



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 26th Sun after Pentecost + Sun, December 3rd, 2023 + Prophet Zephaniah



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!"

We celebrate the memory of Thy prophet Zephaniah, O Lord; through him we beseech Thee: "Save our souls!"

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!"

Thou hast been revealed by the Spirit of God to be brilliant, O Prophet Zephaniah, for thou didst proclaim the coming of God: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to save mankind!"

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading - Ephesians 5:9-19

(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Gospel Reading - Luke 18:18-27

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the

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!*

kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."



This Week's Schedule

Doly Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, December 2nd

9 AM: Deanery Retreat @ All Saints in Olyphant
5 PM: 9th Hour (4:50), Great Vespers, Confession

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Sunday, December 3rd

8:10 AM: Resurrectional Matins (NEW) w/ Hours
9 AM: Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour, Church School, Adult Ed @ 11:15 AM

Parastas, Dec 3rd in Memory of Archbishop David Mahaffey

Offered by SD Greg Polk

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THIS WEEK

Nativity Fast continues thru December 25th

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Feast of St. Nicholas of Myra

TUES 6:30 PM - Great Vespers for St. Nicholas

WED 9 AM - Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas

Followed by a Festive Lenten Coffee Hour. Please welcome our sister Parishes who will be with us - Holy Resurrection Cathedral & St. John the Baptist, Edwardsville

NOTE: No Wednesday Open Church or Akathist this week due to the Feast. Please come to Tuesday Night Vespers & Liturgy on Wednesday morning instead.

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THURS 11 AM: Bible Study

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, December 9th

5 PM: 9th Hour (4:50), Great Vespers, Confession

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Sunday, December 10th

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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Parish Council is the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is SUN, Dec 10th.

Friends of the Poor is the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, Dec 9th.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is December 31st.

December 17th after Divine Liturgy

The Annual Church School

Christmas Yolka

Confession During the Nativity Fast

Dear Parish Family - A reminder for those who regularly receive Holy Communion, and those receiving for Our Lord's Nativity that we go to confession at least once during each fasting period (and as needed). Preparation for Our Lord's Nativity is a spiritual work that is greatly supported by examining ourselves and confessing our sins and shortcomings. Don't miss out on this beautiful work that strengthens us and bring us closer to God. Receiving Holy Communion unites us to Jesus Christ who then remains present in us and brings us spiritual Joy. Everyone is invited and encouraged to engage and receive Christ - Born in us on Christmas Day!

Friends of the Poor, December 9th: Our next Friends of the poor outing will be Saturday December 9th, we will meet at the church at 9:00am. We have been blessed with the donation of many clothing items and we are grateful for the support. For the remainder of the Nativity season we would ask for your continued support by monetary donations made out to Friends of the poor. This will enable us to target specific needs identified when we are out meeting our less fortunate neighbors.

Nativity Fast Text Message Series: As we did last year during the Nativity Fast, Fr. Innocent will send a series of encouraging text messages to help keep you engaged in the spirit of the season. It's not too late to sign up in the vestibule!

Please Consider Donating to our Friends of the Poor Ministry

In the spirit of the Christmas/Nativity Season, please consider supporting our Parish's Friends of the Poor Ministry with a monetary donation. This donation will help us to target specific needs for individuals on the streets of Wilkes-Barre during the coldest time of the year with much needed winter clothing and supplies. **Check's should be made payable to "Friends of the Poor"**. Thank you and may God bless your sacrifice.



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Rich Young Ruler

By Met. Anthony Bloom

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

It is not only awesome, at times it is frightening to preach the Word of God, because the Lord said "By thy words thou shall be judged." Judged, because if you proclaim God's truth and remain idle and not the doer of what the Lord has commanded, and what you know well enough to proclaim to others - then, how shall you stand before the judgement of God? This does not apply only to the priest, but to every Christian who is called to be a witness, an apostle, one that brings God's word to the people who are in darkness or twilight, who need divine light, and truth and life.

Today's Gospel challenges us all so sharply. It begins with words that may be interpreted in more than one way: "Good Lord - what shall I do to have eternal life?" And the Lord answers, "Why do you call Me 'good'? Good is only God". He does not say, "You are wrong". He does not deny His right to be called good as God is good; and thereby, to those who have ears to hear, those who have a heart capable of perceiving the surpassing goodness of the Lord Jesus, surpassing all human goodness, all human beauty and truth - it is a testimony: Yes, you are speaking to your God, and it is your God that is to answer your question.

And then Christ gives us two indications. The one is: if you wish to have eternal life, keep the Commandments. The Commandments of God are not only rules of behavior (although, of course, they are such), but as one of the Psalms puts it, should be in our inmost hearts. It should be from the depths of our heart that we accomplish the Commandments: not because we are commanded from outside, but because they have reached us with the ring of truth; not because God has spoken, but because with all our being we have answered "Amen!" This is true, this is life, this is the way into eternal life. When we hear Christ mentioning these Commandments - where are we? Who of us can say that he was faithful to every word of this shortlist that

Nativity Fast Adult Education - Topics on Spiritual

Life: Fr. Innocent will offer brief presentations during coffee hour Sundays - Nov 26th, Dec 3rd and Dec 10th, during the Nativity (Advent) Fast. The goal of each presentation will be to enrich our understanding in areas of Orthodox spiritual life and strengthen our faith. Presentations will last 30 minutes followed by discussion and Q&A. Everyone is invited. **This week's class will continue our study on The Lord's Prayer.**

NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS - \$15: As customary, our Nativity Poinsettia Donations will purchase flowers to adorn the Church for the Feast of the Nativity. Your donations may be made in remembrance of, or for the health of, your family and loved ones. The names you provide at the time of your donation will appear in the Church Bulletin for the Feast of the Nativity. Please see the signup sheet in the vestibule and give your donation directly to Mary Ann Kudey or Deborah Mills. Many thanks and may God Bless You for your donation!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays: David Clark (12/1), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratich (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Peter Holoviak (12/30), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31) **Anniversaries:** N/A

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: Stephen Dutko (12/8)

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Holoviak Family, Evelyn Kosmiski, Mat. Elizabeth, Jeri Basarab, Fr. Theodore Orzolek, Vladimir & Marie Dutko, Tom & Joan Austin, David, Elizabeth, Lydia, Melanie Bishop, Delores Voda, Nicole Hapeman, David Goobic, David Lezinsky **Departed:** Al Horiak, Mary Ann Lepa, Mary Homick

indicates that without which we cannot live? Where do we stand? I, who am preaching, you who are hearing, because it is as responsible to hear as it is to speak. How often do we think - as this young man, and with how little reason - that we want perfection. We want perfection without having first trod the road of the Commandments.

But Christ says to us quite clearly: "If you want perfection - give all you possess." It is not only material things which we can give: every one of us has treasures hoarded in his mind and heart, in his soul, things which are more important to him than anything material, that is his wealth. Each of us should turn inward and ask himself, "What is there which is my peculiar treasure? What are those things which I will not give away even for life eternal, for God?"

We do not put things in such a crude manner, but we hug those things which are so precious to us, and still, we hope that we will enter the Kingdom of God, we will reach perfection, we will become in all fullness what we are called to be, the kind of persons of whom God dreamed when He created us - and it is not true.

In the Book of Revelation, there is a passage that says, "I have only one thing against you - you have forgotten your first love". And this first love, indeed, for each of us, is the Living God, Whom we call in so many ways: we may call Him 'Life', we may call Him 'Fulfillment', we may call Him 'Happiness', we may call Him by all the names that mean that we should reach the fullness of our being. At times we know that only in God it is possible, at times we imagine that we can outgrow ourselves - all the same, this is our first love: to become as great as God has dreamed us, willed us.

And we do not follow the Commandments because we think that we can achieve it in a simpler manner; and we do not give away all we have, that is: the only thing we are not prepared to give away, in a hope that God will accept us, and our burden.

Let us reflect on this story. This is not even a parable, it is something that has happened to a young man. It happens to all of us when God says, "Have you been faithful to the way of life which I have described to you in terms of commandments, outlined in these terms as one can outline a road by milestones? Do you want to attain fullness - start at that point." And if you are aware of

having been faithful in these things, then ask yourself the further question: what is the treasure which I will not give away, even for eternal life?

The young man heard the words of Christ, and went away sad. He had earthly possessions, but we have so many possessions which are not material and which are our burden, our fetters.

And yet, there is in this story one thing that can give us so much hope. Christ did not condemn this young man; Christ let him go without a word of reproach because what He had said was like seed sown into the mind and heart of this young man. He let him go wounded at the heart, puzzled in his mind, called to be himself by an act of heroic will and surrender, let go of himself, as Christ said, give everything away and follow Him. Where to? Along the road of human life on one hand, on the other hand - into the fullness of life eternal.

When Christ says to us "Follow Me", He does not call us to walk a frightening, dark road; He says, "I have trodden all this road, I know every meander of it - you can safely follow! I am like the good shepherd that walks in front of his sheep, meeting all dangers himself, so that the sheep may be safe."

We all will go home like the young man, perhaps saddened, that neither are we keeping the Commandments, nor are we able to give away our most precious treasure: but remember - we will not go condemned, we will have been faced with an ultimate choice, and as long as we can struggle on earth - there is time.

But let us not be beguiled by the length of time: time flies, time goes - let it not be too late, let us turn to life, let us become all we are capable of being.

The answer to today's Gospel is so clear - "Who then can be saved?" - To man, it is not possible by our own strength; but to God, all things are possible." That is our hope: God is with us, and nothing is too much for us. Amen.

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Collections last Sunday (11/26): \$1,925</p>
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