

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

**The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**(07.28.2024.)**

**Matthew 8:28-9:1**

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. **(KJV)**

**Holy Fathers of the First Six Councils**

**John 17:1-13**

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word., Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more

in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ( KJV)

We come today to God's Holy Church to glorify and worship the Lord God. We come seeking peace and salvation of our souls. We need God's mercy and forgiveness because of our sinfulness.

The Church lifts our hearts, minds and souls to the greatness and glory of God. Partaking of Jesus Christ's Precious Body and Blood awaits us in the Divine Liturgy.

The Gospel is proclaimed for the nourishment of our hearts, minds and souls. We are to leave the Divine Liturgy as better Christians than when we entered. We are to leave our daily cares behind and focus clearly on the Lord God.

God calls us to the Church to work out our salvation. The Church is where we discern our purpose in life and the paths we are to travel. In the church we learn how we are to get along with each other and with our neighbor.

Forgiveness and love for each other are taught in the Church. We are expected to always practice love and forgiveness in the Church. We are all sinners. We all need God's forgiveness.

God's forgiveness for each of us depends on our own practice of forgiveness with each other. This is made clear in the Lord's Prayer. Christ's teachings challenge us to grow from the time of baptism until departure from this life.

Stagnancy, hardness of heart and negative thoughts toward others have no place in the Christian life. Jesus Christ offers growth and fulness in life for believers seeking to heed His word and do it.

Eternal life is possible for believers following the narrow path to the Kingdom. Today's Gospel of St. Matthew demonstrates that Jesus opens the path to the Kingdom when evil stands in the way.

St. John's Gospel for today verifies the possibility of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Choices and decisions in earthly life determine where a believer will experience eternity.

The Church encourages the believer to follow the narrow path to the Kingdom and eternal life. The Church offers the necessary teachings and nourishment for believers in life's journey.

The Church is filled with examples for believers to learn from and to follow to the Kingdom. God is ever-present to assist and guide believers. The Mother of God, the saints and martyrs are ready intercessors in our behalf.

Confessing belief in Jesus Christ and following Christ is completely voluntary. The hunger in the soul finds complete nourishment in Jesus Christ. Peace in the heart, mind and soul is experienced in Jesus Christ.

The Divine Liturgy gives the believer the opportunity to think carefully about his or her personal life. Believers assemble in the Divine Liturgy to celebrate the Lord God and to express collective joy.

The Divine Liturgy transforms the lives of active participants. Believers actively participate by opening the heart, mind and soul to God. God enters the welcoming hearts, minds and souls. When the mind wanders, bring the mind consciously back to God. Focusing on God as much as possible during the Divine Liturgy and in daily life keeps the believer away from sin.

Today's Divine Liturgy is a source of strength for participating believers. May the Lord's love for each believer be deeply cherished. Each believer has a responsibility be grateful to the Lord. Thanking God has a place throughout life.

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**The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. The Holy Fathers of the First Six Councils.  
Holy Martyrs Gyricus and Julitta; St. Vladimir of Russia. July 15/28, 2024.  
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic**

## **The Prologue from Ochrid**

### **Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic**

#### **1. THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYR MARINA**

Marina was born in Pisidian, Antioch of pagan parents. At the age of twelve, Marina learned about the Lord Jesus Christ: how He became incarnate of the All-Pure Virgin and how He worked many miracles, suffered death on the Cross and gloriously resurrected. Her young heart became inflamed with love for the Lord and she vowed that she would never marry, and in her soul she further desired to suffer for Christ and be baptized in the blood of martyrdom. Her father hated her for her faith and did not consider her as his daughter. The imperial deputy, Olymbrius, learning from Marina that she was a Christian, at first desired that she would become his wife. When Marina refused, he ordered her to bow down before the idols. St. Marina replied: "I will neither bow down nor offer sacrifice to the breathless and dead idols, who do not recognize themselves and do not know that we honor or dishonor them. I will not give them the honor that belongs only to my Creator." Then Olymbrius subjected Marina to harsh torture, and threw her into prison, completely covered with wounds and blood. In the prison Marina prayed to God. After her prayer, the devil appeared to her in the guise of a horrible serpent that entwined itself around her head. When she made the sign of the cross, the serpent burst apart and vanished. Then she was engulfed with a heavenly light, and it seemed to her that the walls and roof of the prison vanished, and a radiant, towering cross appeared. A white dove perched atop the cross, issuing forth a voice which said: "Rejoice Marina, rational [discerning] dove of Christ, daughter of Zion in the highest, for your day of rejoicing draws near." Then, Marina was healed of all her wounds and pains by the power of God. The demented judge tortured her the following day, both in fire and in water, but Marina endured all, as though she were in another body. Finally, he condemned her to be beheaded. Before her death, the Lord Jesus appeared to her, accompanied by angels. She was beheaded during the reign of Diocletian; but in soul and power, she has remained alive in the heavens and on earth. A hand of St. Marina reposes in the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mt. Athos. There is also a monastery dedicated to St. Marina with a portion of her miracle-working relics, located atop

Mount Langa in Albania, overlooking Lake Ohrid. Countless miracles have occurred and still occur in this monastery, witnessed not only by Christians, but by many Muslims as well. So much respect did the Turks have for this holy place, that they never dared disturb either the monastery or its property. At one time a Turk was the guardian of the monastery.

## **2. THE VENERABLE LEONID OF USTNEDUMSK**

From his youth, this Russian saint lived a spiritual life of asceticism in several monasteries: in Solovki, Mirozh and elsewhere. He then founded his own monastery along the Luza River, in the province of Vologda. He lived a strict life of asceticism, such that his soul was filled with the light of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. A spiritual beacon, Leonid attracted many to the ascetic life. He is called of "Ustnedumsk," because once, when he was bitten by a poisonous serpent, he neither thought nor spoke about it, and he remained alive. Having pleased God, Leonid died peacefully on July 17, 1653 A.D. His relics repose in his monastery.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

#### **THE HOLY MARTYR MARINA**

Saint Marina, to the Lord, prayed,  
And with warm tears she strengthened her prayers;  
"Lord Jesus, my God and Savior,  
All who in You hope, You help.  
Be near me, near to my soul,  
When the unbelievers begin to destroy my body.  
Be near me, O Strength of martyrs,  
That, without fear and cries, I endure the torment.  
Before the hungry wolves, like a sheep I stand,  
As a lonely bird before many hunters,  
As a poor fish snared by the net--  
But, O Lord of salvation, to You I look!  
My body, like a cheap sack, let them tear,  
O Christ, You will I not deny;

To all corruptible pleasures, I prefer sufferings with You,  
Only to Your authority, O Savior, I bow down  
Conqueror of death, the devil and hades,  
Your victories now, through me, repeat!  
Praise be to You, my Lord and Savior,  
That You help all who hope in You."

### REFLECTION

Until Christ becomes all for the soul--all that has permanent and unchanging value--man cannot enter into suffering for Christ. How could St. Marina, a fifteen-year-old girl, enter into suffering for Christ? Because Christ was all to her, absolutely all! How could Saint Julitta have rejoiced on seeing her three-year-old son Cyricus dead for the Faith of Christ? Again Christ was all to her, absolutely all. Behold, how St. Tikhon of Zadonsk speaks exhaustively--in the form of a conversation between Christ and man--about how Christ can be all to man:

"Do you desire good for yourself?

Every good is in Me.

Do you desire blessedness?

Every blessedness is in Me.

Do you desire beauty?

What is more beautiful than Me?

Do you desire nobility?

What is more noble than the Son of God and the Holy Virgin?

Do you desire height?

What is higher than the Kingdom of Heaven?

Do you desire riches?

In Me are all riches.

Do you desire wisdom?

I am the Wisdom of God.

Do you desire friendship?

Who is a more loving Friend than I, Who laid down My life for all?

Do you desire help?

Who can help except Me?

Do you seek joy?

Who will rejoice without Me?

Do you seek comfort in misfortune?

Who will comfort you other than Me?

Do you seek peace?

I am the Peace of the soul.

Do you seek life?  
In Me is the source of life.  
Do you seek light?  
*I am the Light of the world"* (John 8:12).

## CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous bronze serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21):

1. How all the people would have died from the bite of the serpents, until Moses raised the bronze serpent on a pole;
2. How all who were bitten by a serpent were made whole as soon as they gazed upon the bronze serpent;
3. How the bronze serpent prefigures Christ on the Cross.

## HOMILY

### About the need to repeat and repeat

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12).

A plow ploughs a field. Does not the plow repeat the same task every moment? How would he plow the field, if not by plowing from morning to dusk, making furrow after furrow?

A traveler walks down a road. Does not the traveler repeat the same task every second with the same effort? How else would he travel the road and reach his destination?

The carpenter prepares the boards in his workshop. Does not the carpenter repeat the same task with every board, with the same labor? How else would he be able to prepare the required number of boards?

Brethren, are not all of our beneficial works comprised of strands and strands of repetition? Therefore, let not the preacher of the truth become slothful, and let him not say: "I've told them, and I will not repeat it!" Let not the hearer of the truth become proud, and let him not say: "I have heard it once, and I do not need to hear it again!"

O preacher of the truth, do not be afraid to repeat and repeat: to teach repeatedly, and to remind repeatedly. Without repetition, the field is not plowed, nor the path traveled, nor the framework of the house prepared. And it is your task to plow, to lead and to prepare.

O hearer of the truth, do not become proud and say that you heard the truth once. Truth is food for the soul. You have eaten bread today, yesterday, and the day before yesterday, and for months before, and years past. And you will eat it again, so that your body will be healthy. Nourish your soul as well. Nourish it with the truth--the same truth, yesterday, today, tomorrow and until death--so that your soul may be healthy, strong and radiant.

O Lord Jesus, nourish us every day and every hour with Your truth, which is Yourself, O Jesus, sweet nourishment!

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

# Services this Week

- **Tuesday (07.30.2024.)**
  - Holy Greatmartyr Marina; Holy Hieromartyr and Martyrs of Livno
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*
- **Friday (08.02.2024.)**
  - Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah; St Elijah of Georgia
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*
- **6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (08.04.2024.)**
  - Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal-to-the-*Ap.* Mary Magdalene; Hieromart. Phocas
  - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*



## Donations July 21, 2024

**Offering - \$1,296.00    Candles - \$47.00    Dues - \$150.00**

### Large Candles

For Health of Olga Lucas from Sharon & Jim Urban  
(2) IMO Devich & Lovrich Families from Tom & Carole McAllister  
IMO Christine Bulich, Louis & Mary Daley from Olga Bulich  
IMO Charles Bulich from Olga Bulich  
IMO of Bartis & Pavich Families from Joe Bartis

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US FOR



**SATURDAY, AUGUST 10<sup>TH</sup> 2024**

**NOON TO 6:00 PM**

**ORCHESTRA SRPSKI SINOVI**

**EVERYONE'S  
HELP IS NEEDED!!!**



**Johnstown Slavic Festival - September 20-21<sup>st</sup>**





**HOLY TRANSFIGURATION  
ORTHODOX MONASTERY  
PATRONAL FEAST**  
*Annual Pilgrimage*

Presiding Hierarch  
His Grace the **Right Reverend Irinej**  
Bishop of Washington-New York  
and Eastern America  
The Serbian Orthodox Church

**Monday, August 5—Eve of Transfiguration**

**6:00** Festal Vigil Service

**Tuesday, August 6—Feast of Transfiguration**

**9:00** Greeting, Procession, and Vesting of  
Hierarch in Outdoor Church

**9:30** Hierarchical Liturgy

**12:00** Catered Luncheon

**2:30** Holy Unction with singing of  
Paraklesis Hymn

321 MONASTERY LANE, ELLWOOD CITY, PA 16117

