

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SUNDAY: AUGUST 11, 2023

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Schedule of Divine Services

Sunday, August 13: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

8-8:45am Confessions, 8:23am Rosary, 8:45am 3rd Hour, 9:00am Divine Liturgy

For the deceased Michael and Catherine Warhola, by Catherine Warhola

Monday, August 14: Vespereal Divine Liturgy for the Dormition of the Theotokos (Obligation) - 5pm

For the deceased Harold Witzel, by Theresa Carr

Tuesday, August 15: Dormition of The Theotokos (Obligation)

5:30pm Liturgy at St. Pius X in Carrick

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 Helenanne Rudiak, by Natalia Rudiak

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.

PARISH FLEA MARKET: Will be Saturday, August 26, 2023 – today is the last day for donations. Please see Mary Dzurichko for how you can help with set up!

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!

THE MAGNIFICENT FEAST OF THE DORMITION... August 15, we celebrate the principal and most ancient of Marian feasts, the All-Glorious Virgin Mary's Dormition, that is her happy death and also the transferal into heaven of her holy body as well as her most pure soul. Because of Mary's unique and specific role in salvation history as the Mother of God's Son, the Church discerns in her the preeminent representative of all humanity. She is given as a model to each of us individually and to all of us corporately as the Church (the People of God), showing us the final destiny that will be bestowed upon us as a pilgrim people who aspire to enter the Promised Land of Eternity. Mary is seen as the prototype of the final physical resurrection that will be bestowed upon all people of faith as they pass into eternity and thus come into the ever-existing reign of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God is celebrated as a triumphal day of complete rejoicing for all of God's faithful people.

We will also participate in the ancient custom of blessing flowers and other plants. According to tradition, St. Thomas was preaching the Gospel abroad and was not present for Mary's burial. He arrived at her tomb in the Garden of Gethsemane three days later. When they opened the tomb, only the burial cloths remained. The transposition of her hallowed body into heaven had taken place already, and fragrant flowers were found instead in the empty tomb. The various flowers, plants, herbs, and greens that were blessed are sacramentals that symbolize the ever-new eternal life with God in His heavenly Kingdom.

We will commence this spiritual journey of two weeks by joining symbolically with the twelve illustrious apostles who have been summoned to the Holy City of Jerusalem from the various comers of the world of antiquity for the impending death of the Most Holy Mother of God. As we thus travel vicariously up to Jerusalem for the dormition event, the penitential character of this savorial fast period is reflected in the liturgical life of the Church. It is recommended to receive the Sacrament of Confession in preparation for this blessed Feast.

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY... Jesus used parables as a teaching device through which He conveyed profound religious truths. Today's parable about the Kingdom of Heaven accentuates how much we OWE to God and how these DEBTS must be REPAID. Paul also tells the Corinthians about their OBLIGATIONS toward others, especially those who preached the gospel among them. Many times God deals with us in a manner similar to the way we handle our own relationships with other people.

EPISTLE: I Corinthians 9:2-12 (Section 141)

Brethren: Although I may not be an apostle for others, I certainly am one for you. You are the very seal of my apostolate in the Lord.

My defense against those who criticize me is this: Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Do we not have the right to marry a believing woman like the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Is it only myself and Barnabas who are forced to work for a living? What soldier in the field pays for his rations? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its yield? What shepherd does not nourish himself with the milk of his flock? You may think the reasons I am giving are merely human ones, but does not the law itself speak of these things? It is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain." Is God concerned here for oxen, or does he not rather say this for our sakes? You can be sure it was written for us, for the plowman should plow in hope and the harvester expect a share in the grain. If we have sown for you in the spirit, is it too much to expect a material harvest from you? If others have this right over you, is not our right even greater? But we have not used this right. On the contrary, we put up with all sorts of hardships so as not to place any obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

~~~~Both of today's scriptural lessons revolve about the theme of OWING something and how DEBTS and OBLIGATIONS are to be REPAID. In this pericope taken from the first letter to the Christian community at Corinth, the Holy Apostle Paul centers his remarks on the rights and privileges that belong to a preacher of the gospel message who ministers to the people and proclaims the Good News of salvation among them. He asserts that those who sow the seeds of the Lord's message have a right to expect a material reward. In Paul's own case, however, although he deserves some gratuity for his arduous efforts, he states that his greatest remuneration is the contentment that he gets in instructing people about Christ's salvific gospel. We all owe a constant debt of gratitude to God for the gift of our holy faith. We have the obligation of paying tribute to those who have preached the gospel among us, asking God to sustain them in these endeavors. We repay them for their efforts in diverse ways, primarily praying to the Lord in their behalf.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 18:23-35 (Section 77)**

That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.

When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt.

Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart."

~~~~This parable about the Kingdom of Heaven is taken from the Holy Evangelist Matthew's gospel and speaks about a king who began to settle accounts with various servants who owed him different sums of money. Although a certain debtor was unable to repay what he owed, the king nevertheless showed compassion and absolved his debt. However, this same debtor was uncompassionate when he confronted a man who owed him, even though he himself had been the recipient of mercy and kindness. Through this parable, Jesus thus attempted to teach that the king is similar to God, our Father in heaven, to Whom we OWE many, many DEBTS which must be REPAID. However, God will treat us in the same and exact measure that we deal with others here on earth who have certain OBLIGATIONS to us and who owe us something. Our Lord Jesus told His disciples that His Heavenly Father will deal with each of us as the parable's king handled the uncompassionate servant unless we exhibit the virtue of forgiveness in our relations with our fellowman and neighbor. Forgiveness will be given by God to us only if we demonstrate to Him that we truly can forgive others.