

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

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Zacchaeus Sunday (01.29.2023.)

Luke 19:1-10

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

(KJV)

The Church of St. Sava proclaims the Gospel message about Zacchaeus today in parishes everywhere. Zacchaeus experienced Jesus Christ coming to his house. Jesus said salvation came to Zacchaeus' house.

Orthodox churches around the world hear about Zacchaeus today. The Church proclaims this message as a step in moving toward Great Lent. Zacchaeus' experience with Jesus Christ has lasting value.

Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus Christ into his home. Zacchaeus changed his life to correct any wrongs he committed. Attentive believers take to heart Zacchaeus' example of changing his life.

Attentive believers cherish Jesus' message that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Each person is a sinner. Each person willing to receive and be attentive to Jesus Christ experiences newness in life.

Zacchaeus was convincing in his willingness to change and prove that he wanted to correct wrongs he committed. He was willing to restore fourfold to everyone he had defrauded.

Followers of Jesus Christ are expected to take convincing action as did Zaccheus. Initiative is necessary to learn about and to grow in Christ. Effort is required to experience Christ and to be with Christ.

Definitive actions are necessary for believers to repent of sins. Zacchaeus took action to make things right with people he defrauded. Contemporary believers are to take corrective actions of their sinful and irresponsible behavior.

Prayer, fasting and reading the Holy Scriptures will guide believers in making good on the desire to repent. The Divine services of the Church will guide and encourage believers to repent and follow Christ.

The arrival of Zacchaeus Sunday alerts the heart, mind and soul to ready the self for change and renewal in Christ. Renewal and growing in Christ requires careful thought, concentration and action.

The Church Year is structured for believers to grow and to celebrate the life in Christ. Being mindful of the structure of the Church Year is beneficial. Structuring life according to the Church Year enhances growth in Christ.

The Church provides the calendar to guide, nourish and educate believers for each day of the year. Living according to the calendar unites believers around the world and through the centuries.

Being a part of the Church unites the living and the departed. Believers are never alone when being a part of the Church. Believers are recipients of prayers from around the world and at all times of the day and night.

The saints and martyrs serve as intercessors before the Lord. Guardian angels look out for each individual believer. Parish churches and monasteries provide love, comfort and hope for each person.

Healing takes place in God's Holy Church. Zacchaeus' life became new in Christ. Zacchaeus experienced a form of healing. Taking action to reach out and to experience Jesus Christ has lasting benefits.

Today offers a turning point in life. Believers benefit by looking within themselves to determine actions to take to draw nearer to Christ. Self-assessment will reveal corrective actions to take to repair any troublesome relationships.

Definitive change is necessary among believers to reveal repentance is authentic. Zacchaeus was convincing in his actions with Jesus. Jesus knows whether a person sincerely repents and desires to begin anew.

The Church encourages renewal in Christ throughout the year. The Church encourages repentance throughout earthly life. Confession and Communion enable newness and unity with Christ.

St. Sava is on the minds of Serbian Orthodox Christians at this time of the year. St. Sava's efforts to experience Christ and to lead others to Christ remain vivid down through the centuries.

The current Gospel lesson on Zacchaeus is consistently proclaimed each year in the churches of St. Sava. St. Sava valued the Gospel and valued learning. Followers of St. Sava do well to exert effort as did St. Sava to grow in Christ.

Zacchaeus Sunday is just a beginning. Good beginnings in life make for good endings. Believers baptized into Christ are to follow Christ throughout life until departure from life.

Today is an opportunity to turn the mind completely to Christ. Repentance and definitive actions to follow Christ are possible today. May today's Gospel about Zacchaeus be life-changing for the heart, mind and soul.

