



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

July 13th, 2025 + 5th Sunday after Holy Pentecost + Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils



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!"

Thou art most glorious, O Christ our God, Who hast established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth. Through them Thou hast guided us to the True Faith. O greatly compassionate One, glory to 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!

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one Faith for the Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology, It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

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

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!

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 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

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, July 12th

Friends of the Poor @ 9 AM

NO Great Vespers - Fr. Innocent out of town

Sunday, July 13th

NO MATINS, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

Please welcome Fr. David Hester

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THIS WEEK

Wed @ 10 AM - Bible Study (w/ Dn Tikhon)

Wed @ 11 AM - 1 PM Church Open for Prayer

Wed @ 6 PM - NO Akathist this week

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, July 19th

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Sunday, July 20th

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

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Blessing of Vehicles,

Coffee Hour

Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM

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. **Orthodoxy 101 is currently on break.**

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is **July 27th.**

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. **Next Friends of the Poor is July 12th**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is **SUN, July 20th @ 11:30 AM.**

The Blessing of Homes Check in with Fr. Innocent as to when there is availability for your visit.

WANTED: Coffee Hour Teams - Sponsor a Sunday Coffee Hour with a friend. Speak with Joanne Dutko to learn more and sign up.

BLESSING OF VEHICLES - SUN, JULY 20th: 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 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 20th to be blessed immediately following Divine Liturgy.**

Community Fundraising Event – Wyoming Valley Challenger - July 22/11AM – 5PM:

The Wyoming Valley Challenger is an adaptive baseball program designed for children with physical and intellectual challenges. This year, as part of the annual Little League World Series (held in Williamsport PA) our own team from Miners Mills has the opportunity participate in the Little League Challenger Exhibition. Our team is ready and excited to participate. To cover expenses for this 4-day/3-night event the team is actively fundraising. **Holy Trinity is excited and proud to be able to lend a hand** with raising funds by hosting a food sale on July 22 at our pavilion. Menu will include clam chowder, potato pancakes and pulled porketta sandwiches. **Sign up sheets** for those able to help with the food sale or to donate towards the purchase of supplies is on the stand in the vestibule. Please consider giving of your time, talents and/or treasures for this wonderful cause. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jason King or Sandy Serafin.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Wednesdays at 10 AM. Everyone is welcome. We are reading through the Acts of the Apostles with discussions.

Sunday July 27th - Annual FOCA Family Picnic @ Knoebels - Once again The FOCA of Central Pennsylvania is having our annual Picnic dinner at Knoebels. **This year it will be Free** (you will still need to buy tickets for rides). Our Annual Picnic outing is sponsored by The Central Pennsylvania District of the FOCA. Arrive after Liturgy and stop by Pavilion D (near the Giant Ferris Wheel) to check in and spend the afternoon at the Park. At 6pm there will be a Picnic Dinner in Pavilion D. Hamburgers, hotdogs, sodas and side dishes will be served. FREE for Everyone! See you there!

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), Damian Rosencrans (7/24), Katrina Zbegner (7/26), Chris Yanovich (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), Kristin & Bill Resnick (7/31)

This Week: Birthdays - Luke Ausin (7/15), Diane Welgus (7/18) **Anniversaries:** Lisa & Scott Harvey (7/15), Marianne & Jeremy Haugh (7/18)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Sunday of the Gergasenes

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

How familiar is this story to us. Yet every time we read it we rediscover something in it which touches our heart, or gives a new light to our mind. And today I would like to attract your attention to three features of this passage.

The first is the attitude of the devils, of the powers of evil, to their victims. The powers of evil have no other intention or desire than to take possession of a living creature and to make it both a sufferer and one that will fulfil their will. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the devils can have no direct action in this world; all they can do is enslave

human beings and through them work the evil within them. So this is what these powers of evil had intended: to enslave these men and to make them instruments of destruction, but at the same time to make them suffer for it.

