

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Sunday of Orthodoxy

(03.09.2025.)

John 1:43-51

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man
(KJV)

The 1st and 2nd Finding of the Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist Mt 11:2-15

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the

kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. *(KJV)*

The first week of Great Lent is complete. The journey to Holy Week and Pascha continues for believers. The focus on the condition and care of the soul are important in the Lenten journey.

Today the Church rejoices in the presence and restoration of icons in the Church. Believers rejoice that Jesus Christ took on human flesh. Believers benefit from the presence of icons depicting Jesus, the Mother of God and the Saints.

The Lenten journey is undertaken by believers in the Church. Participation is voluntary and expected. Each person chooses the degree to invest. Each person benefits proportionately to the investment.

The Church encourages increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving during the period of Great Lent. Lenten services focus on repentance and renewal in Jesus Christ. The church services address hunger existing in the believer's soul.

The daily services challenge the believer to honest self-examination. Each believer determines the degree he or she is interested in renewal in Christ. Wise believers welcome Great Lent and embrace prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Initially Great Lent may seem to be very long. The time will go fast. Each day is an opportunity to invest in the Kingdom of God. Each day is an opportunity to care for the soul.

The Church is celebrating the findings of the Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist today. Believers benefit from considering the special place St. John has in the life of Jesus Christ.

St. John's Gospel for the Sunday of Orthodoxy mentions Philip and Nathaniel. Philip and Nathaniel also both had direct experience with Jesus for believers to carefully consider.

Believers with eyes to see and ears to hear will recognize Jesus Christ's Divine presence in daily life. The world is renewed each Spring. Believers are renewed in the Lenten journey.

The journey to Holy Week and Pascha occurs each year and will continue until Jesus Christ's Great and Glorious Second Coming. Believers need the benefit of renewal in Christ throughout life.

Baptism is the important beginning for believers. The journey to God's Kingdom continues for the remaining days of life. Believers need not journey alone. Jesus, the Mother of God and the Saints are present to accompany believers.

Rejoice today! Rejoice over the presence of icons in the Church. Rejoice for the opportunity to repent. Rejoice for the love of Jesus Christ. Be grateful for the presence of the Mother of God and the Saints through the centuries.

Increased prayer and fasting help each believer to address the condition of his or her own soul. Holy Confession and Communion unite and reunite believers with Jesus Christ.

Almsgiving is a way to help the needy with whom Jesus Christ identifies. (Mt. 25:31-46) Joy increases in the Lenten journey as tarnish is removed from the soul and the brightness of Christ shines within repentant believers.

May the remaining days of Great Lent be beneficial for each believer. The Lord Jesus Christ welcomes each person drawing near in faith. Now is the time to repent and draw near to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sunday of Orthodoxy. The 1st and 2nd Finding of the Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist. February 24/March 9, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

FROM A HOMILY ON THE SUNDAY OF THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY



Christ the Pantocrator. Fresco in the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

Orthodoxy is the true knowledge of God and reverence of God. Orthodoxy is the worship of God in Spirit and in Truth. Orthodoxy is the glorification of the true God, the knowledge of Him and worship of Him. Orthodoxy is the glorification of God by man, the true servant of God, given to him through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the glory of the Christian (cf. Jn 7:39).^[1] Where there is no Spirit, there is no Orthodoxy.

There is no Orthodoxy in human teachings and philosophies; false reason reigns in them—the fruit of the fall. Orthodoxy is the teaching of the Holy Spirit given by God to man for his salvation. Where there is no Orthodoxy, there is no salvation. "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic [meaning: universal] Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly" (from the Creed of St. Athanasius^[2]).

The teaching of the Holy Spirit is a precious treasure! It was taught in the Holy Scriptures and the sacred traditions of the Orthodox Church. The teaching of the Holy Spirit is a precious treasure! In it is the guarantee of our salvation. Our blessed portion in eternity is precious; nothing can take its place, and it is comparable to nothing. The teaching of the Holy Spirit is just as precious, just as high above all other values, and a guarantee of our blessedness.

In order to preserve this guarantee for us, the holy Church recounts today for all to hear the teachings that were spawned and published by Satan—teachings which are an expression of his enmity toward God, and which suggest slander concerning our salvation, robbing us of it. The Church rebukes these teachings as we would rebuke wolves seeking prey, deadly snakes, thieves, and murderers. Guarding us from them and calling back from perdition those who were deceived by them, the Church anathematizes those teachings and all who stubbornly adhere to them.

The word *anathema* means severance, rejection. When the Church anathematizes a teaching, it means that that teaching contains blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and for the sake of salvation it should be rejected and removed, as poison is removed from food. When a person is anathematized, it means that he has irreversibly adopted a blasphemous teaching, and through them deprives himself and those near him, to whom he has imparted his line of thought, of salvation. When a person has made the commitment to abandon the blasphemous teaching and to receive the teachings upheld in the Orthodox Church, he is obligated, according to the rules of the Orthodox Church, to anathematize the false teaching that he formerly upheld, which was destroying him, alienating him from God, keeping him locked in enmity against God, in blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and communion with Satan.

The meaning of *anathema* is the meaning of the Church's spiritual cure of an illness in the human soul, which causes eternal death. All human teachings cause eternal death if they introduce their own thinking drawn from reason falsely so-called, from carnal mindedness—that common heritage of fallen spirits and men—into the God-revealed teaching about God. Human philosophies introduced into the teachings of the Christian Faith are called heresies, and adherence to these teachings is called evil belief.^[3]

Hearing today the dreadful pronouncement of spiritual cure, let us accept it with the true understanding of it; and pressing it to our souls, let us sincerely and decisively renounce those destructive teachings that the Church will strike down with anathema unto the salvation of our souls. If we have always renounced them, then through the voice of the Church let us confirm our renunciation of them. The spiritual freedom, lightness, and strength that we will unfailingly feel within ourselves is a testimony to us of the rightness of the Church's action, and the truth of the teaching it proclaims.

The Church pronounces:

As we therefore bless and praise those who have obeyed the divine revelation and have fought for it; so we reject and anathematize those who oppose this truth, if while waiting for their return and repentance, they refuse to turn again to the Lord; and in this we follow the sacred tradition of the ancient Church, holding fast to her traditions. To those who deny the existence of God, and assert that the world is self-existing, and that all things in it occur by chance, and not by the providence of God, Anathema.

To those who say that God is not spirit, but flesh; or that He is not just, merciful, wise and all-knowing, and utter similar blasphemies, Anathema.

To those who dare to say that the Son of God and also the Holy Spirit are not one in essence and of equal honor with the Father, and confess that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not one God, Anathema.

To those who foolishly say that the coming of the Son of God into the world in the flesh, and His voluntary passion, death, and resurrection were not necessary for our salvation and the cleansing of sins, Anathema.

To those who reject the grace of redemption preached by the Gospel as the only means of our justification before God, Anathema.

To those who dare to say that the all-pure Virgin Mary was not virgin before giving birth, during birthgiving, and after her child-birth, Anathema.

To those who do not believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and apostles, and by them taught us the true way to eternal salvation, and confirmed this by miracles, and now dwells in the hearts of all true and faithful Christians, and teaches them in all truth, Anathema.

To those who reject the immortality of the soul, the end of time, the future judgment, and eternal reward for virtue and condemnation for sin, Anathema.

To those who reject all the holy mysteries [sacraments] held by the Church of Christ, Anathema.

To those who reject the Councils of the holy fathers and their traditions, which are agreeable to divine revelation and kept piously by the Orthodox Catholic Church, Anathema. (From the Service of the Sunday of Orthodoxy).[\[4\]](#)

Divine Truth became incarnate to save through Himself us who have perished by accepting and adopting a murderous lie. *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (Jn 8:31–32). Only he is faithful to the teachings of Christ who decisively renounces and ever rejects all those teachings once conceived and still being conceived by outcast spirits and lawless people, inimical to Christ's teaching, to God's teaching—slandering its integrity and inviolability. The integrity of the God-revealed teaching is preserved inviolable solely and exclusively in the bosom of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

*[St. Ignatius \(Brianchaninov\)](#)
Translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees)*

Services this Week

- **2nd Sunday of Lent – St Gregory Palamas (03.16.2025.)**
 - **Sts Eutropius, Gleoncius, Basilicus, Martyrs**
 - ***Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 AM.***

Donations March 2, 2025

Offering – \$850.00 Candles – \$30.00

Donations

**“Thank You Carole McAllister” from Eli Cvijannovich to the
Sunday School for \$25**

Large Candles

- IMO Lazo & Bosa Vuckovich from Helene Gleason**
- IMO John & Millie Pavich and Daughter Connie Bartis from Olga Bulich**
- IMO Brother Joseph Kondas from Richard Kondas**
- IMO Jeffrey Smith –41 years of marriage from wife Mariam Smith**
- IMO Dorothy Thomas from John & Patricia Pavich**
- IMO Joseph & Amelia Kondas from Richard Kondas**

Our New Library!

We will be offering a selection of books for our parishioners to borrow for your enjoyment. All reads will be recommended by Father Dragan. At this time we have two available, “Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Finding the Way to Christ in a Complicated Religious Landscape” and “Memory Eternal: Living with Grief as Orthodox Christians” – These titles are available in the Candle Room. Please feel free to sign one out and return when completed. If you have any suggestions, please speak with Father Dragan.

**Nut, Apricot, and Poppyseed Rolls are available!
(Also Pumpkin Rolls – \$10)**

**Sunday of Orthodoxy Service
Christ the Saviour – 3:00 PM**

**Thanks to all of our WONDERFUL volunteers at our first
Lenten Fish Fry of 2025.**

**A special Shut-out to the best workers
Meara Gleason, Petar Vukovic and Maddie Zahurak!
(We love you!)**

Please see Suzette to sign up for your Fish Fry Slot

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lenten Fish Fries

Friday, March 7th to Friday April 11, 2025

Lenten Vespers

5th Sunday of Lent – St. Mary of Egypt

Sunday, April 6, 2025 – 5:00 PM

*** Palm Sunday – Sunday, April 13, 2025**

*** PASCHA! – Sunday, April 20, 2025**

*** St. Nicholas Anniversary Celebration–**

Sunday, May 18, 2025

*** Polka Fest – May 30, – June 1, 2025**

*** Band of Brothers – July 2025**

*** Taste of Serbia – Saturday, August 9, 2025**

*** Johnstown Slavic Festival –**

September 19–20, 2025