**Zacchaeus Sunday. Veneration of the Precious Chains of St. Peter.
Venerable Romilus of Ravanica. January 16/29, 2023.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic**

The Prologue from Ochrid St Nikolai of Zhicha

1. SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA

Athanasius was born in Alexandria in the year 296 A.D., and from his early childhood had an inclination to the spiritual life. He was a deacon to Archbishop Alexander and accompanied him to the First Ecumenical Council [Nicaea, 325 A.D.]. It was at this Council that Athanasius became renowned for his knowledge of, devotion to, and zeal for Orthodoxy. He contributed greatly to the destruction of the heresy of Arius and the strengthening of Orthodoxy. He wrote the Symbol of Faith [The Creed] which was adopted at the Council. Following the death of Alexander, Athanasius was elected Archbishop of Alexandria. He remained in his calling as Archbishop of Alexandria for forty years, although not for the entire time on the archepiscopal throne. With few exceptions, he was persecuted by heretics throughout his life. Of the emperors, he was persecuted the most by Constantius, Julian and Valens; of the bishops, by Eusebius of Nicomedia and many others; and of the heretics in general, by Arius and his followers. Athanasius was forced to hide from his persecutors at various times: once in a well, once in a grave, and sometimes in private homes or in the deserts. Twice he was forced to flee to Rome. Only for a while before his death did he live peacefully, as a good shepherd among his good flock, who truly loved him. Few are the saints who were so mercilessly slandered and so criminally persecuted as was St. Athanasius. His great soul patiently endured all for the love of Christ and, in the end, emerged victorious from this entire terrible and long-lasting struggle. For counsel, for comfort and for moral support, Athanasius often visited St. Anthony the Great, whom he respected as his spiritual father. A man who formulated the greatest truth, Athanasius had much to suffer for that truth--until the Lord gave him repose in His kingdom as His faithful servant, in the year 373 A.D.

2. SAINT MAXIM, ARCHBISHOP OF WALLAGHIA

Maxim was the son of the Serbian Despot [Prince] Stefan the Blind and his wife, Despotica [Princess] Angelina. He was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of Manasija. Pressured by the Turks, he fled to Romania, where he was consecrated to the vacant throne of the Archbishop of Wallachia. He negotiated a truce between the warring commanders Radul and Bogdan and averted a war between them. In his later years, he returned to Krušedol, where he built a monastery and, after a lengthy ascetic life, reposed on January 18, 1546 A.D. His incorrupt and miracle-working relics repose, even now, in this monastery.

HYMN OF PRAISE **CHRIST AS THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS**

Through Athanasius, wisdom shown,
And the truth of God enlightened men.
That wisdom is not bitter, the people recognized,
But, to all who drink it to the bottom, it is sweet;
To all who suffer for it, it is dear.
Whoever in the world feels all hope extinguished,
Whoever walks through the world as over an old cemetery,
Whoever thinks about human life as about weak slavery,
Whoever thinks about the five earthly continents as about five threshing floors,
Whoever thinks about five oceans as about five puddles--
To him, let Christ be the measure by which eternity is measured;
Let him adhere to that measure, and be confirmed in faith.
Whoever recognizes this measure will never abandon it;
He will find no other measure by which to understand the mysteries of the world.
All other measures, in spite of exertion,
Do not reach to the Alpha or the Omega:
They are as deceiving as the moon that crawls over the water,
But appears to reach the bottom of the water.
Christ surpasses both ends of the world,

Where the drama ends and where it began.
Of all the mysteries, the greatest mystery is Him.
From His Nativity to His Crucifixion on the Cross,
From His Crucifixion on the Cross to His Resurrection--He is the
true measure of all God's creation.
Through Him, measuring suffering in the midst of worldly tumult,
The saints of God suffered--without pain.

REFLECTION

To the question, "Why did the Son of God appear on earth in a human body and not in another form of creation?" the brilliant St. Athanasius replied in this manner: "If they ask why did He not appear in some other, better form of creation--for example, as the sun or the moon, or the stars or fire, or the wind--but just as a man, let them know that the Lord did not come to show Himself, but to heal and teach sufferers. For to reveal Himself only to amaze the viewers would mean to come for a show. It was necessary for the Healer and the Teacher, not only to come, but to serve for the benefit of the suffering ones, and to reveal Himself in such a way that this revelation would be bearable for the sufferers. Not one single creature was in error in the eyes of God, except man alone: neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the sky, nor the stars, nor the water, nor the wind betrayed their ranks. On the contrary, knowing their Creator and their King--the Word--they all remained as they were created. Only human beings separated themselves from good and replaced truth with deceit; and the honor belonging to God (as well as the knowledge about Him) they transferred to devils and to men carved out of stone [idols]. What, therefore, is so unbelievable in this, that the Logos appeared as a man to save mankind?" Indeed, we also ask the unbelievers of our day: "In what form would you wish God to appear, if not as a man?"

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the Lord Jesus, burdened by slander and shame for the sake of our salvation:

1. Burdened by slander and shame from the Jewish scribes and elders;
2. Burdened by slander and shame from the many contemporary scribes and elders;
3. Burdened by slander and shame from every one of us who has been baptized in His name and who has not fulfilled His commandments.

HOMILY

on danger

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning" (Luke 12:35).

This is the commandment of Him Who knows the weaknesses of our being, and Who desires our good more than our father and mother do. This is the commandment of our man-loving

Lord. When man is ungirded, does not his entire body droop? When he girds himself, does not his entire body become as erect as a candle? As a candle stands, so must our soul stand, erect before God. How will our souls stand erect before God if unrestrained physical earthly passions and lusts weigh them down? Behold, in the loins is the nest of the main physical passions. To gird one's loins means to tighten oneself with restraint and not to give in to passions at will. But to gird one's physical loins is not the goal, but the means that we utilize to easily gird our mind, our heart and our will. Physical restraint is the primary school of our Christian character; after it comes a higher school, in which we learn restraint of the mind, restraint of the heart and restraint of the will. If we gird our mind, then lustful thoughts will be unable to find a place in its narrowness. If we gird our heart, then lustful desires will be unable to find a place in it. If we gird our will, then the evil, beastly and demonic desires will be unable to find a place in it. Brethren, by a narrow path can one enter into the Kingdom of God. Only in the narrowness of the mind, the heart and the will, can the candles of the virtues be lighted, the flames of which rise toward God. By the image of the lighted candles, we should understand Christian virtues. O Lord, pure and sinless, the seat of all virtues, help us to gird ourselves with restraint and to walk the narrow path to Thee with the lighted candles that Thou hast brought into the world. **To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

Services this Week

- ❖ **Tuesday (January 31th) *St Athanasius the Great, St Maximus, Archbishop of Serbia* - 09:30 AM - Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **Friday (February 03th) - PARALYSIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NEGTARIOS - 05:00 PM - Confession**
- ❖ **SUNDAY (February 05th) - The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee 10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy**

Donations January 22, 2023

Offering - \$ 813.00 Candles - \$99.00
Dues - \$50 Donations - \$1,000.00
St John Slava donation from Sylvester Gjurich In Memory of Lazo
& Damjena Gjurich - \$100
Donation form William & Melanie Vuckovich Schall - \$1000

Building Fund

In Memory of Lillian Fleck from Cameron & Linda Palmer - \$100
In Honor of Steve & Mary Stramanak from Sharon & Jim Urban - \$100
In Honor of Tete Donna Koslin Wharton from Sharon & Jim Urban - \$100
In Memory of Boris Banda from Steve & Radojka Merriman - \$50

Large Candles

In Memory of Charles Bulich from Olga Bulich
In Memory of Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp
In Memory of Vinny Czubak from Jeannette Czubak
In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Kathleen McDowell
In Memory of Damenja & Lazo Gjurich from Diane and Dan Tomak
In Memory of Amelia & Joseph Kondas from Richard Kondas

TODAY, SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2023
St. Sava Program & Luncheon
Honored Kumovi, Kum Petar Vukovic & Kuma Quinn Komar

**Today is the last day to take your Poinsettia
And any extras that you would like.
Garden Haven was generous in donating 50 poinsettias and
S.E.A.D.S donated a few extra.
Everyone help themselves!**


Fish Fries begin Friday, February 24, 2023

On display in our church hall next Sunday, February 5th.



SUPER BOWL SUB SALE

St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
1001 St. Clair Rd., Johnstown PA
\$10.00 18" long
PRE -ORDER ONLY BY SAT, FEB 4



LEAVE MESSAGE AT 814-255-3008
Please specify onions or no onions
and leave your name and phone #.
Pickup at church hall, noon-1:30
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2023

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THE KOLO IS HAVING A SUB SALE!!!!
Our subs are the best! 18".
Fresh deli meats and cheese,
lettuce, tomatoes and pickles
on a fresh roll.. Made by us;
not ordered and re-sold.
Please contact any kolo
member with your name and
phone number; and specify
onions or no onions. Last day
to order is Saturday, Feb. 4.
Pick up at St. Nicholas
church hall noon -1:30
Saturday, Feb 11