

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SUNDAY: AUGUST 20, 2023 TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Schedule of Divine Services

Sunday, August 20: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

8-8:45am Confessions, 8:23am Rosary, 8:45am 3rd Hour, 9:00am Divine Liturgy
For the deceased Helena Rudiak, by Natalia Rudiak

Monday, August 21: 10am Confessions through Campus Ministry

No Vespers due to the Patronal Feast at St. Pius X

Wednesday, August 23: 6pm Confessions, 7pm Daily Vespers

Friday, August 25: 6pm Confessions, 7pm Divine Liturgy

For Msgr. Russell Duker on his birthday, by Theresa Carr

Sunday, August 27: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

8-8:45am Confessions, 8:23am Rosary, 8:45am 3rd Hour, 9:00am Divine Liturgy
For Gerald and Alexandria Bacasa and their 50th Wedding Anniversary,
by Theresa Carr

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 the church and leave it in the sacristy.

PARISH FLEA MARKET: Is this Saturday, August 26, 2023 from 10am-2pm.

Please see Mary Dzurichko for how you can help with this parish fundraiser.

GROUNDS CLEAN-UP: We will be doing grounds clean up this fall. So, we can plan ahead, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex with two sets of dates – please sign up for the dates you can help. We will select a final date based on how many people can join us. Thank you!

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY... The Apostle Paul instructs the Corinthians that belief in Christ's resurrection is essential to being part of God's Kingdom. Jesus calls all of us to follow after Himself and to strive for perfection in order to be worthy of participating in His Eternal Life. Our gospel's rich young man was unwilling to do this as other things were more important to him. In following Jesus, we must work in order to attain eternal life.

EPISTLE: I Corinthians 15: 1-11 (Section 153)

Brethren, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and in which you stand firm. You are being saved by it at this very moment if you hold fast to it as I preached it to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. I handed on to you first of all what I myself received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried and, in accordance with the Scriptures, rose on the third day; that he was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve. After that he was seen by five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have fallen asleep. Next he was seen by James; then by all the apostles. Last of all he was seen by me, as one born out of the normal course. I am the least of the apostles; in fact, because I persecuted the church of God, I do not even deserve the name. But by God's favor I am what I am. This favor of his to me has not prove fruitless. Indeed, I have worked harder than all the others, not on my own but through the favor of God. In any case, whether it be I or they, this is what we preach and this is what you believed.

~The Corinthians are told by the Holy Apostle Paul in this passage from his first letter addressed to their community that the foundation of their faith must be the risen Lord Jesus. Paul reminds them that the gospel's central message is that Jesus, Who is the Christ – the Messiah – died for the sins of humanity and then rose victoriously from the grave on the third day, just as the scriptures had foretold. Jesus was seen by many people after His resurrection; in fact, He even chose to appear to Paul and to designate him to be an apostle (a messenger of the "good news"). The core element of the entire gospel message is the very fact of the physical resurrection. As an appointed apostle, Paul continues to preach this salvific message about the resurrected Jesus, for it is the resurrection event itself that paves the way for our being granted an Eternal Life. All those who accept Christ and believe in His bodily resurrection have been given the assurance of attaining that salvation which Jesus thus achieved through His redemptive acts performed for all of us.

GOSPEL: Matthew 19: 16-26 (Section 92)

Now someone approached him and said, "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He asked him, "Which ones?" And Jesus replied, " 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother'; and 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" The young man said to him, "All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and said, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

~This pericope which is taken from the Holy Evangelist Matthew's gospel deals with a young man who questioned Jesus about the requirements that are necessary for attaining Eternal Life. Our Lord tells him that if he wants to be good, he must keep the commandments as the law stipulates. Jesus then summarizes the Decalogue, that is the Ten Commandments. This individual retorts, however, that he has kept carefully all of these mandates throughout his lifetime. And yet he asks Jesus about what is still missing. It is precisely here that Jesus challenges him to go beyond the keeping of the commandments in a purely legalistic way. Our Lord tells him that if he wants to be perfect, he must give up all that he possesses, and then he must follow after Jesus. The young man was crushed by this response, for he was extremely wealthy, and his riches were apparently more valuable to him than the requisites set forth by Jesus. When the disciples heard Jesus' statements, they wanted to know who then could possibly be saved. Our Lord explained to them that no one could be saved by mere humans; but only by faith and trust in God could salvation be achieved. Anyone who desires to attain eternal life must respond to the call of the Lord and then follow after Jesus.

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – THE RICH YOUNG MAN

Matthew 19: 16-26 *Bible Reflection by Helenanne Hochendoner, MAT*

Matthew, in this narrative, provides lessons about discipleship and eternal life. In this story Our Lord is approached by a rich, young man. This man has a remarkably interesting question to ask Jesus. I imagine this question is one all Christians have pondered and possibly would like to ask Christ too. This is the question – “What good must I do to gain eternal life?” In other words, give us the formula. With that we would feel secure as we walk life’s path.

Now, it is a rather benign question to ask the Lord and one we may believe should get a direct response. But as we know, Jesus surprises as he teaches us. So, let us begin to unpack this young man’s question. There are three words that stand out in this sentence, good, I, and gain. First, let us look at good. Jesus responds to his question with one of his own. “Why do you talk to me about good? There is only One who is good.” What is Jesus getting at? I believe He is telling this young man who he is – God. One of God’s divine attributes is good, which therefore makes God the Good. Who should be asked about goodness except Goodness itself, our God? Who is our God and Lord? Jesus Christ is.

