

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

The Twenty Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
(12.10.2023)

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him **(KJV)**

The present Gospel verifies that Jesus is the healer of infirmities created by the bonds of Satan. Jesus healed the woman in the Gospel. Jesus freed the woman from eighteen years of being bent over caused by the influence of Satan.

Sin bounds every person to a certain degree. Some believers are bound more by Satan than others due to personal choices and behaviors. Everyone sins and the sin affects personal life physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The hunger in the soul yearns for the purity and health found in the life in Christ. Living in Christ yields the health and purity desired. Constant repentance leads to renewed purity and health for the heart, mind and soul

The body benefits when repentance occurs. The emotional and spiritual weight of sin are removed through repentance. The present Gospel makes clear that Satan has the power to affect personal health.

Believers enter the life in Christ at Holy Baptism. Health in Christ continues as

the believer participates in the life of the Church and adheres to the ways of Jesus Christ in daily life.

When sin becomes a part of daily life, bodily health, the heart, mind and soul are affected and compromised. Repentance and the Holy Mysteries of the Church lead to improved health to the body, the heart, mind and soul.

Even when believers suffer from debilitating illnesses or injuries, the health of the body improves to a certain degree through repentance. Suffering from illness or injuries are better understood when viewed through Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ underwent suffering on the Cross. The Lord's suffering led to the Resurrection and the joy arising from the Resurrection. Holy martyrs suffered for Christ. Christian martyrs' lives shine through the centuries.

Believers are not exempt from suffering. Examining personal suffering through Jesus Christ leads to a new understanding and newness in life. Drawing strength through Jesus Christ makes suffering more manageable.

Joy in suffering becomes possible when the believer is united with Christ and faces the suffering with Christ. Suffering brought Jesus Christ to the woman in the present Gospel. The woman glorified God when she was healed.

Healing the woman's suffering was a lasting lesson Jesus taught to all hearing the Gospel down through the centuries. When suffering occurs in personal life, wise believers turn to Jesus Christ for healing and understanding.

Joy is possible throughout the Christian life. The life in Jesus Christ provides context for personal health. Health of body, mind, heart and soul are connected with the life in Christ.

A person freely engaging in sin can expect consequences to the body, heart, mind and soul. Gluttony, abuse of drugs or alcohol, and living with abandon bring consequences.

Abusive and dishonest relationships take a toll on the body, heart, mind and soul. Greed eventually leads to downfalls and reckonings. Jesus Christ offers the way to health and wholeness in life's relationships.

The present Gospel intends for believers to recognize and appreciate the healing power of Jesus Christ. The pitfalls and power of Satan over a person are clear in the Gospel.

Believers freely choose whether to follow Jesus Christ. Each moment is an opportunity to invest in the life in Christ. Investing in the life in Jesus Christ is an investment in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ said: "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."(Mt.6:20)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the way of healing and wholeness in life. God's Holy Church offers healing and health in Christ. The woman in the present Gospel learned directly of Jesus' healing powers.

The woman's healing is convincing evidence to follow the way of Jesus Christ. Repelling Satan in personal life requires repentance and the forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ.

Heeding the repelling of Satan and living in the way Jesus Christ is the important message for today. Health and wholeness come through Jesus Christ. Let us benefit from Christ's healing power and glorify God in repentance.

**The Twenty Seventh Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Great Martyr James the Persian.
St. James, Bishop of Rostov. November 27/December 10, 2023.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.**

Father Rodney Torbic

WHAT IS PRAYER? On Fasting and Prayer. Part 2/1

Prayer is the conversation between a Christian's nous and heart and God, addressed to Him in order to glorify His holy name, or to offer Him thanks, or to entreat of Him everything we need for spiritual and bodily life. Therefore, there are three kinds of prayer: doxology, thanksgiving, and supplication.

The work of prayer is the very first, the most important in the life of a Christian. Prayer is the breath and life of our spirit, such that if we have prayer, then our spirit is alive; and if we have not prayer, then neither is there life in the spirit.

Prayer is very beneficial for the soul, for the body, and for the external well-being of a Christian: Bringing the soul nearer to God, prayer enlightens it, heals its infirmities, and fills it with spiritual joy; prayer strengthens bodily health, heals diseases, and calls God's blessing down on a man's labors and all his earthly pursuits.

Prayer is both internal and external: Internal prayer is that which is performed in the soul of a man; external prayer is that which is accompanied by external signs and performed visibly.

We have a multitude of written prayers, both in the word of God and in the works of the Holy Fathers, and especially in the Church's liturgical books. The highest example of all prayers is the Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father."

And we're not forbidden to pray with short prayers, the main one being: "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" It's even possible for each of us to pray our own prayers, according to our needs, provided these prayers be said with true piety and are imbued with love for God.

All our concern when praying should be that reverent feelings for God arise in our heart one after the other—the feelings of self-abasement, fidelity, gratitude, doxology, supplication, contrition, submission to the will of God, zealously falling at His feet, and so on, so our soul might be filled with these feelings and our heart might not be empty. When we have these feelings, directed

towards God, then our prayer rule is prayer, and when we don't—our prayer rule is not yet prayer. Prayer, or the heart's desire for God, must be awakened, and once awakened it must be strengthened; or, in other words, we must acquire and cultivate a prayerful spirit.

The method and means of acquiring a prayerful spirit are found in the very prayers that we pray as we should. Read or listen to the prayer rule as appointed, and you will certainly arouse and strengthen the ascent to God in your heart; that is, you will enter into a prayerful spirit. A great prayerful power is at work in the prayers of the Holy Fathers, and whoever enters into them with all his attention and zeal will certainly taste of this prayerful power to the extent that his state of mind converges with the content of the prayer. To make our prayer rule a true means for cultivating prayer, we must pray so that both the thought and the heart perceive the content of the prayers that make up our prayer rule, says Bishop [St.] [Theophan](#) [the Recluse], a famous, great, and experienced man of prayer.

But such prayer must not be approached lightly, without thinking, haphazardly: Nothing will come of such prayer, save sin alone. No, beloveds, for proper, salvific prayer, we must prepare carefully, with full attention. Amen.

Services this Week

- **Wednesday 12.13.2023 – Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:00 AM***
- **28th Sunday after Pentecost (12.17.2023) - Forefathers (Serbian Children's Day) – After the Holy Liturgy in honor of St Nicholas wonderworker blessing and cutting of the Festive (Slava) Bread followed by Banquet - *Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 AM***

Donations December 3, 2023

Offering - \$ 1,775.00 Candles - \$65.00
Dues - \$200.00

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.

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 \$3 each, 6 for \$15 and 12 for \$28. See Donna Zimmerman.

**Thank you to our beautiful waitresses, Meara Gleason and Madison Zahurak for working at Friday's Fish Fry!
They bring so much joy...and fun to our Day!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Annual Congregational Meeting
TODAY**

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
