



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sunday, January 16th, 2022 - 30th Sunday After Pentecost - Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy Apostle Peter



Hymns for Today

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

Thou didst come to us without leaving Rome through the precious chains that thou didst wear. First-enthroned of the Apostles, we bow down to them in faith and pray: "Through thy prayers to God grant us great mercy!"

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, and we cry to Thee: "O Lord, save us!"

Christ the Rock radiantly glorifies the Rock of Faith, the first-enthroned of the disciples; He calls us to honor the miracles wrought through Peter's chains, so that He may grant us forgiveness of our sins.

Epistle Reading - Colossians 3:12-16

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts 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 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."

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!*

This Week's Schedule

THIS WEEKEND

SAT, Jan 15th: Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

SUN, Jan 16th: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Great Blessing of Water, Diocesan Assembly Meeting

THIS WEEK

WED, Jan 19th: Private Prayer 11:00 AM-1:30 PM

NEXT WEEKEND

SAT, Jan 22nd: Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

SUN, Jan 23rd: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Parish Council Meeting

2022 HOME BLESSINGS

PLEASE READ FOR INSTRUCTIONS

The Blessing of Homes will begin **Tuesday, January 18th**. The order in which homes are blessed will follow the normal pattern. Please see the schedule below. Fr. Innocent and his helpers will arrive to bless either the outside OR inside depending on your preference for this year. If you would like the inside of your home blessed remember to have an icon, candle, bowl for holy water, and list for living & departed. For blessing the outside of your home no special preparations are needed other than the list of names. If you do not want your home blessed please indicate so on the signup sheet in the vestibule. If you have not had your home blessed in past years, but would like to this year, let Fr. Innocent know so he can add you to the schedule. Fr. Innocent and the boys look forward to this joyful time with each one of you!

Home Blessing Schedule

Tues, Jan 18th: Miners Mill & Parsons (11:00 PM - 3 PM)

Wed, Jan 19th: Hudson, Plains, Laflin, Pittston, Bald Mountain (11 AM - 5 PM)

Thurs, Jan 20th: Mountaintop, Hanover Twp, Nanticoke Area (11 AM - 5 PM)

Tues, Feb 1st: Wilkes Barre City & Township, Kingston & Westside, and homes missed earlier (11 AM - 5 PM)

By Appointment: Back Mountain, Outside of Area

Upcoming Parish Events & Announcements

SAT, JAN 15 - PARLOR CLEANUP & SETUP FOR THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY - Help is needed in our continued restoration of the downstairs parlor AND in preparation for the Diocesan Assembly. Anyone who can offer a few hours to help in this important effort is encouraged to come. Cleanup begins at 8:30 AM. More details to come.

TODAY - SUN, JAN 16 - DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY EVENT MEETING - The 2022 Diocesan Assembly Meeting to be held at Holy Trinity is quickly approaching (Jan 27-28). All those who are on the event team or interested in helping with the event please attend today's meeting.

SUN, JAN 23 - PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - Monthly Parish Council Meeting.

COFFEE HOUR & CHURCH SCHOOL THRU JANUARY: With the current surge in Coronavirus we will suspend Church School and Coffee Hour for the next few weeks. With our new Coffee brewer in the parlor, anyone who would like to go down after liturgy for a self-serve pot of coffee is welcome to do so. Instructions for brewing will be posted. A full Coffee Hour and Church School will begin again in February.

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY JAN 27-28: Holy Trinity is honored to host this year's Diocesan Assembly. We are in need of volunteers! If you can offer time on those days, days leading up to the Assembly, or for post-assembly cleanup, please see Fr. Innocent or Deborah Mills. We thank you in advance for any time you may be able to offer.

SUN, JAN 30 - COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING to discuss our continued efforts in reaching out to the poor and homeless in our community.

PARLOR COFFEE BAR: We are building a new coffee bar area downstairs in the Parlor. If you have an old kitchen table that you could donate for the project please see Sandy Serafin.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

January Birthdays: Coleen King (1/1), Mary Krill (1/1), Greg Polk (1/4), Melissa Donlick (1/5), Mark Sovyrda (1/5), Margaret Krout (1/7), Jerry Stankiewicz (1/8), David Welgus (1/11), Amanda Benczkowski (1/17), Bernard Bolubiewski (1/20), Matthias Haugh (1/22) Eleanor Sovyrda (1/27), Josie Bisset (1/31), Amanda Benczkowski, Matthias Haugh

This Week's Birthdays: Amanda Benczkowski (1/17), Bernard Bolubiewski (1/20), Matthias Haugh (1/22)

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Rose Marie, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Betty Serafin, Matushka Elizabeth, Karen Maier, John Metz, Tim, Jeri Basarab, Fr. Theodore Orzolek, Bernie Elko, Delores Voda, Mary Ann Lepa, Melanie Bishop, Eric, Lynn Bankos, Mat. Delores Donlick, Archpriest Michael Lepa, Archpriest Vladimir Fetchko, Dorothy Sysak, James Clark **Departed:** Mat. Anna Pawlush, Lynn Bankos

Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday

“The Orthodox Church continues to hold fast to its ancient belief that all human life, from conception in the womb to our very last moment, is sacred to God. For the Holy Scripture tells us that “God did not make death, and He does not delight in the death of the living. For He created all things that they might exist” (Wis 1:13–14). So we say, humbly but firmly, that the willful destruction of a person in the womb is an evil act and a rejection of a gift of God.”

- Met Tikhon, Sanctity of Life Sunday

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 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?

"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."

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.