Second, the young man uses the word I, meaning me. He asks what HE can do to gain eternal life, thus making himself the authority on his salvation, not God. In other words, I can save myself. This leads to the third word in this sentence that is significant – gain. Merit and my works will win me eternal life. As Jesus goes on to tell us, that is not so. It is God who will give us eternal life because it is a gift, that he graciously extends to us.

Jesus goes on to answer his question. “Keep the commandments.” Now, it really gets interesting. The man responds – “which ones?” This leads to a few questions. From the young man’s response, we can assume he knows there are ten commandments. He is rich male Jew, which means he is knowledgeable of Jewish Scripture and has time to study it. He would know God himself gave all ten commandments at one time from Mt Sinai. Why would God have any favorites or a list from the most important to the least important commandment? However, Jesus responds by listing five. Do not kill, commit adultery, steal, do not lie about your neighbor, and honor your father and mother. Then our Lord goes on to turn the conversation on its head. He stops quoting commandments and refers to a specific Scriptural verse. “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). Now, why would Jesus say this? It is notable Jesus refers to commandments that speak specifically on how to treat others. No one wants to be murdered, stolen from, lied about, have their marital bed dishonored, and be the parents of recalcitrant, rebellious, and disrespectful children. Then Jesus goes on to sum up as they say and tell the young man what has become a central commandment in Christianity, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” This one sentence tells us how we are to treat others. Jesus has tied his choice of commandments to the verse about one’s neighbor. When we love and love for love’s sake and no other reason, or without conditions, you are acting in the way God has directed us and how God treats humankind. Regardless of who and what we are, he loves us, and this is verified at the end of every liturgy, “He is gracious and loves us all.” We are doing what he has asked us to do when we imitate him by loving our neighbor in the way we are able to do so.

Well, the conversation continues between the young man and Jesus. “All these I have observed.” Notice Jesus does not argue with him. Does this mean he has never broken a commandment? We do not know. Our Lord neither denies nor affirms this young man’s statement. Scholars have made comment about his response. Some have seen pride in this young man’s declaration. However, it is hard to judge because he asks the Lord a question which shows he is aware something is missing in his devotional life and wants more. “What do I still lack?” Jesus answers, “Go... sell what you possess...give to the poor...come, follow me.” Our Lord asks him to make a choice, here and now.

The young man could not do this. He is rich and has many possessions. But he knows he is leaving something wonderful behind. He goes away “sad.” Jesus is pointing out “love your neighbor” in action. Give what you can to others. This is the epitome, the essence of love your neighbor and a reflection of God in us. Our Lord makes a comment as he watches the rich young man walk away. “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” This astonishes the disciples. They ask him, “Who then can be saved?” Now, what can the disciples mean? Why would they ask this question?

Jewish belief in antiquity associated wealth and prosperity with God's favor. Those that God preferred had these blessings bestowed on them. It would then be natural to believe those who are rich easily enter God's Kingdom. This is the reason Jesus' statement about a camel going through the eye of a needle is easier than a rich man to enter the Kingdom is so astonishing to them. If those who God favors cannot get into the Kingdom, who can? Jesus reassures their fears. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." In other words, we cannot inherit the Kingdom on our own. This is impossible. St. Paul tells us why in his letter to the Romans, "All are under the power of sin" (3:9) and we inherit "death through sin" (5:12). So, Jesus is saying what humankind cannot do for itself, God can do and did. St. Paul tells how. "At the right time Christ died for the ungodly God shows his love for us in that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us [and so] we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation" (Romans 5:6-11).

Now, our practical and outspoken Peter steps out to ask the Lord a question, which surely is on all the disciples' minds. "We have left everything and followed you. What shall we have?" Jesus promises a wonderful gift not only to his faithful disciples who walked the earth with him, but to us too. "You who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses, or brothers or sisters or fathers or mother or children or lands, for my namesake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."

What a great and wonderful promise. Anything and all that we have given up for the Lord he will remember. Indeed, we shall receive so much more than what we gave up for him. We shall have the greatest gift God can give us, eternal life.

This narrative gives several points of reflection. What do I have and can give up for love of neighbor and God? Remember, this does not have to be about money. What gifts or abilities do I have that I can give in service to others? What stops me from giving this "love" to my neighbor?

PRAYER FOR OUR FOUR SAINTLY BISHOPS: Please pray for the causes of our four Saintly Bishops and ask them to intercede for your specific intentions: O Almighty God, our Lord, we bless You, we praise You, and we thank you for all the graces which You, in Your infinite mercy have bestowed upon us. We are especially grateful for giving us four saintly and heroic Bishops: **Bishop Theodore G. Romzha, Bishop Paul P. Gojdich OBSM, Bishop Basil Hopko, and Bishop Alexander Chira**, who, by their courage, charity, and intrepid faith, inspired our Ruthenian people in the darkest moments of their history. By their great sufferings, humiliating imprisonment, and violent death they gave living witness to their Catholic faith and glorified Your exalted name. Therefore, O Gracious Lord, glorify them in return by Your divine power and inscribe their names in the book of Your Saints. For you are holy, our God, and we render glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen. With Ecclesiastical Approbation Acknowledgment of answered prayers: Postulator's office, 54 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214, U.S.A.

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