



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 5th Sunday after Pentecost + Sun, July 9th, 2023 + St. Pancratius +



Hymns for This Week

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!"

By sharing in the ways of the Apostles, thou didst become a successor to their throne. Through the practice of virtue, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation, O inspired one of God; by teaching the word of truth without error, thou didst defend the Faith, even to the shedding of thy blood. O Hieromartyr Pancratius, entreat Christ God to save our souls!

O Pancratius, thou wast revealed as a brilliant star for the people of Taormina. Thou wast also shown to be a sufferer for Christ. Since now thou standest before Him, O blessed one, pray for those who honor thee.

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!

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.

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

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!

begged Him to depart from their region. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.



This Week's Schedule

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

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THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, July 8th

10 AM: Friends of the Poor

5 PM: Great Vespers & Confessions

Sunday, July 9th

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

11:30 AM: Parish Council Meeting

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THIS WEEK

WED 11 AM – 1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church
No Akathist in the evening

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, July 15th

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

Sunday, July 16th

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

on our vehicles traveling through town, on vacations, for work, and for recreation. This blessing is a request to Our Lord that He send a Guardian Angel to protect and keep both drivers and passengers in safety, and to bless our vehicles given to us by God for their good use. Bring your vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles or any other form of transportation on Sunday, July 23rd to be blessed immediately following Divine Liturgy.

ANNUAL BAZAAR July 28th & 29th - Work and Donations needed

The Holy Trinity Annual Bazaar is approaching fast. It will be held July 28th & 29th from 4 PM to 8 PM. As usual we need as much help as we can get to make it a big success. There will be a number of upcoming workdays, especially the week of the Bazaar, along with many donation opportunities. Please see the signup sheets in the back to make donations for the Raffle Baskets and Bake Sale, and to sign up for the upcoming pierogi project (July 14th/15th) and work schedule.

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

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), Katrina Zbegner (7/26), Donna Stankiewkz (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)

This Week's Birthdays: Marley Willis (7/10), Xenia Clark (7/11) **Anniversaries:** N/A



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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SUMMER BIBLE STUDY: Beginning Thursday, July 20th, 11:AM – Noon, we will begin our summer bible study. The bible study will be held weekly on Thursdays for one hour. Bring your bible with you as we discuss and discover the profound revelation of Jesus Christ to the world and how it applies to our daily lives.

BLESSING OF VEHICLES - SUN, JULY 23RD: Vehicles are traditionally blessed on or near the Feast of St. Elijah (July 20th) who was taken up by God into the heavens in a fiery chariot. We are all accustomed to having our homes blessed around the Feast of Theophany, yet we also spend a great deal of time in OR



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

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On St. Anthony and Demons

By St. Justin Popovich

Venerable Anthony, great among the perfect, was clairvoyant. Having experienced demonic temptations, he no longer succumbed on their cunning. And many times he saw with his bodily eyes both angels and devils working around people, to draw them each to their side. He was so great and powerful in virtues, that he mocked unclean spirits and ridiculed them. Sometimes he

infuriated them, reminding them of how they had been cast out of heaven, and how they had to suffer eternally in the fire.

And this happened once: Two demons agreed on how to approach the famous elder Anthony. And they talked among themselves about how neither of them should approach him, fearing that the elder would inflict severe wounds on them. Because the elder had achieved great fearlessness and a perfect life, and he had acquired the Holy Spirit. And one of those two demons said to the other:

"Brother Serefer (because that was the name of this demon), if either of us repented, would God accept our repentance? Could it be or not?"

The other answered: "Who can know that?"

And Serefer said: "Do you want us to go to Elder Anthony, who is not afraid of us, and to find out about it from him?"

The other answered him: "Go, go, but be careful, because the elder is clairvoyant, and he will see that you are tempting him, so he will not want to ask God about it. Still, go, if only you so you could find out what you want."

And Serefer turned into a man, and went to Elder Anthony, and began to weep before him and lament. And God, wanting to show that He does not turn His face away from anyone who repents, but accepts all who resort to Him, and wanting to give an example to a sinner person that He would not turn His face away even from the devil, the chief of evil, if he truly repents, temporarily hid from the elder the intentions of this demon. And the Saint, seeing a man in front of him and not a demon, asked him:

"Why, man, do you weep and cry from the heart, and shake my soul with your tears?"

And the cunning demon answered: "Holy Father, I am not a man but a demon, and that because of the multitude of my iniquities."

The elder asked him: "What do you want me to do for you, brother?" (Because the Saint thought that out of

great humility he called himself a demon. And God had not yet revealed anything to him about this).

The demon answered: "Holy Father, I pray for one thing only: pray fervently to God to tell you, would He receive the devil if he repents or not? Because if He received the devil, He would receive me, because I have done deeds that he did."

The elder said: "I will fulfill your will. But go to your house today, and come here tomorrow, and I will tell you what the Lord says about it."

