

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2022

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday, August 14: 8am Confessions

9am Divine Liturgy for the deceased Carrie Ann Hunnicutt by Mary Anne Meredith

Monday, August 15: Dormition of the Holy Theotokos (Obligation)

Holy Spirit ~ 9am Selections from Festal Matins

St. Pius X ~ 11am Confessions followed by 12pm Divine Liturgy

Holy Spirit ~ 5pm Confessions followed by 6pm Divine Liturgy

Friday, August 19: 9am 1st and 3rd Hour

5pm Confessions, 6pm Divine Liturgy for the Intentions of the Parish

Saturday, August 20: 8am Confessions, 9am Divine Liturgy

Sunday, August 21: 8am Confessions

9am Divine Liturgy for the deceased Stephen Hunnicutt by Mary Anne Meredith

Confessions are available before Divine Liturgy. All divine liturgies are open for intentions. Call the office or fill out the request form in the back of church and leave it in the sacristy.

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY... In curing the devil-possessed boy a recorded in the miracle account of today's gospel, Jesus emphasizes the absolute necessity of faith and trust in God. This can be nurtured only through PRAYER and FASTING. The Holy Apostle Paul instructs us to imitate the Christ of the gospels, for He must be our model. Jesus continues to call us to a vigorous and energetic faith through fervent prayer and with concerted fasting. Though the Dormition Fast is a lesser fast than our Lenten observance, let us not overlook this opportunity of grace.

EPISTLE: 1 Corinthians 4: 9-16 (Section 131)

Brethren: As I see it, God has put us apostles at the end of the line, like men doomed to die in the arena. We have become a spectacle to the universe, to angels and men alike. We are fools on Christ's account. Ah, but in Christ you are wise! We are the weak ones, you the strong! They honor you, while they sneer at us! Up to this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, poorly clad, roughly treated, wandering about homeless. We work hard at manual labor. When we are insulted we respond with a blessing. Persecution comes our way; we bear it patiently. We are slandered, and we try reconciliation. We have become the world's refuse, the scum of all; that is the present state of affairs. I am writing you in this way not to shame you but to admonish you as my beloved children. Granted you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you have only one father. It was I who begot you in Christ Jesus through my preaching of the gospel. I beg you, then, be imitators of me.

~~~~~The Holy Apostle Paul, in these verses taken from his first letter addressed to the community of Christians at Corinth, pleads with them to follow his example, for his model is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The faith of the Corinthians had lapsed into a terrible rut with the people becoming smug, complacent, and secure. Paul endeavors to point out certain necessities essential to the Christian existence. Among these are abnegation – the need for self-control and sacrifice – together with denial, that is a sense of FASTING in general. In addition PRAYER is of paramount importance to the Christian way of life. Paul states plainly that when people follow such precepts, they are frequently considered to be "fools for the sake of Christ." However, he personally finds joy in following this way of Christ. When people curse him, Paul says that he returns a blessing. Others may make his life miserable, but he endures it patiently. Some even try to ruin his good reputation, and yet Paul still continues to bless them and to win them over for God. A genuine Christian has to live the gospel message and to effect the gospel's principles in the daily course of life.

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 17: 14-23 (Section 72)**

When they came to the crowd a man approached, knelt down before him, and said, "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic and suffers severely; often he falls into fire, and often into water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." Jesus said in reply, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I endure you? Bring him here to me." Jesus rebuked him and the demon came out of him,\* and from that hour the boy was cured.

Then the disciples approached Jesus in private and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were overwhelmed with grief.

~~~~~In the holy gospel reading given for today, the Holy Evangelist Matthew relates how Jesus was approached by a father who begged Him to cure his son who was a lunatic, being devil-possessed. This incident occurred just after the transfiguration event on Mount Tabor, for great crowds met Jesus as He came down from the mountaintop. Prior to appealing to our Lord, the man did seek the apostles' assistance, but they were unable to aid this demented boy. As Jesus came down the mountain, the distraught father of the epileptic boy pleaded with Him: "Lord, have pity on my son!" In recounting the cure of this boy, Matthew presents us with this seventh miracle as we conclude our summer series of miracle accounts. Jesus castigated the apostles because they were powerless to cure this boy, accusing them of a lack of faith. Jesus made it perfectly clear to them that they were unable to provide any relief for this hapless boy precisely because they had such little faith. A dynamic and vibrant faith can even move mountains! But, it must be nourished and fostered through PRAYER and FASTING, the essential and central elements of Christian spirituality.

Bible Reflection by Helenanne Hochendoner, MAT, Matthew 17:14-23

In this Sunday's gospel Jesus heals an epileptic boy. In Matthew's writings and the church lectionary, Jesus will shift from miracles to teaching. After this healing, Matthew's writings will shift to Christ's parables and teachings about ministry; what it means to be his disciple, about community life, apostolic leadership, and predictions of his Death and Resurrection.

Prior to this story, the Transfiguration has occurred on Mt. Tabor. Jesus has revealed his glory and divinity as the Son of God to three chosen men, Peter, James, and John. They descend the mountain and Jesus comes to a crowd that has been waiting for him. Out of the crowd comes a man, a father, who kneels in front of Christ to plead for his son. "Please Lord, have mercy on my son, he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." Jesus has a rare flash of human emotion and gives an unexpected response. He is annoyed, no doubt, and quite likely, a bit angry. His exasperation is obvious. "Your faithless and perverse...how long am I to be with you? How long I am to bear with you?" Jesus has the boy brought to him; he heals him immediately, and the boy is cured. Later, the crowd is gone and the Lord and the disciples are alone. They are probably upset, and we can assume embarrassed because they ask Jesus this question. "Why could we not cast it out?" Jesus pulls no punches. "You have little faith... this kind can only be driven out by prayer and fasting. If you have faith the size of a mustard seed (which is quite small), nothing would be impossible for you."

We have several points to reflect on. First, let us speak to faith. Jesus accuses the disciples of "little faith." Recall, they were able to expel demons, heal, and preach when he sent them on their missionary journey (Matthew 10: 5-15; Mark 6: 7-13; Luke 9:1-6). What has happened? Why could they not heal this boy? Jesus's response is quick and simple. "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."

So, what is the Lord telling us? We must remain vigilant in prayer and fasting to develop and increase our faith. We cannot rest and remain in the faith we have. Faith is not static, the disciples' inability to expel the demon nicely demonstrates this. Prayer allows us to "talk" to God, fosters the relationship he has with us and we for him, in other words, it unites us with God in a special and life-giving way. Fasting enables us to clear our minds and bodies of those things that hold us back from giving God space in our hearts, minds, and souls. Bellies that are dulled with food, ears that are filled with noise, eyes that have a narrow focus, and minds filled with social attractions leave little room for the Holy Spirit to move, so He can enlighten our hearts and minds.

The second point is this, Jesus coming down from Mt. Tabor, meeting a crowd and disciples of "little faith" is reminiscent of Moses descending from Mt. Sinai and finding the Hebrews wildly celebrating around the Golden Calf. Remember, they had been told to wait for Moses to return. In addition, they had been given the 10 Commandments so to have a god image was breaking a commandment. But they had forgotten. Both times the followers have failed when their leaders were away. Both Jesus and Moses react emotionally to the scene in front of them, the Lord is exasperated at the very least and Moses is downright angry (Exodus 20:19).

In summary, we can reflect on this. Does our prayer and fasting unite us ever closer to God in a relationship of love and peace, thereby opening a space for God and allowing the Holy Spirit to increase our faith? Do we hold fast to our faith when we may feel "forgotten" by God?

ECUMENICAL SERVICE..... On September 17 we will host an ecumenical prayer service for an end to the conflict in Ukraine. We'll start in the parish hall and process around the church while praying the Akathist to the Precious and Lifegiving Cross.

9am: welcome, brief description of service

9:30am: service and procession

10am: optional light fellowship after the service concludes

PARISH DIRECTORY..... We're looking to update the parish directory. Please remember to fill out the directory information form found in the back (narthex) of the church. You can submit forms to Fr. Michael or Pani Janine.

UNIONTOWN PILGRIMAGE

The 88th Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mt. St. Macrina in Uniontown, PA, will take place Friday evening September 2 through Monday morning September 5 (Labor Day weekend).

PRAYER FOR SEMINARIANS: Saints Cyril and Methodius, Venerable Apostles of the Slavs and Patrons of our Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we place our Seminarians in your loving care. Help them to grow in humility, meekness and prudence. Enkindle in them a burning zeal for souls. May their hearts be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and may they learn to know and love the church so that they may always and everywhere think, speak and act with Her, the Glorious Spouse of Christ. May they become exemplars of generosity and detachment from the things of this world. But above all, O Venerable Patrons, help them to truly know, love and serve the Eternal High Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose priests they aspire to be. Amen.

St. Michael the Archangel, Defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, By the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen