The Sunday Messenger

+ Holy Trinity, Wilkes-Barre + July 5th, 2026 + Holy and Wonderworking Unmercenaries Cyrus and John + 5th Sunday after Pentecost +

Hymns & Readings

For Today's Divine Liturgy

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

From thy youth thou didst receive Christ into thy soul, O ven'rable one, and above all didst desire to leave behind the turmoil of the world. Thou didst courageously settle in the wilderness, where thou didst raise children in obedience, the fruits of humility. Thus, as an abode of the Trinity, thou didst enlighten all who approached in faith and didst grant healing to all. O our Father Sergius, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved!

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day!

Having risen from the earth today and shining like the sun, thy precious and incorrupt relics are as fragrant flowers, scented with miracles, granting healing to all the faithful, and making glad thy flock which thou didst wisely gather and tend. Now as thou standest before the throne of the Trinity, entreat God's help and grace for them and for all Orthodox Christians, so that we may sing: "Rejoice, O divinely-wise Sergius!"

Please Sing Along!

Singing throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

Epistle Reading - Romans 10:1-10

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Dear Guests and Friends: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!

Gospel - Matthew 8:28-9:1

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

"Vice does not change our nature but obscures the beauty placed there by God."

— St. Gregory of Nyssa

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

THIS WEEKEND

SAT, July 4th
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions
SUN, July 5th
Resurrectional Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,
Coffee Hour, Orthodoxy 101 @ noon

July 5th Parastas following Divine Liturgy
For the Newly Departed Servant of God Clement Valletta
In Memory of William, Julia, Eva, Alexander
Offered by Marie Talpash
In Memory of Dn Gregory Hatrak
Offered by Dn Greg Polk
In Memory of Ernie Tressa
Offered by Nancy Pieck

To submit names for this Parastas/Memorial Service, please give them to Fr. Innocent before the service begins.

July 5th Mission Coffee pickup in the Vestibule. Pay by cash or check made out to Melanie Neal. Thank you!

THIS WEEK
MON @ 11 AM - Funeral for Clem Valletta
Bible Study is on Summer Break - Stay tuned!
WED @ 11 AM - 1 PM - Church Open for Prayer
WED @ 6 PM - Akathist
WED @ 6:30 PM - Orthodoxy 101

NEXT WEEKEND
SAT, July 11th
Reader's Vespers
SUN, July 12th
NO Matins, Hours @ 8:40 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Study is currently on summer break
ORTHODOXY 101 Alternating between Sundays @ noon following the coffee hour & Wednesday following the Akathist service. Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about our faith.
Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is Sun, June 28th.
Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is Saturday, July 11th.
Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is Sunday, July 19th.

Appalachia Service Project Mission Trip: Thanks so much to everyone who supported Ephraim and Andrew by purchasing coffee. Your purchases provided for more than half of the funds needed for their trip to help the poor in Appalachia!

Parish Library: Holy Trinity now has a parish library that is open and ready for you to use. See Rdr. John (Jalen) downstairs at coffee for a library tour. There is a log for checking out books on the desk. Books may be checked out for up to 4 weeks at a time. Thanks also to our catechumens Jesse, Katie & Tyler (and anyone else who helped) for heading up the project! Finally, we are planning to name the library after a Saint. If you would like to submit an idea please do so at the library desk.

Sun - July 19th, Orthodox Family Day at Knoebels: A FREE Picnic Dinner at Knoebel's Amusement Park on Sunday July 19th**.** Everyone is invited. The Harrisburg "O" Club of the FOCA will be sponsoring an Orthodox Picnic outing. Arrive after your Liturgy and stop by Pavilion B (new pavilion this year) to check in and spend the afternoon at the Park. At 6pm there will be a Picnic Dinner in the Pavilion. Hamburgers, hotdogs, sodas and side dishes will be served.

FREE: Michael & Nancy Pieck are moving and would like to give away remaining furniture and items. If anyone is interested they can text Nancy at 570-540-6776 for pictures. All of these items are free and in good condition: Solid cherry queen sleigh bed with matching triple dresser, Three wing chairs, 38 inch Square glass cocktail table, Buffet 60 inches by 19 inches, Double bed with Simmons beauty rest firm mattress and boxspring (Must take bed and mattress), octagon side table 26" x 21 height

July Birthdays: Christina Cherkis (7/2), Marley Willis (7/10), Xenia Clark (7/11), Luke Ausin (7/15), Diane Welgus (7/18), Rachael Talpash (7/24), Damian Rosencrans (7/24), Ava Spinghel (7/25), Katrina Zbegner (7/26), Chris Yanovich (7/26) Donna Stankiewicz (7/27), Christopher Dutko (7/28), Shannon Bisset (7/28), Deborah Mills (7/31) **July Anniversaries:** Lisa & Scott Harvey (7/15), Marianne & Jeremy Haugh (7/18), Marie & Vladimir Dutko (7/26), Tom & Alexanne Conklin (7/27), Kristin & Bill Resnick (7/31)

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: Christina Cherkis (7/2), Marley Willis (7/10), Xenia Clark (7/11)

... of the Saints, Fathers & Teachers

The Sunday of the Gergasenes

How familiar is this story to us. Yet every time we read it we rediscover something in it which touches our heart, or gives a new light to our mind. And today I would like to attract your attention to three features of this passage.

