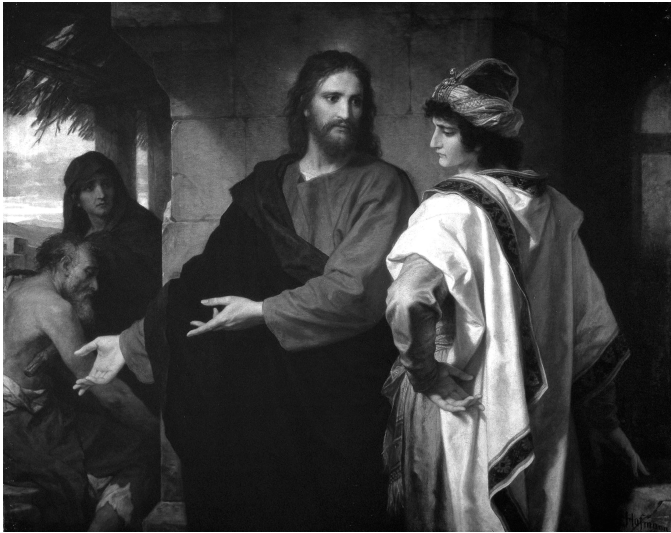




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

December 1st, 2024 + 23rd Sunday after Pentecost + Venerable Botolph of Iken (7th c.). Prophet Nahum (7th c. B.C.)



Hymns for This Week

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

We celebrate the memory of Thy prophet Nahum, O Lord; through him we beseech Thee: "Save our souls!"

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.

Illumined by the Spirit, thy heart was a vessel of illustrious prophecy, seeing far-off things as though they were present. Therefore, we venerate thee, glorious prophet Nahum.

Epistle Reading - Ephesians 2:4-10

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Gospel Reading - Luke 18:18-27

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with 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

DOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, November 30th

Orthodoxy 101 - Thanksgiving Weekend - No Class

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, December 1st

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM

Coffee Hour, Church School

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THIS WEEK

WED 11 AM-1:30 PM - Church Open for Prayer

WED 6:30 PM - Akathist to St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre

THURS 11 AM - Bible Study / The Book of Acts

THURS 6:30 PM - Great Vespers for St. Nicholas of Myra

FRI 9:30 AM - 120th Anniversary Divine Liturgy at

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Olyphant

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, December 7th

Orthodoxy 101 @ 3:30 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, December 8th

Hours @ 8:20 AM, Prayers before Baptism @ 8:45 AM

Baptismal Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM

The baptism of Judah Nealon, son of Steve & Eva Nealon

Parastas following Divine Liturgy

+ In Memory of John Yudin on his 40th day +

Offered by Jason and Colleen King

Coffee Hour, Church School



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Thursdays at 11 AM. Everyone is welcome. We are reading through the Acts of the Apostles with discussions.

ORTHODOXY 101 Saturdays @ 3:30 PM: Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in

learning more about the foundations of our faith. 1 hour followed by Great Vespers.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is December 29th.

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, December 14th @ 9 AM

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is SUN, Dec 8th @ 11:30 AM

Dec 6th - St. Nicholas Day Divine Liturgy: This year St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Olyphant PA will be celebrating their 120th Anniversary on the feast Day of St. Nicholas of Myra (Dec 6th). Join us as we go to celebrate a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Archbishop Mark and the St. Nicholas Community. Divine Liturgy begins at 9:30 AM (*There will not be a Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity*).

Dec 14th - Divine Liturgy at Holy Resurrection

Chapel: Divine Liturgy will be celebrated in the St. Alexis Chapel at Holy Resurrection Cathedral December 14th at 9 AM. This first Divine Liturgy is restricted to members of Holy Resurrection Cathedral who have transferred to Holy Trinity. There will be a signup list in the vestibule. Because of limited space we can only accommodate 25 people. Our hope is to continue celebrating Divine Liturgies in the chapel to give more people an opportunity to attend. The next Divine Liturgy is scheduled to be held January 4th.

Sunday School Christmas Cookie Sale: The Sunday School will hold a Christmas cookie sale on Sunday, December 22. All proceeds will benefit the Good Samaritan Food Pantry in Philadelphia. The annual Christmas Play / Yolka will also take place on Sunday, December 22 immediately following Divine Liturgy. This year's play is entitled "The Little Christmas Shepherd". Expect a visit from St. Nicholas as well.

Opportunity for Giving during the Nativity Fast:

Donate loose change (and paper bills too) in the water jug in the vestibule which will be distributed to a local charitable organization for those in need. The collection will continue through the remainder of the Nativity Fast.

NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS - \$20:

As customary, our Nativity Poinsettia Donations will purchase flowers to adorn the Church for the Feast of the Nativity. Your donations may be made in remembrance of, or for the health of, your family and loved ones. The names you provide at the time of your donation will

appear in the Church Bulletin for the Feast of the Nativity. Please see the signup sheet in the vestibule and give your donation to Mary Ann Kudey or Deborah Mills. You may also leave your donation at the candle stand with your list of names marked "Nativity Poinsettas". Many thanks and may God Bless You for your donation!

A note from Newly Ordained Deacon Gregory:

Father Innocent and the parish family of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church,

I am deeply humbled and grateful that I had the opportunity to be ordained to the holy diaconate in the presence of you, my extended parish family. Your words of encouragement, your continued good wishes and most importantly, your prayers have helped me more than you will ever know. Your generosity and the love you've always extended to me and my family is something I will always cherish.

On behalf of my family, I wish to offer my sincere thanks, for everything, and I ask that you continue to keep us in your prayers as you will be in mine!

With Love in Christ, Deacon Gregory

Confession During the Nativity Fast

Dear Parish Family - A reminder for those who regularly receive Holy Communion, and those receiving for Our Lord's Nativity that we go to confession at least once during each fasting period (and as needed). Preparation for Our Lord's Nativity is a spiritual work that is supported by examining ourselves and confessing our sins and shortcomings. Don't miss out on this beautiful work that strengthens us and bring us closer to God. All Orthodox Christians are invited and encouraged to engage and receive Christ - Born in us on Christmas Day!

December 22nd after Divine Liturgy

The Annual Church School Christmas Play (Yolka)

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays: David Clark (12/1), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratich (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Peter Holoviak (12/30), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31) **Anniversaries:** N/A

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: Olga Layton (11/29), David Clark (12/1)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Rich Young Ruler

By Met. Anthony Bloom

It is not only awesome, at times it is frightening to preach the Word of God, because the Lord said "By thy words thou shall be judged." Judged, because if you proclaim God's truth and remain idle and not the doer of what the Lord has commanded, and what you know well enough to proclaim to others - then, how shall you stand before the judgement of God? This does not apply only to the priest, but to every Christian who is called to be a witness, an apostle, one that brings God's word to the people who are in darkness or twilight, who need divine light, and truth and life.

Today's Gospel challenges us all so sharply. It begins with words that may be interpreted in more than one way: "Good Lord - what shall I do to have eternal life?" And the Lord answers, "Why do you call Me 'good'? Good is only God". He does not say, "You are wrong". He does not deny His right to be called good as God is good; and thereby, to those who have ears to hear, those who have a heart capable of perceiving the surpassing goodness of the Lord Jesus, surpassing all human goodness, all human beauty and truth - it is a testimony: Yes, you are speaking to your God, and it is your God that is to answer your question.

