



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sunday, September 5, 2021: 11th Sunday after Holy Pentecost, The Unmerciful Servant, Holy Prophet Zachariah & Righteous Elizabeth



Hymns for Today's Service

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!"

Robed in the vestments of the priesthood, according to the Law of God thou didst offer whole-burnt offerings in a sacred manner, wise Zachariah. Thou didst become a luminary and a seer of the mysteries, bearing within thyself the signs of grace, all-wise one. Slain by the sword in the temple of God, O prophet of Christ, intercede together with the Forerunner that our souls may be saved!

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee, and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.

Today the prophet Zachariah, priest of the Most High and parent of the Forerunner, has prepared a banquet to his memory to nourish the faithful, mixing the drink of

righteousness. Therefore we praise him as a divine initiate of the grace of God.

Epistle Reading - 1 Corinthians 9:2-12

If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Whoever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 18:23-35

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the

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!*

debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

This Week's Schedule

THIS WEEKEND

SAT, Sept 4th: Great Vespers w/ Litya @ 5 PM
Confessions @ 5:45 PM

SUN, Sept 5th: Hours @ 8:40 AM,
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour
Labor Day Weekend Cook/Campout @ 4 PM

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THIS WEEK

Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God

TUES, Sept 7: Vespersal Divine Liturgy @ 6 PM
At Holy Resurrection Cathedral

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

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NEXT WEEKEND

SAT, Sept 11th: Great Vespers w/ Litya @ 5 PM
Confessions @ 5:45 PM

SUN, Sept 12th: Hours @ 8:40 AM,
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour,
Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM

Upcoming Parish Events & Announcements

THANK YOU - HTOC Shrimp Boil Feast: Thank you to everyone who helped make our Shrimp Boil Feast food sale a huge success. Glory to God. The profit made for the church was \$1337.00 Whether you helped with the preparation and sale of the food or by purchasing a dinner, your contribution makes a difference. We are very grateful!

Next parish council meeting - September 12, 2021

Annual parish council meeting - September 19, 2021 following Divine Liturgy. All members in good standing are welcome to attend. **Election for church council officers will be conducted.** Qualification for election into office per HTOC bylaws require that one be at least 21 years of age; a voting member of the parish for at least two years; an active communicant of the sacraments (confession/communion); met all canonical requirements of the faith; and a person of the church in conduct and speech. If anyone has questions about these requirements please speak with Fr. Innocent. If you would like to be an officer on the Parish Council please contact the nominating Committee Chair Peter Holoviak or Fr. Innocent.

TODAY - SUNDAY - TODAY **YOUTH & FAMILY LABOR DAY** **WEEKEND COOKOUT & CAMP**



Today, Sunday, September 5th
Cookout and Games begin at 4 PM
Ping Pong, Foosball, Outdoor Games
Followed by Campfire & Music
Camping w/ late night movie begins at 10 PM
Morning breakfast & departing at 9 AM
*** Camping is optional - come enjoy the fun ***

Birthdays & Anniversaries

September Birthdays: Jason King (9/1), Marianne Haugh (9/3), William Gurka (9/8), Lynn Bankos (9/11), Kaleb Dutko (9/19), Olivia Zawatski (9/22), Irene Kazmierowicz (9/27) **September Anniversaries:** Jason & Coleen King (9/5), Dave & Diane Welgus (9/6)

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PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Rosalie Bagenski, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Antonette Terry, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Marni Bachman & Family, Rose Marie, Helen Gudaitis, Mahaffey Family, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Louis Gianuzzi, Betty Serafin, Matushka Elizabeth, Karen Maier, John Metz, Bill & Chris, Leigh Remp **Departed:** Mary Metz, Sharlie

The Importance of Forgiveness

The Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

“Father, forgive them. They know not what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

If you want to be like Christ and model your life after His, then you can begin by forgiving others the way He did and is still doing. Read again His words from the cross – what a liberating phrase. Forgive. He did not take with Him to heaven a wish for revenge against Judas Iscariot. Nor was there any hatred against Pontius Pilate, the governor who really did not want Him to be crucified, but he thought it expedient to satisfy the demands of the crowd. Nor was there hostility against the soldiers who used him as a substitute for their pent-up rage against the emperor and all in authority, dressing him in a parody of royal garb, then abusing, mocking, taunting and beating Him as though He were not a human being but rather a puppet tossed to them for their amusement.



He forgave the two that thrashed Him nearly to death with their whips of leather laced with metal and bone shards. Even those who with no qualms pounded spikes into His wrists and feet. What does it take to have such a spiritual disposition? Yet the lives of the martyr saints bear witness to the blessed ones who did likewise.

We say we are like Him and them as we pray several times each day: “Forgive us our trespasses [or debts] as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Nevertheless, do we mean it? Even more important, do we live by forgiving all others?

The Lord Jesus came to mind as I followed a sedan driven by a woman. On her bumper sticker: My ex is in the trunk. Stopping and starting along the street, I reread that pitiful proclamation of anger, and I thought: Madam, your “ex” is not in the trunk, but you are imprisoned in the trunk of your mind, and you will not allow yourself to escape. How long is your sentence? There is no judge or jury evaluating your mental condition. Nobody is there to plead your case – no lawyer or psychiatrist appointed by the court to recommend your release from the cell of your mind. You hate the one who hurt you, and you think that as long as that anger goes unabated, he is suffering for all the wrongs he has inflicted upon you. Of course, it does not make sense. Hating and holding grudges are symptoms of irrational behavior, but who will take it upon himself to explain that to the one locked up in misery? What friend or family member is willing to assume responsibility for the reaction that likely will follow?

Forgiveness is the antidote for negative thinking. Forgiveness means to let go. Let go of resentment, thoughts of payback, and the hurt that remains and will always be part of your life. Forgiveness releases the grip anger has on your heart. It opens the focus on those parts of life that lead to understanding, empathy, and compassion for the person who hurt you. It doesn't deny responsibility, or minimize or justify wrong – not excusing, but rather offering inner peace, presence of the Lord, spiritual and psychological well-being. It alleviates stress, hostility, and blood pressure. Holding a grudge means that you were hurt by somebody you love, producing anger, sadness, and confusion. By forgiveness you can bridge the barrier of anger that invades each relationship. Forgiveness brings the decision and commitment to change, recognizes the value of the forgiven, not how your reaction affected your life. Let go of grudges and you will not define life by who hurt you. Forgiveness is beginning the process of healing. Forgiveness is a conscious choice, a decision of the will, which meant that it is in your control. You decide to forgive.

Today's Saints: The Holy Prophet Zachariah and the Righteous Elizabeth



The Holy Prophet Zachariah and the Righteous Elizabeth were the parents of the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. They were descended from the lineage of Aaron: Saint Zachariah, son of Barach, was a priest in the Jerusalem Temple, and

Saint Elizabeth was the sister of Saint Anna, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. The righteous spouses, "walking in all the commandments of the Lord" (Luke 1:6), suffered barrenness, which in those times was considered a punishment from God.

Once, during his turn of priestly service in the Temple, Saint Zachariah was told by an angel that his aged wife would bear him a son, who "will be great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1:15) and "will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17).

Zachariah doubted that this prediction would come true, and for his weakness of faith he was punished by becoming mute. When Elizabeth gave birth to a son, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit she announced that his name was John, although no one in their family had this name.

They asked Zachariah and he also wrote the name John down on a tablet. Immediately the gift of speech returned to him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, he began to prophesy about his son as the Forerunner of the Lord.



When King Herod heard from the Magi about the birth of the Messiah, he decided to kill all the infants up to two years old at Bethlehem and the surrounding area, hoping that the new-born Messiah would be among them.

Herod knew about John's unusual birth and he wanted to kill him, fearing that he was the foretold King of the Jews. But Elizabeth hid herself and the infant in the hills. The murderers searched everywhere for John. Elizabeth, when she saw her pursuers, began to implore God for their safety, and immediately the hill opened up and concealed her and the infant from their pursuers.

In these tragic days Saint Zachariah was taking his turn at the services in the Temple. Soldiers sent by Herod tried in vain to learn from him the whereabouts of his son. Then, by command of Herod, they murdered this holy prophet, having stabbed him between the temple and the altar (MT 23: 35). Elizabeth died forty days after her husband, and Saint John, preserved by the Lord, dwelt in the wilderness until the day of his appearance to the nation of Israel.

On the Greek calendar, Saints Zachariah and Elizabeth are also commemorated on June 24, the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist.