

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
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The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost **(08.25.2024.)**

Matthew 14:22-34

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. **(KJV)**

Wisdom comes from the Lord God. Believers do well to turn to the Lord when seeking wisdom. God's wisdom is found in the Holy Scriptures. Wisdom from God is proclaimed in the Church.

The Gospel teachings at each Divine Liturgy communicate God's wisdom. The current Gospel reveals Jesus' ability to bring calm in the storms of life. Jesus' ability to save those perishing in the tumultuous sea of life is verified.

The Church is often likened to a ship. Noah was saved in the ark when the earth was subject to great flooding. The disciples in the current Gospel were not harmed when the storm arose as they travelled in the ship at Jesus' direction.

Believers learn the value of listening to Jesus in the Church. Jesus' known words and teachings are preserved and proclaimed in the Church. Attentive believers value Jesus' words and find peace in them.

Hunger in the soul is nourished and addressed by the Gospel. Love for Jesus Christ develops by being attentive to the Gospel. The Church is where believers enter the life in Christ and learn to grow in Christ.

The Church offers daily nourishment for believers to grow in Christ. The Church provides daily Divine services and teachings for individuals seeking to grow. Baptism is the beginning point for the life in Christ. Eternal life is the final goal.

Believers become aware of God's Kingdom by coming to church. Believers learn about and experience Jesus Christ in the Church. The needs for life are addressed in God's Holy Church.

Each Divine Liturgy gives believers the opportunity to partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The saving actions of Jesus Christ proclaimed in the current Gospel are taught throughout the year in the Church.

The present Gospel describes the disciples witnessing Jesus' walking on the water. Jesus made a great impact on the disciples. Jesus transforms the lives of believers attentive to the Gospel.

The Church is currently continuing to celebrate Jesus' transfiguration on Mt. Tabor before the Apostles Peter, James and John. Jesus' transfigured glory shines through the centuries in the Church.

Joy emanates from Jesus' radiance. During this time of the Dormition Fast in the Church believers have opportunities to increase their life in the Transfigured Christ. Believers are called upon to fully embrace the Transfigured Christ.

The Light of the Transfigured Christ shines the path to the Heavenly Kingdom. The Light of the Transfigured Christ destroys the darkness of the world. The Light of Christ illumines the goodness known through the Lord God.

Darkness is very prevalent in daily life. Jesus is the Light for believers to follow through the darkness. Peter was wise to ask Jesus to save him when he began to sink while walking on the water.

Believers can always reach out to Jesus and asked to be saved from drowning in life's stormy seas. Jesus is attentive to pleas made in good faith. The thief on the cross beside Jesus changed his life completely at the last moment.

While there is life in the body and the mind functions well, the opportunity exists to be saved with Christ. Believers having falling away from Christ are always welcome to repent and return to Christ.

Many baptized into Christ have fallen away. Those having fallen away are very near parish churches everywhere. Jesus Christ welcomes home all those who have fallen away just as the father welcomed home the prodigal son.

Having strong faith is a valuable lesson in the current Gospel. Strong faith is nourished by attending the Divine services and being attentive. The Church nourishes believers seeking to address the hunger in the soul.

Jesus did not disappoint Peter when Peter was fearful of drowning. Jesus will not disappoint believers crying out from the depths of their souls with sincere and strong faith. Now is the time to reach out to Jesus in faith.

The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost. Afterfeast of the Transfiguration. Holy Martyrs Anicetus and Photius and Others with Them. August 12/25, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

The Prologue from Ochrid **Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic**

1. THE DORMITION [THE FALLING ASLEEP - THE ASSUMPTION] OF THE MOST-HOLY BIRTH-GIVER OF GOD (THEOTOKOS)

The Lord Who, on Mt. Sinai, gave the Fifth Commandment, *Honor your father and your mother* (Exodus 20:12), showed by His own example how one should respect one's parents. Hanging on the Cross in agony, He remembered His Mother, and indicating to the Apostle John, He said to her: *Woman behold your son* (John 19:26). After that, He said to John: *Behold your mother* (John 19:27). And so, providing for His Mother, He breathed His last. John had a home on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, in which the Theotokos then lived. She dwelt there to the end of her days on earth. By her prayers, kind guidance, meekness and patience, she greatly assisted Her Son's apostles. She spent most of her remaining time on earth in Jerusalem, often visiting those places that reminded her of the great events and of the great works of her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. Of her few distant journeys, her visit to St. Ignatius the God-bearer [Theophorus] in Antioch is recorded; as is her visit to Lazarus (whom our Lord resurrected on the fourth day), the Bishop of Cyprus. She also visited the Holy Mountain [Athos], which she blessed; and she stayed in Ephesus with St. John the Evangelist [The Theologian] during the time of the great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. In her old age, she often prayed to her Lord and God on the Mount of Olives, the site of His Ascension, that He take her from this world as soon as possible. On one of these occasions, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed to her that she would find repose within three days. The angel gave her a palm-branch, which was to be carried in her funeral procession. She returned home with great joy, hoping in her heart to see her Son's apostles just

once more in this life. The Lord fulfilled her wish, and the apostles, borne by angels in the clouds, gathered together at the house on Mount Zion. With great rejoicing she saw them, encouraged them, counseled them, and comforted them. Then she peacefully gave up her soul to God without pain or physical illness. The apostles took up her coffin, from which a heavenly fragrance arose--and, in the company of many Christians, bore it to the Garden of Gethsemane, to the sepulchre of her parents, Saints Joachim and Anna. By God's providence, the procession was concealed by a cloud from the evil Jews. Even so, Aphthonius [Anthony], a Jewish priest, grabbed the coffin with the intention of overturning it, but an angel of God severed both his hands. He then cried out to the apostles for help, and was healed upon declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Thomas was absent--again, according to God's providence--in order that a new and all-glorious mystery of the Holy Theotokos would be revealed. On the third day, Thomas arrived and desired to venerate [kiss] the body of the Holy Most-pure One. But when the apostles opened the sepulchre, they found only the winding sheet: the body was not in the tomb! That evening, the Theotokos, surrounded by a host of angels, appeared to the apostles and said to them: "Rejoice, I will be with you always." It is not exactly known how old the Theotokos was at the time of her Falling Asleep, but the overwhelming opinion is that she was over sixty years of age.

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE MOST-HOLY BIRTH-GIVER OF GOD [THE THEOTOKOS]

Thus spoke the Lord Most-high:

"From your heart, Virgin pure,

Living water will flow,

That those who thirst will drink Christ."

Life-bearing source,

We all boast of you!

Those who thirst will drink Christ.

By Him, the bitter is sweetened;

By Him, the scales are washed from blind eyes;

And by Him, the grief of those in sorrow is healed.

Life-bearing source,

We all boast of you!

Sweet drink sprung from eternity,
Our arid age, the brook filling:
Once more toward heaven raised,
Our exhausted world becomes refreshed.

Life-bearing source,
We all boast of you!

Glory to You, O Most-pure One!
Glory to You, O Mother of God!
For us the Living Christ You did bear,
The living water of grace!

Life-bearing source
We all boast of you!

REFLECTION

Each one of the faithful can learn much--indeed, very much--from the life of the Virgin Theotokos. I would like to mention only two things. First, she frequently went to Golgotha, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Bethlehem, and other places redolent [reminiscent] of her Son. She prayed on bended knees at all of these places--especially at Golgotha. Thus she gave the first example and impetus to the faithful of visiting holy places out of love toward Him Who by His presence, His passion and His glory made these places holy and significant. Second, we learn how she prayed for a quick departure from this life, so that, when separated from her body, her soul would not encounter the prince of darkness and his horrors, and hidden from the dark regions would not see the punishment of those darkened by sin. Do you see how terrible it is for the soul to pass through the toll-houses [mitarstva]? When she--who gave birth to the Destroyer of hades, and who herself has tremendous power over demons--prayed thus, what then is left for us? Out of extreme humility, she commended herself to God, and did not trust in her own deeds. So much less should we trust in our deeds, and even more we should commend ourselves into the hands of God, crying out for His mercy, especially at the time of the departure of the soul from the body.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the wondrous sign by which Samuel confirmed his words before the people (1 Samuel 12 - [also known as 1 Kings 12]):

1. How Samuel told the people it was evil in the sight of the Lord that they sought a king for themselves other than the Lord, the true King;
2. How for the confirmation of his words, he called upon God for thunder and rain;
3. How the thunder and rain descended, and how the people were in fear of God, and of Samuel.