The first is the attitude of the devils, of the powers of evil, to their victims. The powers of evil have no other intention or desire than to take possession of a living creature and to make it both a sufferer and one that will fulfil their will. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the devils can have no direct action in this world; all they can do is enslave human beings and through them work the evil within them. So this is what these powers of evil had intended: to enslave these men and to make them instruments of destruction, but at the same time to make them suffer for it.

When Christ commanded them to leave their victims they cried, shall I say, for a place of refuge, a place where they could dwell and work destruction. And Christ allowed them to in-dwell the pigs. Pigs, in the eyes of Jews, were a symbol of impurity; the request to be lodged in their bodies was a sign for all who could understand - and every Jew could - that they were as impure as the impurest of the animals. But what happened next was a demonstration to people of what happens when we allow ourselves to be possessed of evil, when we allow passions to have power over us - hatred, lust, jealousy, and all the passions of body and soul.

PARISH PRAYER LIST // Homebound: Evelyn, Vladimir, Marie, Pearl, Jeri, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice, Sylvia, Paul **// Sick & Suffering:** Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Tom Vaskalis, Tom O'Brian, David, Delores Tressa, Elaine & Forrest Hanson, Alexandra, Jody, Michael Noice, Paul Loftus, Santo, Susan Shiposki, Dn Jerimiah, William, Alan, Tim, Ann, Paul, Bill, Linda, Betty, Jim, George, Ali, Athansios, Hanna, Don Redmond **// Recently Departed:** James, Ruth, Walter, Dn Christopher, Claire Ann, Clement, Ernie **// Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa, Aaric, Tyler, Dom, David, Ashley, Audrey, Jessica, Nicholas, Nicholas // **Inquirers:** Steve, Nicholas

Being possessed by them we are doomed to destruction, as this herd ended in death.

We should remember this because we do not always realise how much we are in the grip, in the power of those things which rule our life: likes and dislikes, hatreds, resentments and so on. We are not only possessed, but we are also working evil through our subjection to the power of evil. And the warning is clear: if we only allow evil to take possession of us completely, it will mean death; not physical death, but a total, tragic alienation from all that is life: from God, from love, from beauty, from meaning. We cannot fall out of existence but we can be possessed of an existence which is a ghostly one, an existence without life, without content - a shell that is empty, and yet a torment.

And in contrast to this we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man. He is the Creator, He is the Lord, He is the Saviour of the whole world; and He forgets everything, as it were, the whole of creation to pay attention to nothing but these two men who are in need of salvation, indeed He is prepared to leave ninety-nine righteous, whole people who do not need Him at that moment alone in order to give all His attention, all His life, indeed all His power to save these two men. In the face of all the need of the world He can see every individual need and respond to it with all His love, all His compassion, all His understanding and all His divine power to save and to heal.

There is a third group of people whom we see in action in this Gospel story; it is the inhabitants of the country. They had known of the desperate condition of these two men; they were told of what Christ did for them; they were told who their master was, who was their tormentor; should they not have come to give glory to God and thank Him for delivering the two men from the power of evil? NO! All they saw in the act of Christ was that they were deprived of their herd of swine. What mattered to them the wholeness and the life and the salvation of these two men? They were deprived of what was important to them, what mattered to them more than a human life, and they asked Christ to leave their borders, to go because they did not want to risk another miracle that would be costly to them. What a tragic - not monstrous, but just tragic contrast between the attitude of God and the attitude of these people.

Let us give thought and ask ourselves, where do we stand? Of course, the first movement we shall have is to say, 'On God's side' - it is not true. When there is a tragic need, and the cost of helping would be perhaps not a disaster but a pain or loss to us, what would we choose? Let us reflect on this: are we really on the side of Christ Who can forget the whole world because His Heart is pierced, transfixed with compassion, or - do we allow our heart to be moved one moment, and then recalculate the cost and turn away from the need?

Let us reflect - because every one of these stories, every parable, every image, every act of God is challenging us: Where do you stand? Who are you? The person possessed, to whatever extent? A disciple of Christ ready to forget everything for the sake of a desperate need? Or rather one of those who say to Christ: Go, go away - you are disturbing our peace, the harmony of our life and our security?

Let us reflect deeply; but not only reflect, take a decision and act. Amen. +Met Anthony Bloom

"... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. + Jesus Christ

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: $12,305
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: $2,840
Last Week's Collection (6/21 & 6/28) : $5,141

Scan to make an online donation.

Thank you to **those who provided for today's coffee hour** and to those who helped clean up! Would you sponsor a coffee hour with a friend?
See Fr. Innocent, Mat. Melanie or Joanne Dutko.