And the demon left. And when night fell, the elder raised his holy hands to heaven, and prayed to the One who loves mankind, to tell him whether He would receive the devil if he repents. And immediately an Angel of the Lord stood before the elder and said: "

Thus saith the Lord our God: 'Why do you ask Me for a demon? He came to test you cunningly.'"

And the elder said to the Angel: "Then why didn't the Lord God reveal it to me, but hid it from me, so that I wouldn't see the demon's cunning?"

The Angel answered: "Let it not trouble you, for this is the wonderful providence of God for the benefit of sinners, so that sinners, who have committed many iniquities, do not despair but repent, knowing that the all-merciful God does not turn His face away from anyone who resorts to Him, even if it was the cunning devil himself, if he really did it. Besides, God did not reveal it to you, in order to reveal the stubbornness and despair of demons. So when the tempter comes to you and asks you, do not cut him off immediately, but tell him this: 'God is so merciful that He does not turn His face away from anyone who resorts to Him, even if he is the devil himself. Here, He promises that he will receive you too, only if you fulfill what He orders you to do.' And if he asks you: 'What is He ordering me?' say unto him, 'Thus saith the Lord God: I know who you are, and from where you have come. You are an ancient evil and you cannot be a new virtue; you have long been the chief of evil, and you will not stop doing evil now. Accustomed to pride, how can you humble yourself to repentance and find mercy? But, in order not to have this excuse on the Day of Judgment, that you wanted to repent but God did not receive you, here, the gentle and merciful Lord also determines (only if you agree) repentance, because He

says: Standing in one place for three years, and facing the East, cry out and say this day and night: God, have mercy on me, the ancient evil! – Say this a hundred times. And again another prayer: God, save me, who am darkened by delusion! – And say the same thing a hundred times. And again: God, have mercy on me, the abomination of desolation! – Say this also a hundred times. So cry out to the Lord constantly, because you don't have a body to get tired or weak. And when you do it with humility, then you will be accepted into your original dignity and included among the Angels of God.' And if he promises to do this, you accept him for repentance. But I know that ancient evil cannot become new good. And let this be written for the last generations, so that sinners who want to repent do not despair. Because from this, people will easily be convinced that they should not despair for their salvation."

When the Angel said this to the Venerable Anthony, he ascended to heaven. And when the dawn came, the demon, who from afar began to cry and weep like a man, he approached the elder, and he bowed. The elder did not rebuke him at first, but he said in his mind: "At the wrong hour you came liars, devils, scorpions, creators of evil, ancient evil, snake-eater!" Then the Saint said to him: "As I promised you, I prayed to the Lord my God. He will receive you to repentance, if you adopt what my powerful and almighty Lord commands you through me."

The demon asked: "And what is it that God has commanded me to do?"

The elder answered: "God commands you like this: Facing the East, you are to stand motionless in one place for three years, crying out day and night: 'God, have mercy on me, the ancient evil!' – You are to say this a hundred times. Then you are to say a hundred times like this: 'God, have mercy on me, the abomination of desolation!' – And after that again a hundred times this: 'God have mercy on me, who am darkened by delusion!' – And when you do all that God commands you, you will be included among the Angels of God, and you will be in the original dignity in which you were before."

Serefer immediately threw off that false form of repentance, laughed out loud, and said to the elder: "O monk! if I wanted to call myself the ancient evil, and the abomination of desolation, and the one darkened by delusion, I would have done it earlier, in the beginning,

to be saved. Should I call myself an ancient evil now? Not at all! And who says that? Oh, I am wonderful in my glory until this hour, and all cowards obey me! And why would I call myself the abomination of desolation or the one darkened by delusion? Not at all, monk, not at all! For I still rule over sinners, and they love me, and I am in their hearts, and they live according to my will. Does repentance make me an unnecessary and wicked servant? Never, evil old man, never, never will it be that I push myself from such a great honor into such disgrace!"

Having said that, the devil became invisible. And the elder stood in prayer, and thanked God, saying: "You have told the truth, Lord, that ancient evil cannot become a new virtue; the creator of evils cannot be the creator of new goods."

We have endeavored, brethren, to tell you this not in vain, but that you may know the gentleness and mercy of the Lord. Are you sinful – repent! If you do not repent, then you will suffer more terribly than demons in hell, not because you have sinned – (because we all sin, and no one is without sin except one God) – but because you did not want to repent and pray to the Judge before your death. For in the state death finds us, so will we be sent there. If you die without repentance, serving the devil with various and different sins, you will be completely with him and you will be condemned to eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And if before death you flee from sin, and please the Lord with repentance and faith, oh! how many treasures you will enjoy after death! For you will find a merciful Judge, and you will be worthy of bliss, and you will dwell with the bright Angels, where for all who have pleased God, there is inexpressible beauty and eternal joy and gladness. May we all receive this in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and through all the ages, Amen.

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 (07/02/23): \$</p>
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