HOMILY

About the Most-glorious Child

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

In all of human history, to what mortal man could all of these titles, all of this authority, and all of this glory apply? There is no one. That is why St. Chrysostom says: "It is impossible to understand this in regard to any other man, but only in reference to Christ." The prophet here clearly expresses two natures in the Savior: the human and the divine. *A Child is born*--this signifies a human nature. *Unto us a Son is given*--this unites the two natures in one person, the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin in the person of the Incarnate Lord. The remaining titles signify the Divine Nature of the Lord Jesus. His government is *upon His shoulder*--the government is His, His own, and is not borrowed. *Mighty Counsel*--is this not the Holy Trinity? The angel--or messenger and herald--of this Triune Counsel is the Son of God, the Pre-eternal Word. *Wonderful Counseller*--for all that is wonderful, all that is new that has come to mankind is from Him and through Him. *The Mighty God*--what would Arius and his modern adherents, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus, say to this? *The Prince of Peace*--for from Him is lasting peace; outside Him is war, without and within. *The Everlasting Father* [the Father of future times]--as He is the Lord of the past, so also is He the Lord of the future. Furthermore, He is also the Father of the Church, the Creator of the new world, the Founder of the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah himself, the son of Amos, saw this wonderful and true vision some seven hundred years before it was revealed to the entire universe.

O Lord Jesus, You are to the prophets the most glorious prophecy, and to the faithful the most glorious revelation. Unlock our minds, so that the wonderful glory of Your majesty can enter into our minds; and unlock our hearts, so that they would be filled by Your life-creating love.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- **Wednesday (08.29.2024.)**
 - **Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos (Slava of the KSS at the Church of St. Nicholas in Monroeville: The Holy Hierarchical Liturgy will be served by His Grace Bishop Irinej.)**
 - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:00 AM*
- **10th Sunday after Pentecost (09.01.2024.)**
 - **Holy Martyr Andrew Stratelates and others**
 - *Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM*

Donations August 18, 2024

Offering - \$2,180.00 Candles - \$70.00 Dues - \$100.00

Altar Boy Robes

**In Memory of Shawn Novotny from Uncle Tom, Teti Carole,
Christopher & Ashley McAllister for \$100.00**

Building Fund

**In Memory of Shawn Novatny
Mike & Mary Raich - \$40
Gary, Rose & Kristina Marinkovich - \$40
Richard & Suzette Gardenhour - \$30**

A very special thank you to Jeanette “Chee-Chee” Czubak for her generous donation to replace the roof and the heating/air condition system in the parish home. This was in memory of her grandparents, Rados and Stanka Matijevic Dudukovich and Mihailo and Stanka Popovich Sikirica, and her parents, Michael “Ben” Sikirica and Dorothy “Danica” Dudukovich Sikirica. Pozelimo joj mnogaja ljeta!!

Large Candles

**(5) For Health of Olga Lucas from Sharon & Jim Urban
IMO Cecilia Gresh Shuman from Olga Bulich**

**Thanks for another successful “Taste of Serbia”!
It takes a village...and we have the BEST!
(Open your 2025 calendar and add Saturday, August 9, 2025)
Congratualtions to Gloria Cernic for winning the 50/50!!**

UPCOMING EVENTS



Johnstown Slavic Festival – September 20-21st

KOLO SLAVA CELEBRATION – Sunday, September 29th

FISH FRY – Friday, October 4th

BASKET PARTY
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024
DETAILS COMING SOON

St. Petka Slava Celebration – Sunday, October 27th