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Homebound - Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, Marsha, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Archpriest Michael Evans, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Evelyn, Joan, Irene, Sonja **Sick & Suffering** - Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Tom & Joan Austin, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, Delores Voda, David Lezinsky, June, Myra, Bob Lutzick, Leann, Matthew Gingo, Madison & Millie Nicholas, Gregory Krevko, Steve Rilkowski, Tom Vaskalis, David, Alice Liskowski **Departed:** Archpriest Michael Evans, Archpriest Peter Telencio, Monk Nichodemus, Emily Trumbower, Michael Kondratich, Monk Michael Juk, Mary Ann Klapatch

And then Christ gives us two indications. The one is: if you wish to have eternal life, keep the Commandments. The Commandments of God are not only rules of behavior (although, of course, they are such), but as one of the Psalms puts it, should be in our inmost hearts. It should be from the depths of our heart that we accomplish the Commandments: not because we are commanded from outside, but because they have reached us with the ring of truth; not because God has spoken, but because with all our being we have answered "Amen!" This is true, this is life, this is the way into eternal life. When we hear Christ mentioning these Commandments - where are we? Who of us can say that he was faithful to every word of this shortlist that indicates that without which we cannot live? Where do we stand? I, who am preaching, you who are hearing, because it is as responsible to hear as it is to speak. How often do we think - as this young man, and with how little reason - that we want perfection. We want perfection without having first trod the road of the Commandments.

But Christ says to us quite clearly: "If you want perfection - give all you possess." It is not only material things which we can give: every one of us has treasures hoarded in his mind and heart, in his soul, things which are more important to him than anything material, that is his wealth. Each of us should turn inward and ask himself, "What is there which is my peculiar treasure? What are those things which I will not give away even for life eternal, for God?". We do not put things in such a crude manner, but we hug those things which are so precious to us, and still, we hope that we will enter the Kingdom of God, we will reach perfection, we will become in all fullness what we are called to be, the kind of persons of whom God dreamed when He created us - and it is not true.

In the Book of Revelation, there is a passage that says, "I have only one thing against you - you have forgotten your first love". And this first love, indeed, for each of us, is the Living God, Whom we call in so many ways: we may call Him 'Life', we may call Him 'Fulfilment', we may call Him 'Happiness', we may call Him by all the names that mean that we should reach the fullness of our being. At times we know that only in God it is possible, at times we imagine that we can outgrow ourselves - all the same, this is our first love: to become as great as God has dreamed us, willed us.

And we do not follow the Commandments because we think that we can achieve it in a simpler manner; and we do not give away all we have, that is: the only thing we are not prepared to give away, in a hope that God will accept us, and our burden.

Let us reflect on this story. This is not even a parable, it is something that has happened to a young man. It happens to all of us when God says, "Have you been faithful to the way of life which I have described to you in terms of commandments, outlined in these terms as one can outline a road by milestones? Do you want to attain fullness - start at that point." And if you are aware of having been faithful in these things, then ask yourself the further question: what is the treasure which I will not give away, even for eternal life? The young man heard the words of Christ, and went away sad. He had earthly possessions, but we have so many possessions which are not material and which are our burden, our fetters. And yet, there is in this story one thing that can give us so much hope. Christ did not condemn this young man; Christ let him go without a word of reproach because what He had said was like seed sown into the mind and heart of this young man. He let him go wounded at the heart, puzzled in his mind, called to be himself by an act of heroic will and surrender, let go of himself, as Christ said, give everything away and follow Him. Where to? Along the road of human life on one hand, on the other hand - into the fullness of life eternal.

When Christ says to us "Follow Me", He does not call us to walk a frightening, dark road; He says, "I have trodden all this road, I know every meander of it - you can safely follow! I am like the good shepherd that walks in front of his sheep, meeting all dangers himself, so that the sheep may be safe." We all will go home like the young man, perhaps saddened, that neither are we keeping the Commandments, nor are we able to give away our most precious treasure: but remember - we will not go condemned, we will have been faced with an ultimate choice, and as long as we can struggle on earth - there is time.

But let us not be beguiled by the length of time: time flies, time goes - let it not be too late, let us turn to life, let us become all we are capable of being. The answer to today's Gospel is so clear - "Who then can be saved?" - To man, it is not possible by our own strength; but to God, all things are possible." That is our hope: God is with us, and nothing is too much for us. Amen.
