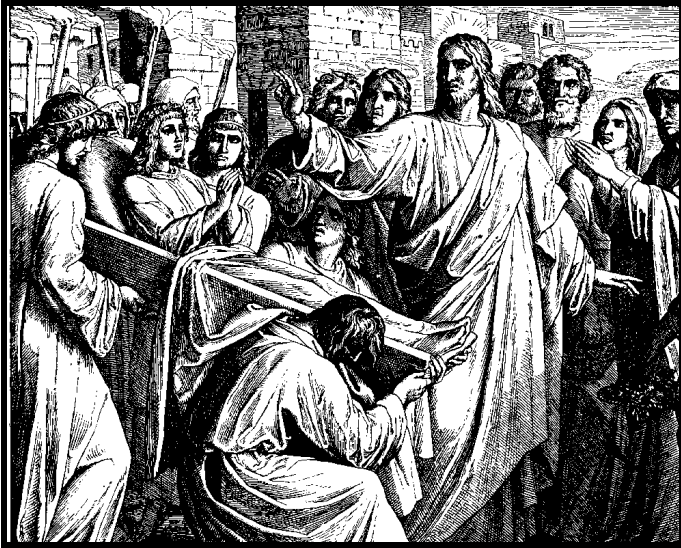




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 18th Sun after Pentecost + Sun, October 8th, 2023 + Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council, Ven. Pelagía the Penitent



Hymns for Today's Service

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

Thou art most glorious, O Christ our God, Who hast established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth. Through them Thou hast guided us to the True Faith. O greatly compassionate One, glory to Thee!

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself. Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee: "Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!"

The Son Who shone forth from the Father was ineffably born, two-fold in nature, of a woman. Having beheld Him, we do not deny the image of His form, but depict it

piously and revere it faithfully. Thus, keeping the True Faith, the Church venerates the icon of Christ Incarnate.

Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

Epistle Reading - 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

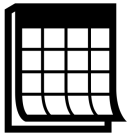
But this I say: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

Gospel Reading - Luke 7:11-16

Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying,

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!*

“A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.”



This Week's Schedule

Doly TRINITY ORThodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, October 7th

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

Sunday, October 8th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,
Coffee Hour, Church School, Parish Council @ 11:30 AM

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THIS WEEK

WED: No Open Church or Akathist this Week

THURS 11 AM: NO BIBLE STUDY - FALL BREAK

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, October 14th

10 AM: Friends of the Poor

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

October 14th, following Great Vespers

Parastas for Steven Hutz Jr.

Offered by Steven and Jeanne Anne Hutz

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Sunday, October 15th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,
Coffee Hour, Church School

FRIENDS OF THE POOR OUTREACH on October 14:

The next Holy Trinity Friends of the Poor Outreach will take place October 14th. We will meet at Holy Trinity Church at 10:00 AM and proceed together from there to meet with our poor brothers and sisters in the city of Wilkes Barre. We are collecting new winter socks, underwear (men and women's), and new or GENTLY used winter boots or shoes. Thank you for your continued support and donations.

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP DAY October 28:

There will be a clean-up day for the Holy Resurrection Cemetery on William St in Plains, scheduled for Saturday October 28 2023, (rain date November 4 2023). The goal is to remove small trees along the fence line, trim back overgrown brush and to generally tidy up the Cemetery grounds. Start time is scheduled for 9:00am to 1:00pm. Items such as pruning shears, chainsaws, weed whackers, hedge trimmers, and rakes would be helpful. Light refreshments will be provided.

ORTHODOX YOUTH OF NEPA

will host a bonfire and games at the Holy Trinity Pavillion on Sunday, October, 29th from 4-8 PM. We will do a potluck meal. Please RSVP on the signup sheet in the vestibule and comment with what you can bring! We'll need food, drinks, paper goods (plates, forks, spoons, napkins), dessert (maybe s'mores?), and drinks. And if you have any ideas for games or can bring supplies, please let us know. We are also looking for a few volunteers to help with setup and the bonfire. Sign up in the Vestibule.

THE NEAL FAMILY

will be out of town for a few days this week. Please keep us in your prayers and call Paul Tumavitch, our Parish Chair, if anything comes up or you have a need - 570-687-0552. Keep us in your prayers and we will see you next weekend!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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Parish Council is the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is today, October 8th.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY - FALL BREAK: We will not have our weekly Thursday Bible Study for the next 3 weeks. The Bible Study will resume on October 26th at 11 AM. Enjoy the break. We will miss our time together!

HAS GOD BLESSED YOU WITH A GOOD SINGING VOICE?

THE HOLY TRINITY CHOIR is seeking new members. If you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry, please call or text Greg Polk at (570)362-2642. Previous choral experience is helpful but not required. All ages are welcome.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

OCTOBER Birthdays: Paula Holoviak (10/2), Barry Benczkowski (10/2), Tommy Donlick Jr. (10/5), Brian Benczkowski (10/5), Paul Andrew Tumavitch (10/6), Irene Zimich (10/6), John Zimich (10/11), Jason Stankiewicz (10/18), Amber King (10/20), Sarah Benczkowski (10/22), Rebecca Leonori (10/23), Mary Anya Haugh (10/27), Walter Shedlock (10/28), Marie Talpash (10/28) **Anniversaries:** William & Mary Gurka (10/15), Rebecca & Steve Leonori (10/23)

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: John Zimich (10/11)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Widow of Nain

Christ's Compassion and Integrity, by Philip LeMasters

No one likes a hypocrite, someone who says one thing and does another. As Christians, we must be very careful not to condemn ourselves and scandalize others by not living out what we teach to be true. Instead, we must be people of integrity who live out our beliefs every day in what we say and do.

Jesus Christ is certainly the perfect example of a life lived with integrity, for He is a human being who is also divine. He Himself is the perfect integration of the image of God with God Himself. And He does not ask us, or anyone else, to do anything that He has not already done.

When we read the account of the Lord's raising of the son of the widow of Nain, we are probably reminded of St. James' teaching: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." And that is precisely what Christ does: He has compassion upon a widow who mourns the death of her only son. He comforts her, saying "Do not weep," and then touches the coffin, bringing the young man back from the dead.

The Lord's great act of compassion for this woman is a sign of our salvation. For we weep and mourn not only for loved ones whom we see no more, but also for the broken, disintegrated state of life that the sins of humanity—and our own sins—have brought to us and to our world. Death, destruction, hatred, fear, and decay in all their forms are the consequences of our refusal to live faithfully as those created in the image of God. We have worshipped ourselves, our possessions and our pride, and found despair and emptiness as a result, as well as slavery to our own self-centered desires. So we weep with the widow of Nain for losing loved ones and for losing ourselves.

The good news of the Gospel, however, is the compassion of God. Rather than simply observing human suffering and letting us bear the consequences of our actions, the Father sent the Son to enter into our suffering, into our distorted and disintegrated world, in order to set us right, to stop us from weeping, and even to raise us from the dead into the glory of the heavenly kingdom. The Son touched the coffin of the dead man and he arose. Christ's compassion for us is so profound that He also entered a coffin, a tomb, and even descended to Hades, the shadowy place of the dead because—out of love for humankind—He could not simply stand by and allow us to bear the full consequences of our actions.

You see, our faith is not fundamentally about justice or punishment or wrath for sinners. It is instead about the infinite and holy love of Christ Who will stop at nothing to bring the one lost sheep back into the fold, Who is not embarrassed to welcome home the prodigal son, and Who will even submit to death on a cross in order to destroy death by His glorious resurrection.

And, yes, we have our part to play in response to His love. If we seek to follow Jesus Christ, if we are members of His Body the Church, and are nourished by His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, then His compassion must become evident in our lives. If we are partakers the divine nature in Him, then His life must become ours such that, as St. Paul teaches, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." If we receive Christ's compassion, we must extend compassion to others, suffering with them in love, sharing their pain as best we can and going out of our way to show them the mercy and care that we have found in our Lord.

But we need to be clear: Extending Christ's compassion to others is not the same thing as being a wimp or making sure that everyone likes us. It took discipline, strength, and courage for the Lord to show compassion throughout His entirely earthly ministry, especially His journey to the cross. And every time that He healed the sick or raised the dead, He surely knew that the Pharisees and perhaps the Romans were watching, noticing Him as a threat to their power. And they certainly did not like Him or His ministry.

If we are to live the Christian life with integrity, we too must have the courage to show compassion to those who suffer, who mourn, and whose lives are filled with pain and disorder. Perhaps they brought some of these conditions upon themselves. Maybe they didn't always do the right thing and are reaping the consequences of their own bad choices. In some cases, they may actually believe that what they are doing is good. Well, so what? Isn't that the story of us all? Christ did not come to show mercy upon those who deserved it, for mercy is something that, by definition, we can't deserve. The widow of Nain and her dead son did not deserve the compassion of the Lord, but He showed love to them anyway. The relevance for our lives should be obvious. If we have integrity as Christians, we will respond to others with the same compassion that we have experienced in Jesus Christ.

This is not a calling for cowards afraid of their own shadow, for it requires discipline, self-control, and a strength of character beyond our own power. Unfortunately, it's become second nature for us to try to judge others as though we were God, as though it were our place to separate the sheep from the goats. Nothing gets in the way of mercy more than self-righteous judgment, for it so easily inflames our passions and gives us perverse pleasure in naming the faults of others. This prideful attitude quickly takes root in our hearts, weakening marriages and families, destroying friendships, giving us every excuse not to care for those who don't measure up to our standards, and making it impossible for us to live the Christian life with integrity.

Well, Jesus Christ certainly has integrity. Not only are God and humanity integrated in His own Person, He lived out the kind of life that He taught in the same fallen world that we experience every day. He came to bring us into His eternal life out of compassion. He suffered with

us to the point of death. The One who was the highest became the lowest for our sakes.

If we want His compassion, let us be compassionate to those who suffer even as a result of their own bad choices and habits. That doesn't mean that we should give everyone exactly what they want, let them run our lives, or refuse to speak and act according to the truth, but it does mean that we sorrow with them in their pain and discern prayerfully how to do the fitting thing that best manifests Christ's love in our relationship with them.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, each of us may become a better living icon of our Lord's compassion. In order to do that, we must open our lives more fully to the presence of God, mindfully rejecting the lies that we tell ourselves about who is not worthy of our time, attention, and assistance. The greater focus we place on prayer, the more seriously we take our fasting, the more conscientious we are in confessing and repenting of our sins on a regular basis, the more aware we will become of the great mercy that the Lord has shown us and of where we need to grow in sharing His compassion with others.

Then we will grow in integrity as Christians, treating others as the Lord has treated us, and living out what we say we believe. And our lives will become signs of Christ's salvation, living evidence of His victory over sin and death and of the power of His unfathomable love. And that same holy compassion that raised the son of the widow of Nain will raise us, and others, into the blessed eternal life of the Kingdom.

The Treasury

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

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Collections last Sunday (10/1): \$2,642</p>