When Christ commanded them to leave their victims they cried, shall I say, for a place of refuge, a place where they could dwell and work destruction. And Christ allowed them to in-dwell the pigs. Pigs, in the eyes of Jews, were a symbol of impurity; the request to be lodged in their bodies was a sign for all who could understand - and every Jew could - that they were as impure as the impurest of the animals. But what happened next was a demonstration to people of what happens when we allow ourselves to be possessed of evil, when we allow passions to have power over us - hatred, lust, jealousy, and all the passions of body and soul. Being possessed by them we are doomed to destruction, as this herd ended in death.

We should remember this because we do not always realise how much we are in the grip, in the power of those things which rule our life: likes and dislikes, hatreds, resentments and so on. We are not only possessed, but we are also working evil through our subjection to the power of evil. And the warning is clear: if we only allow evil to take possession of us completely, it will mean death; not physical death, but a total, tragic alienation from all that is life: from God, from love, from beauty, from meaning. We cannot fall out of existence but we can be possessed of an existence which is a ghostly one, an existence without life, without content - a shell that is empty, and yet a torment.

And in contrast to this we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man. He is the Creator, He is the Lord, He is the Saviour of the whole world; and He forgets everything, as it were, the whole of creation to pay attention to nothing but these two men who are in need of salvation, indeed He is prepared to leave ninety-nine righteous, whole people who do not need Him at that moment alone in order to give all His attention, all His life, indeed all His power to save these two men. In the face of all the need of the world He can see every individual need and respond to it with all His love, all His compassion, all His understanding and all His divine power to save and to heal.

There is a third group of people whom we see in action in this Gospel story; it is the inhabitants of the country. They had known of the desperate condition of these two men; they were told of what Christ did for them; they were told

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Homebound - Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice **Sick & Suffering** - Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Bob Lutzick, Gregory Krevko, Tom Vaskalis, Tom O'Brian, David, Delores Tressa, Sylvia Dreater, Patricia Sohoski, Raven, Pearl Tutko **Departed:** Marsha Shaffer, Mike Brown, Joshua, Leanne Kuehnle, Natalie Gripp

who their master was, who was their tormentor; should they not have come to give glory to God and thank Him for delivering the two men from the power of evil? NO! All they saw in the act of Christ was that they were deprived of their herd of swine. What mattered to them the wholeness and the life and the salvation of these two men? They were deprived of what was important to them, what mattered to them more than a human life, and they asked Christ to leave their borders, to go because they did not want to risk another miracle that would be costly to them. What a tragic - not monstrous, but just tragic contrast between the attitude of God and the attitude of these people.

Let us give thought and ask ourselves, where do we stand? Of course, the first movement we shall have is to say, 'On God's side' - it is not true. When there is a tragic need, and the cost of helping would be perhaps not a disaster but a pain or loss to us, what would we choose? Let us reflect on this: are we really on the side of Christ Who can forget the whole world because His Heart is pierced, transfixed with compassion, or - do we allow our heart to be moved one moment, and then recalculate the cost and turn away from the need?

Let us reflect - because every one of these stories, every parable, every image, every act of God is challenging us: Where do you stand? Who are you? The person possessed, to whatever extent? A disciple of Christ ready to forget everything for the sake of a desperate need? Or rather one of those who say to Christ: Go, go away - you are disturbing our peace, the harmony of our life and our security?

Let us reflect deeply; but not only reflect, take a decision and act. Amen.

+Met Anthony Bloom



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. + Jesus Christ

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840
Last Week's Collection (7/6/25) : \$2,612

Quotes for this week's reading:

"The demons confess Christ even while opposing Him. They know who He is but remain disobedient. We must not merely confess but follow Him."

St. John Chrysostom

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"When Christ enters the soul, all darkness flees. The enemy cannot remain where there is light, humility, and prayer."

St. Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia

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"Salvation is not simply the removal of evil, but the gift of communion — restoration to being truly human."

Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra

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"People often reject Christ because He threatens their comfort, not because they do not believe in Him."

St. Luke of Simferopol