praying to the Mother of God.

Learn from the example of Joachim and Anna taking their daughter to the Temple. Share the joy with believers around the world today on the Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God.

The Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. The Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple. November 21/December 4, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid
St Nikolai of Zhicha

1. THE ENTRY INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

When the Most-holy Virgin Mary reached the age of three, her holy parents Joachim and Anna took her from Nazareth to Jerusalem to dedicate her to the service of God according to their earlier promise. It was a three-day journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem but, traveling to do a God-pleasing work, this journey was not difficult for them. Many kinsmen of Joachim and Anna gathered in Jerusalem to take part in this event, at which the invisible angels of God were also present. Leading the procession into the Temple were virgins with lighted tapers in their hands, then the Most-holy Virgin, led on one side by her father and on the other side by her mother. The virgin was clad in vesture of royal magnificence and adornments as was befitting the "King's daughter, the Bride of God" (Psalm 45:13-15). Following them were many kinsmen and friends, all with lighted tapers. Fifteen steps led up to the Temple. Joachim and Anna lifted the Virgin onto the first step, then she ran quickly to the top herself, where she was met by the High Priest Zacharias, who was to be the father of St. John the Forerunner. Taking her by the hand, he led her not only into the Temple, but into the "Holy of Holies," the holiest of holy places, into which no one but the high priest ever entered, and only once each year, at that. St. Theophylact of Ohrid says that Zacharias "was outside himself and possessed by God" when he led the Virgin into the holiest place in the Temple, beyond the second curtain--otherwise, his action could not be explained. Mary's parents then offered sacrifice to God according to the Law, received the priest's blessing and returned home. The Most-holy Virgin remained in the Temple and dwelt there for nine full years. While her parents were alive, they visited her often, especially Righteous Anna. When God called her parents from this world, the Most-holy Virgin was left an orphan and did not wish to leave the Temple until death or to enter into marriage. As that would have been against the Law and custom of Israel, she was given to St. Joseph, her kinsman in Nazareth, after reaching the age of twelve. Under the acceptable role of one betrothed, she could live in virginity and thus fulfill her desire and formally satisfy the Law, for it was then unknown in Israel for maidens to vow virginity to the end of their lives. The Most-holy Virgin Mary was the first of such life-vowed virgins, of the thousands and thousands of virgin men and women who would follow her in the Church of Christ.

HYMN OF PRAISE
SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNA

The parents of the Holy Virgin
Lead her to the holy Temple,
And according to their promise

They give her to the Lord.
They lead the Temple to the Temple,
While angels chant,
And chant with joy
To the young Virgin in purest attire.

The virgins accompany our Virgin,
With hymns and tapers;
Zacharias leads her
To the Holy of Holies;
And into the Holy Place he takes her,
Where the awesome mystery is hidden.

Where the Ark of the Covenant is,
Where the golden lampstand is,
Where the staff and the manna are,
Into the guarding place of all mysteries;
There the pure Virgin is led--
The Mystical Ark of the Living Christ.

REFLECTION

Submit yourself to the will of God and do not pry too closely into God's judgments, for you can lose your mind. The judgments of God are innumerable and unfathomable. A monk in the wilderness, imagining that he had attained perfection, prayed to God that He would reveal to him His various judgments in the lives of men. God put the thought in his mind to go to a distant place to inquire of a spiritual elder concerning this. However, while the monk was on his way, an angel of God in the form of an ordinary man joined him, saying that he too wanted to go to that elder. Thus traveling together, they came upon the house of a God-fearing man, who treated them well, giving them to eat from a silver platter. When they had eaten, the angel took the platter and threw it into the sea. The monk found this both amazing and unjust, but he remained silent. The second day they came upon the house of another hospitable man who cordially received and treated them as kinsmen. Before leaving, that man brought out his only son for the travelers to bless. The angel of God then took the child by the throat and strangled him. The monk was greatly angered and asked the angel who he was, and why he had committed such misdeeds. The angel meekly replied to him: "The first man was pleasing to God in all things and had nothing in his house that was attained by injustice except that silver platter. By God's judgment, I threw that stolen platter away, so that the man would be righteous before God in all things. The other man was pleasing to God and had nothing in his house that would bring down the wrath of God except his son, who--had he matured--would have become a great criminal and a demonic vessel. Therefore, by God's judgment, I strangled that child in time to save his soul, for the sake of his father's goodness, and to save the father from many miseries.

Behold, such are the mysteries and the unfathomable judgments of God. And you, elder, should return to your cell and not strive vainly by inquiring into that which is in the authority of the One God."

CONTEMPLATION

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

1. How God created man from the dust of the earth;
2. How He breathed the spirit of life into his nostrils;
3. How man became a living soul.

HOMILY

on the faithful as one body and one spirit

... There is one body and one spirit (Ephesians 4:4).

The Holy Apostle counsels the faithful to strive to be *one body and one spirit*. By *one body* is understood "one Faith," without divisions, without heresies and without self-will: the whole Church is *one body* of which Christ is the Head. By *one spirit* is understood "love," the ardent love of all the faithful for Christ, from which proceeds mutual love. The many become as one; many men become as one man. This is the miracle of the Christian Faith and Christian love. There is no power in the world which can be a stronger bond among men: not the same blood, or the same language, or the same hearth, or the same parents, or any type of common material interests. None of these is even nearly as powerful a bond as Christian faith and love. By this powerful, irresistible bond, all the members of the Church are bound to each other. The Church of God stands as one man, in time and in eternity--*one body and one spirit*. There is nothing more contradictory to this wondrous unity than the pride of individual men. Pride distorts faith, cools love, creates heresies, divides the Church, and sacrifices the good of the whole for individual satisfaction. Pride, in essence, is the absence of both faith and love. Brethren, may God save us from pride, the primal infirmity of the human race, that we may always be *one body and one spirit* in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**To Thee, O Lord Jesus; to Thee, the Head of the Church, be glory and praise forever.
Amen.**

Services this Week

- ❖ **Wednesday, 12.07. '22 – Holy Greatmartyr Catherine of Alexandria - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **Thursday, 12.08. '22 – Holy Hieromart. Clement, Pope of Rome (Apod. Of the Entry into Temple), 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **The 26th Sunday after Pentecost – December 11th – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

Donations November 27, 2022

Offering - \$ 1,164.00 Candles - \$62.00 Dues - \$50.00

Building Fund

In Memory of Andrew Grisin

Rod & Janet Grisin - \$100

Dan & Dyne Tomak - \$25

Richard & Suzette Gardenhour - \$100

Dianna Dunnington - \$25

Tom, Carole, Christopher & Ashley

Helene Gleason - \$20

McAllister - \$50

Donations

Thanksgiving Donation – Dianna Dunnington - \$100

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Steve & Stella Baich from Kathy & Gerry Szmyd

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!

ST. NICHOLAS SLAVA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2022

Blessing of the Slavski kolac and banquet to follow Divine Liturgy

Honored Kumovi Gojko & Rose Marinkovich

\$15 – Adults Our Children Eat Free

KOLO MEETING

Next Sunday, December 11th following Divine Liturgy

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!!!!

<https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>



POINSETTIAS

Provided by SEADS Garden Center

No.	Size	Price	Total \$
	5"	\$7	
	6.5"	\$11	
	8.5"	\$20	
	10.5"	\$23	
		Total =	

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

Paid _____ Check # _____

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, December 11th.

If you are out of town – payment and completed form can be mailed to:

St. Nicholas Church
1001 St. Clair Road
Johnstown PA 15905

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