

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (07.02.2023.)

Matthew 8:5-13

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. *(KJV)*

The centurion in the present Gospel was a man of authority. He had soldiers under his command who would obey his orders. The centurion recognized the Lord Jesus Christ as having higher authority.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the highest authority for Christian believers, Jesus Christ is the measurement for all that exists in life. Believers take their orders out of love and obedience from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers find their meaning and purpose in life in Jesus Christ. The centurion turned to Jesus Christ for the healing of his tormented servant.

Jesus' word was sufficient for the centurion for his servant to be healed.

Jesus' words have healing power for the believer's heart, mind and soul. The present Gospel is to be taken to heart with faith comparable to the faith of the centurion.

Believers seeking healing for the heart, mind and soul find the answer in the present Gospel. Strong faith as the faith of the centurion is the answer for the healing required in the present life.

Jesus Christ's healing power is sufficient for the challenges believers face in their lives. Jesus' healing power is found in His words as known in the Holy Gospel proclaimed and preserved in God's Holy Church.

The Church proclaims the present Gospel each year to strengthen the believer's faith. The centurion is an example for the believer to emulate in strength of faith.

Jesus healed the centurion's servant. Jesus heals believers of strong faith every day. God's Holy Church has enumerable accounts of healings due to strong faith.

The miracles worked through icons and visits to the tombs of saints and martyrs add to the record of Divine healings. Triumphant hope emanates from the present Gospel.

Challenges arise in life when healings are necessary for the self, friends or for a loved one. The present Gospel is a clear message to place faith and confidence in Jesus' healing power.

The centurion took the initiative to approach Jesus seeking healing for his servant. Jesus welcomed the initiative. Jesus welcomes believers drawing near in faith and love.

The heart, mind and soul benefit from Jesus' healing power. The heart, mind and soul are paralyzed by sin in ways not fully known to and measurable by the believer.

Jesus offers the purification and healing necessary to free the heart, mind and soul from the limitations and afflictions created by sin. Jesus' healing power offers new mobility and freedom to the believer.

Believers healed by Christ experience the joy of new found freedom and mobility. Jesus transforms the heart, mind and soul with His healing power. Strong faith facilitates the healing taking place.

Jesus is due gratitude for the Gospel account proclaimed in the Church today. Jesus is due gratitude for the hope He personifies for all with eyes to see and faith to believe.

Jesus nourishes the hunger in the soul for healing. Jesus heals the afflictions arising from sin. Jesus healed the centurion's servant as a lasting example of strong faith.

God's Holy Church is a stronghold of faith. Believers coming to church enrich and nourish their faith. The Church transforms believers through Jesus Christ and the communities in which they are located.

Families, neighborhoods and communities are affected and benefit when believers come to church seeking healing. The healing of the centurion's servant continues to impact life in today's world.

The Church stands in the world today leading believers to the Heavenly Kingdom and offers a foretaste of the Kingdom. Jesus' healing power present in the Gospel opens the heart, mind and soul to greater possibilities.

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostle Jude, Venerable Paisius the Great, St. John of Shanghai. June 19/July 2, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid *Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic*

1. THE HOLY APOSTLE JUDE

Saint Jude was one of the Twelve Apostles. He was the son of Joseph and Salome^(*) and the brother of James, the brother of the Lord. Joseph the carpenter had four sons with Salome [the daughter of Angeja, the son of Varahina, the brother of Zacharias]: James, Hosea, Simon and Jude. This Jude is sometimes called: "Jude, the brother of James" due to his brother being better-known (St. Luke 6:16 Acts 1:14). St. Jude begins his epistle in this manner: *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James* (St. Jude 1:1). Even though he could be called the brother of the Lord as much as James, he did not do this, out of humility and shame, for he did not at first believe in Christ the Lord. When the elderly Joseph, before his death, wanted to leave a portion of his estate to Jesus, as well as to his other children, all of them protested, even Jude. Only James voluntarily set aside a share of his portion and intended it for Jesus. Jude is also called Levi and Thaddeaus. There is another Thaddeaus of the Seventy Apostles (August 21), but this Thaddeaus or Jude was one of the Great Apostles. Jude preached the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Idumedia, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Armenia. In Edessa, the town of Abgar, he augmented the preaching of the other Thaddeaus. When Jude was preaching in the regions around Ararat, he was captured by pagans, crucified on a cross and killed by being shot with arrows, that he might reign eternally in the Kingdom of Christ.

(*) Not the Salome of Bethlehem, but another.

2. THE VENERABLE PAISIUS THE GREAT

Paisius was an Egyptian by birth and language. After a vision in a dream, his mother dedicated him to the service of God. As a young man, Paisius came to the Venerable Pambo, who received him as his disciple and as a fellow disciple of the Venerable John Kolovos [The Dwarf], who later wrote the biography of Paisius. To the joy of his spiritual father, Paisius added labor to labor and ascetic feat to ascetic feat. Many times the Prophet Jeremiah, whom he especially loved and often read, appeared to him. Angels of God often appeared to him and even the Lord Christ Himself. "Peace be with you, my beloved chosen one!" the Lord Christ said to him. By the great grace of God, Paisius possessed the special gift of abstaining from food. Often he did not taste bread for fifteen days, more often for a week, and once, according to the testimony of St. John the Dwarf, he went for seventy days without partaking of anything. He waged a great struggle with the spirits of evil, who appeared to him at times exactly as they are and at times in the form of radiant angels. But the blessed servant of God did not permit himself to be deceived and beguiled. Paisius was famous throughout Egypt as a clairvoyant and miracle-worker. He took up his habitation in eternity in the year 400 A.D. The Venerable Isidore of Pelusium translated the relics of Paisius to his monastery and honorably buried them.

3. THE HOLY MARTYR ZOSIMAS

Zosimas was a Roman soldier during the reign of Emperor Trajan. He courageously confessed his faith in Christ the Lord, for which he endured cruel tortures. In the midst of his tortures, he heard a voice from heaven saying: "Be brave Zosimas, and sign yourself with the cross, I am with you!" Angels of God appeared to him in prison. After many tortures, Zosimas was beheaded in the year 116 A.D.

4. THE VENERABLE JOHN THE HERMIT [ANCHORITE]

John lived a life of asceticism in the sixth century in the proximity of Jerusalem. Through his asceticism, he achieved a high degree of purity and power, so that even the wild beasts were submissive to him. John reposed in the Lord in extreme old age, in the year 586 A.D.

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE VENERABLE PAISIUS THE GREAT

Paisius the great from the earliest age
Behind him, the doors of all desires he closed.
His spirit to God he lifted, his only desire,
Like all the great saints of old.
Wonderful Paisius, the monks asked:
"Which virtue to God is most pleasing?"
"That which is hidden!" to them, Paisius replied,
"And that which is made known is not pleasing to God."
When Paisius, by his life, had glorified God,
Unto him, the glorified Lord Christ appeared:
"Peace be to you, O Saint. What do you wish? Tell me.
According to your wish, so it will be. Ask and receive!"
When, from the Lord, these words he heard,
Paisius gave himself over to weeping like a child.
"O gentle Lord, a man of great sin am I,

And because of my many sins, greatly downcast am I.

According to Your mercy, forgive me my sins,

All my sins, O God, from my early youth.

And for future times, grant me strength,

That with new sins, my yoke, I will not burden,

That to the end of my life, Your will I may do

And with greater love burn for You."

The Lord, this wise desire, fulfilled for him,

And to His saint, granted a blessing.

REFLECTION

The monks once inquired of Paisius the Great: "Father, speak to us a word of salvation. How should we live according to God?" The elder replied to them: "Go and keep the commandments of God and preserve the traditions of the Fathers." The tradition of the Fathers is the experience of the saints in the spiritual field, the enormous experience of nearly two-thousand years, the experience of many hundreds and thousands of holy men and women. What an extremely rich depository of wisdom! What an immense mass of proofs of every truth of Holy Scripture! All that wealth, all that wisdom, all those proofs, all that experience, the Protestants have rejected! Oh, what inexpressible madness! Oh, the poverty of beggars!

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous healing of the two blind men: *And behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, heard that Jesus was passing by, and cried out, saying: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"* (St. Matthew 20:30):

1. How the two blind men cried out to the Lord: *Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!*;
2. How the merciful Lord touched their eyes and they saw;
3. How I also am blinded by sin; and how even I can see if I cry out to the Lord to touch me.

HOMILY

About revenge and the Avenger

"Say not, I will repay evil! Trust in the Lord and He will help you" (Proverbs 20:22).

Do not be vengeful; do not return evil for evil. The evil from your neighbor is sufficient. If you

return evil for evil to him, you will double the evil in the world. If you do not return evil for evil to him, he can still burn away his evil through repentance. Thus, through patience and forgiveness, you will reduce evil in the world.

Do not be vengeful; do not return evil for evil, but wait on the Lord. He sees and remembers, and in your time both you and he who does evil will know that God sees and remembers. You ask yourself: What have I done in not returning evil for evil? You have done the wisest deed that you could do in the given situation, i.e., you have relinquished your struggle to the One stronger than yourself, and the stronger One will fight victoriously for you. If you enter into battle with the evil doer, you might be defeated. But God cannot be defeated. Therefore, relinquish your struggle to the victorious and undefeated One and patiently wait.

Learn from a small child. If someone attacks a child in the presence of his parents, the child does not return the attack by attacking, but rather looks to his parents and cries. The child knows that his parents will protect him. How is it that you do not know what a little child knows? Your heavenly Parent is constantly beside you. Thus, do not be vengeful; do not return evil for evil; rather look to your Parent and cry. Only in this way will you guarantee victory for yourself in the conflict with evil men.

O Almighty Lord, Who said: *Vengeance is Mine* (Romans 12:19 Hebrews 10:30), protect us from the unrighteous ones by Your almighty hand, and restrain us from vengeance. Counsel us by Your Holy Spirit that the greater heroism is to endure rather than to avenge.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ *Friday 07.07.2023. – Nativity of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; St Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *5th Sunday after Pentecost– 07.09.2023. - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy*

Donations June 25, 2023

Offering - \$ 608.00

Candles - \$65.00

Donation - \$100.00

Building Fund
In Memory of George Moncilovich

Michael Koslin \$50, Paul & Xenia Jancarich \$25, Marlene Certo \$50,
Steve & Helen Oparnico \$50, Rudolph Mesnak \$100, Patricia Licausi \$100,
Michelle Johnston \$100, Dan Lovrich \$15, Mike, Patty & Kyle Devich \$20,
Delores Gartrell \$50, Mary Kelly \$50, Nick & Emma Saula \$50, Tom & Barb
Serokman \$20, Annonymous \$100

Large Candles

In Memory of Linda Palmer from Rick Kondas
In Memory of Connie Bartis from Joe Bartis
In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp
In Memory of Pani Patrica Ward from Dorothy Podolak
In Memory of Susan Krenisky from Dan & Dyne Tomak
The Malich Family

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<https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>

We have now added a "DONATE" button to make it easier for you to
send your donations. Please take a look.

BAND OF BROTHERS
(Shakespeare in Stack House Park)

July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023

PLEASE

see Suzette or Carole McAllister to sign up to work!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Band of Brothers – July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023



Taste of Serbia – August 12, 2023



Slavic Festival – September 15-16, 2023