



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sunday, January 23rd, 2022 - 31st Sunday After Pentecost - The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia



Hymns for Today

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure body. You captured hell, not being tempted by it. You came to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.

Today the Church of Russia forms a chorus in joy, praising her new martyrs and confessors; hierarchs and priests, royal passion-bearers, right-believing princes and princesses, venerable men and women, and all Orthodox Christians. Having laid down their life for faith in Christ during the days of godless persecution, they preserved the truth by the shedding of blood. By their protection, O long-suffering Lord, preserve our land in Orthodoxy till the end of the age.

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Today the new martyrs of Rus' stand in white robes before the Lamb of God, and with the angels they sing to God the hymn of victory: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and praise, and honor, and power, and strength be to our God unto the ages of ages. Amen."

Gospel Reading - 1 Timothy 1:15-17

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason, I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - Luke 18:35-43

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to 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 22nd: Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions
SUN, Jan 23rd: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Parish Council Meeting

THIS WEEK

WED, Jan 26th: Private Prayer 11:00 AM-1:30 PM
THURS, Jan 27-28th: Diocesan Assembly

NEXT WEEKEND

SAT, Jan 29th: Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions
SUN, Jan 30th: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Community Outreach Meeting

2022 HOME BLESSINGS

The Blessing of Homes will continue in February after the Diocesan Assembly. If you would like your home to be blessed and have not yet scheduled a time, see Fr. Innocent.

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

WED, JAN 26 – FINAL SETUP FOR THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY – A few hands are needed to finalize our setup for the Diocesan Assembly. If you have any time this Wednesday (morning thru evening) please see Fr. Innocent.

TODAY, 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.

FOOD SALE, TUES FEB 1st: We're hoping to have our first, much-needed, fundraiser for 2022 (soup sale) on Feb 1st. We'll need help on the morning of Saturday, January 29th to prepare and set up AND on Tuesday for the sale. The first task is to ensure we have enough volunteers to help. Please sign up in the Vestibule or give sandy a call (571-274-5846) to sign up.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH IN OUR COMMUNITY: Holy Trinity is planning a community service experience for our Wilkes-Barre area youth with **YES**, an Orthodox ministry that focuses on developing young Orthodox leaders. It will take place on a Saturday during Lent. **YES** creates formative opportunities that equip participants to serve each person as the image of Christ. **YES** offers leadership opportunities for high school and college-aged youth. Contact Catie DeCarlo for more information.

WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We need your help! Holy Trinity is not currently meeting its monthly expenses. In addition to your much-needed prayers that God sustains us, Please consider giving a little extra each week or making an additional donation. Below are our current numbers.

Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open – \$ 3,260

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open – \$14,127

Collections last Sunday – \$2,072

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: Eleanor Sovyrda (1/27)

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, Vasilli (Bill) Talpash
Departed: Lynn Bankos

The New Commandment

By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

The commandments to love God and neighbor are found in the law of Moses. They are not commandments for God's people. They are the commandments "written on men's hearts" and given "by nature" itself (Rom 2.14–15). They are the commandments given by God, in His Words, to man "from the beginning" (1 Jn 2.7).

In the new covenant Church of Christ, however, there is a "new commandment" (1 Jn 2.8). It is the "new commandment" given by Jesus Himself to those who believe in Him.

A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one

another. By this, all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn 13.34).

The new element in this "new commandment" is not the teaching of love, for this was written in the law. The new element is that believers in Christ must love as Christ Himself loves. The new commandment is to love "as I have loved you."

Christian love must be the perfect love of Christ Himself which is wholly divine. Christian love must be the totally self-emptying love of the Lord Himself. It must be the divine love of God the Father poured into men's hearts by the very Spirit of God. It must be the love that is absolutely faithful, perfect, eternal and divine.

