

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

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
(12.03.2023)

Luke 12:16-21

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. **(KJV)**

The believer's soul is of utmost importance. The soul requires constant care, protection and nourishment. God's Holy Church provides for the soul's nourishment and offers the ways for protection and care.

The Church's Divine services, teachings and the Holy Mysteries nourish and strengthen the soul. Believers unite and grow with Christ in the Church. Christ's mercy, love and forgiveness are present in the Church.

The believer's heart, mind and soul determine daily interests and pursuits. Charitable interests and actions reveal the content of the heart, mind and soul.

The present Gospel connects the heart, mind and soul with charitable works.

Charitable works and interests are evidence of the believer's love and care for other persons in daily life. Love and care for neighbors and for people in daily life, are essential for living the Christian life.

The rich man in the present Gospel focused exclusively on himself. The rich man's selfishness was apparent in his desire to build bigger storage for the abundant crops.

The rich man showed no interest in sharing his abundance with other persons in need. The coldness and hardness of the rich man's heart were reflected in his selfish interests. The rich man's soul was put in peril.

Knowledge of abundance in his life did not delay the rich man's soul being required of him. The man was going to depart this life without showing love and care for his neighbors. His selfishness was denying great benefit to his soul.

The Gospel is very clear about showing love toward others in need. St. Matthew's Gospel equates the care of the needy with the direct experience with Jesus Christ. (Mt. 25:31-46)

The Nativity Fast is underway. This is a time for heightened awareness of neighbors in need. Now is the time to act with love and care for the needy in the parish and in the community.

The needs of parishioners and neighbors in the community include but are not limited to material assistance. A word of support, a visit or phone call will lift the spirits of individuals struggling with daily challenges.

All believers have the time of life. Putting the time of life to use for the benefit of the parish or as a volunteer in programs serving the needy is a way to express love for Jesus Christ.

Sharing the love of Christ extends to reaching out to the jails, prisons, and hospitals in the community. Personal care homes, rehab centers and nursing home residents benefit from believers coming to share the love of Jesus Christ.

The present Gospel focuses great attention on the soul and the fragility of earthly life. Showing love and concern for others directly benefits the soul.

The Gospel serves as a constant guide to nourish and guide the believer.

The time of Jesus Christ's return and the Great and Final Judgment is not known. The exact moment when a believer will depart this life is not known. Each moment of life filled with the love of Christ is beneficial to the soul

Every person has a certain abundance to share with others. The Nativity Fast is a time for self-reflection and evaluation about the condition of the heart, mind and soul. Growing in Christ is accelerated when the Fast is honored and used wisely.

Being concerned only with increasing one's personal wealth is contrary to the present Gospel reading. The Church provides the Gospel for believers to take the reading to heart and apply it to daily life.

Parish outreach programs to the needy benefit the parish and the recipients of the outreach. Believers showing love and charity in their daily lives are caring for their souls.

Eternal life and God's Kingdom are embraced as goals at Holy Baptism. The way a believer uses personal time, wealth and talents determines the direction, goals and outcome of life.

Each moment of life is precious and only comes once. The use of each moment of life affects the care and nourishment of the soul. The Gospel is clear in saying the soul is more valuable than the whole world. (Mt.18:26, Mk.8:36)

Love of God and love of neighbor are constant expectations for believers. Caring for the soul involves love of God and love of neighbors. Thank God for the present Gospel heightening awareness of life's fragility and caring for the soul.

**The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost Holy Gregory Decapologies.
Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple. November 20/December 3, 2023. Hidden Valley,
Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic**

THE JOY OF THE NATIVITY FAST

Archpriest Pavel Gumerov

*What forms of leisure are preferable in the Fast, to not lose your spiritual mindset? What to do if your name's day or birthday falls during the Nativity Fast? Can we invite guests, and what should we feed them? Are the Fast and holidays compatible in general? **Archpriest Pavel Gumerov**, rector of the Church of the Holy Right-Believing Peter and Febronia of Murom in the Marino region of Moscow responds to these questions.*

His answers draw specifically from his own experience in Moscow, but they can serve as examples and inspirations for Orthodox parishes, families, and individuals anywhere.

—Fr. Pavel, what is leisure? What should it be like?

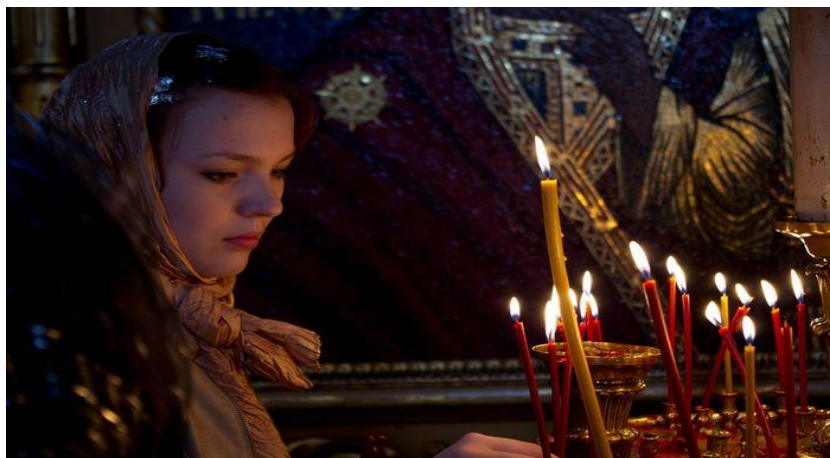
—Leisure is free time that people can use at their discretion. We all have things we have to do—in service or work or connected with caring for our family and children, but leisure is a kind of pleasant bonus that someone has to comfort themselves, in many various ways. But for a Christian, it's important that leisure isn't connected with sin, especially now, in the days of the Nativity Fast. We must remember this.

Leisure is a time when we want to relax, and to relieve tension and stress. It's understandable, as life for people today, especially for those who live in metropolises, is overflowing with all kinds of stress: pressure from every side, and the time crunch we constantly find ourselves in. There's no sin in wanting to shed this tension. But, unfortunately, we see that leisure for many people is useful neither for the soul nor the body.

How do we traditionally spend our weekends? There's a secular adage: "Friday—drunk."^[1] That is, after the work week, on Friday evening, people begin to use any strong spirit to relieve, as they think, their stress; on Saturday they continue; on Sunday they sober up, because they have to somehow recover before the new work week; and on Monday, it's off to work again. This is the cycle, unfortunately, for many. And this cycle is completely wrong. It's not why we're given the weekend.

Another doesn't drink, but spends the entire day sitting at the computer, or in front of the television. This is also harmful for both the soul and the body and for harmonious relationships in the family. Your household—children and wife—wants you to spend time with them, not playing games on the computer or watching the TV all in a row. Leisure should be active. You need to receive a volt of energy for the coming work week over the weekend.

We, Christians, know that the seventh day is for the Lord thy God. It is a commandment, and we must try to fulfill it, no matter what. Of course, there are professions—ambulance medics, for example, or public transport drivers—which demand work on Sunday. But, usually, these people have staggered schedules, and have a break at least one Sunday a month, and this day, and other days off of work must be dedicated, as possible, to God. This is the most important thing.



—How should we spend our free time during the Fast?

—We pray more during the fasts, and we try to go to church more. During the fasts we need to exclude those forms of entertainment which are either on the verge of sin, or could easily lead us into sin: laziness, idleness, drunkenness.

Try to abstain from the computer and television, although such limits are not recorded in the canons of the Church—just because at the time when the canons were established, these things did not exist. But the canons do prescribe abstention from entertainment during fasts, and what are TV shows and movies if not entertainment? I would also advise refraining from reading secular magazines and newspapers and from endless communication in social networks.

The Fast is given to us as a spiritual school, as a time of “military training” when we should acquire many skills. If we limit ourselves only in food, then the soul will profit little. Fasting should not be just a bodily fast. It’s also abstention from worldly vanities—which the media embroils us in.

I made a rule for myself not to watch any artistic films during fasts, and to try to use the internet less, especially for secular things—just if it’s necessary to answer an email or find some information, to prepare for a homily, for school lessons, or to write an article.



If you significantly limit yourself in watching TV shows and in hanging out online, you will free up a lot of time for spiritual leisure—for reading books. Experience—both mine and that of others as fasters—testifies: In a few weeks of the Fast, you read many more books than in the whole rest of the year. These can be not only books of spiritual content, but also classical literature is not forbidden.

You will have time for fellowship with your family, and our loved ones are very much in need of our attention, especially our children.

—During the Nativity Fast we have New Year’s Eve and New Year’s. What’s the best way to spend these holidays? Where can we go with our children?

—The time of the Nativity Fast is a time of many temptations. There’s almost two weeks off!^[2] Many of us become slack and fall into laziness during these days... But everything the Lord gives us must be preserved as a gift from God, and we must use this gift to your benefit. It’s wintertime, and you could go skiing with your kids, sledding, skating. In Moscow, for example, there are many rinks open now. Go to museums, to exhibitions, to concerts of spiritual and classical music...



We have forgotten the good old board games we all played in childhood, when there were no computers and there were two or three TV stations, and so the times were limited. These games really developed ingenuity and the ability to think. When I have time, I love to play these games with my children and return a bit to childhood.

You can celebrate with friends, but without any noisy feasts and drunken parties—after all, fellowship with friends doesn’t involve only those kinds of pastimes. You can do good deeds with your friends—helping your church, for example.

In Moscow, churches and monasteries organize lectures, Orthodox meetings, and seminars during the Fast, so for Muscovites there are such useful forms of leisure during the Fast. It’s not only in Moscow that churches organize such events, but in other cities too.

—Is there any dispensation for people who celebrate their [birthdays or name's days](#) during the Fast?

—The Nativity Fast is not as strict in comparison with Great Lent. There are many days in it when the Typikon allows us to eat fish, but in general, Christians should determine their own measure of fasting in consultation with their spiritual fathers. Every person has his own measure of fasting, depending on his state of health and his spiritual level.

A name's day should be celebrated in fellowship with your saint. How can you please your saint? Go to church for Liturgy and receive Communion. If you can't commune that day because you are working, commune on the Sunday after your name's day. It will be a gift to your Heavenly protector, in whose honor you are baptized.



A birthday can be safely transferred to the nearest Saturday or Sunday, when fish is allowed. Many do this because it's easier to gather friends and family for a celebration on weekends. And it's certainly not forbidden to celebrate name's days on the nearest weekend.

The assortment at our supermarkets allows us to celebrate these days without breaking the Fast and not falling into gluttony. Wine is allowed according to the Typikon. If someone wants to celebrate these festive days on the day of, then know that consuming oil and wine is allowed on all days except Wednesdays, Fridays, and Mondays.

—Tell us the three most appropriate forms of pastime during the Fast, in your view.

—First, prayer. For most people, the weekend is the natural time when they can go to church, when they can pray at home. This is the most important thing, I think. We mustn't think that, having stood in church, we will be very tired, because there is an unspoken rule: If someone isn't too lazy to go to the church of God on Sundays, the Lord will grant him more strength and bless his labors more. After all, strength is a relative quality. You can lie around all day and you'll have no strength, but you can work very actively and go to church, and you will have strength, because you are doing a good work and the Lord is blessing you for fulfilling His commandments.

Second, [reading spiritual literature](#), and third, fellowship with others.

These are the three most important types of leisure—prayer, reading, and fellowship with your family members—children, your spouse, your father, your mother—who are especially in need of your attention in these times.

Archpriest Pavel Gumerov

Services this Week

- **Monday 12.03.2023 – The Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- **Friday 12.08.2023 - Holy Hieromartyr Glemen, Pope of Rome (Apod. Of the Entry into Temple) 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- **27th Sunday after Pentecost - 12.10.2023.- Holy Great-martyr James the Persian; St James, Bishop of Rostov - 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

Donations November 26, 2023

Offering - \$ 707.00 Candles - \$85.00

Dues - \$250.00

Donations

Altar Boy Robes - In Memory of Nick P. Tumbas from Dianna Dunnington - \$200

Large Candles

In Memory of My Wife, Martha Banda from Husband Nick
In Memory of Parents, Andrew & Mildred Banda from son Nick
In Memory of Betty Gjurich from Lazo & Debbie Gjurich
In Memory of Amelia & Joseph Kondas from Richard Kondas
In Memory of Betty Gjurich from the Gjurich Family
In Memory of Damjena & Lazo Gjurich from Dyne & Dan Tomak

Please visit our St. Nicholas Web Page <https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>
We have now added a "DONATE" button to make it easier for you to send your donations. Please take a look.



Please see attached form for Poinsette order!



Due, to Suzette (or the candle room) Sunday, December 3rd.

KOLO NEWS

- We will be making holiday rolls on December 12th. Order forms are in the hall. \$15 each. Nut, poppyseed and apricot. Come help us and learn how to make them.
- GOBS for sale NOW: Vanilla and chocolate. \$3 each, 6 for \$15 and 12 for \$28. See Donna Zimmerman.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FISH FRY

Friday, December 8, 2023

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 10, 2023

St. Nicholas Slava Celebration!!!

(Children's Day)

Sunday, December 17, 2023

**Serbian Mother's Day – Sunday,
December 24, 2023**

**Serbian Father's Day – Sunday
December 31, 2023**

St. Sava Celebration

Sunday, January 28, 2023



POINSETTIAS

Provided by SEADS Garden Center

No.	Size	Price	Total \$
	5"	\$6.50	
	6.5"	\$12	
	8.5"	\$20	
	10.5"	\$24	
		Total =	

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

Paid _____ Check # _____

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, December 3rd. 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