Of all the men who ever lived on this earth, or who ever will live, only one has fully fulfilled the two great commandments of God; only one has lived absolutely and perfectly according to God's laws; only one has loved the Father with all of His heart, mind, soul, and strength, and His neighbor as Himself. This is Jesus Christ, the child of Mary according to the flesh.

There is no one righteous before God's law but Jesus. Only He has lived according to the law and by the teachings of the prophets. He alone is the one who has "fulfilled the law and the prophets" (cf. Mt 5.17, 7.12). He alone, of all men, has loved with perfect, sinless, dispassionate love.

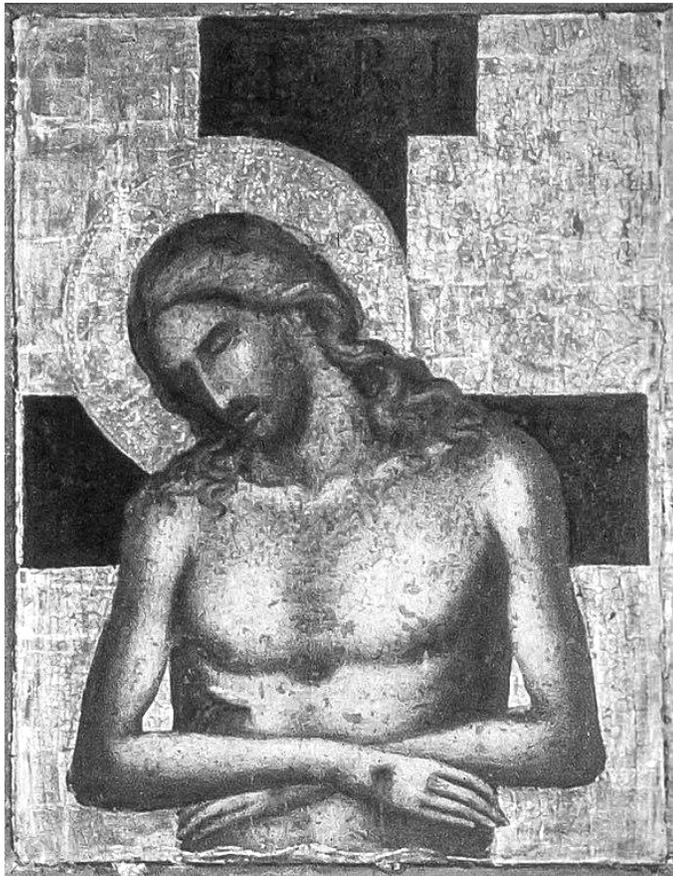
He committed no sin; no guile was found on His lips. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten; but He trusted to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed (1 Pet 2.22–24; cf. Is 53).

Having no sin, Jesus took our sins upon Himself and became sin "for us men and for our salvation" (Nicene Creed). In this the perfect love of God was perfected in a human being, that all humans might share in the love and glory of God. As all of the holy fathers have said, "He became what we are, that we might become what He is . . . God became man that man might become god."

For our sake God made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5.21).

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness ... that you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the nature of God (2 Pet 1.3–4).

Since ... the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.



The Icon of Extreme Humility

Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself suffered and was tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize [i.e., co-suffer] with our weaknesses, but

One who in every respect has been tempted as we, yet without sinning (Heb 2.14–18, 4.15–16).

God has given us His love in Jesus. When a person is “in Christ” he can love with the love of God. This is the “new commandment,” that men filled with the Holy Spirit should love with the love of God Himself.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul describes the perfect love which is Christ’s gift of God to men in the Holy Spirit. He describes what Christian love is: the chief gift of the Spirit of God, who is love.

Through the love of Christ, men are called to bear, believe, hope and suffer all things. This is what Christ has done. This is what love does. The one who does this has fulfilled the “new commandment” of Jesus and abides in the love of God. The one who does this abides in God Himself, and already possesses eternal life as a member of His Kingdom.

The Gift of Love

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for the prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor 13.1–13)