

HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

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The 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading Matthew 6: 22 - 33



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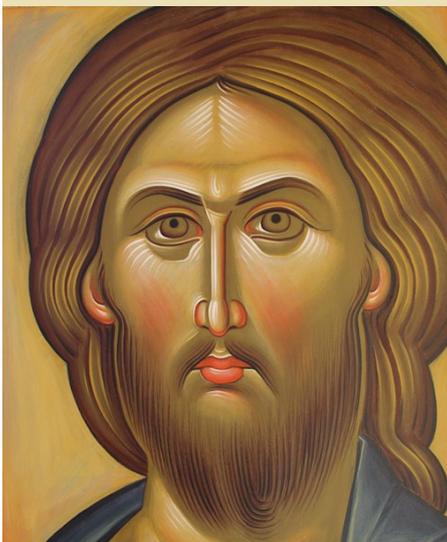
The Lord said, ‘The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ‘No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by

worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Apostle Reading Romans 5: 1 - 10

Brethren, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the

right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.



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Synaxarion. Sunday June 28, 2020 - Third Sunday after Pentecost: Translation of the Relics of Holy Unmercenary Wonderworking Martyrs Cyrus and John; Holy Martyr Papias. Monday June 29: Synaxis of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Homily for the Third Sunday after Pentecost

Today's Gospel is taken from the Sermon on the Mount, the first piece of preaching in Christ's public life.

In it Our Lord says that the light of the body is the eye. If the eye is light, so the body will be light. But if the eye is dark, so the body will be dark. By 'eye' is meant the soul, for the eye is the window of the soul. In these words Our Lord says that we are not

to blame our bodies for our sins. Our bodies are the servants of our souls. If our souls are corrupted, then so also will be our bodies. On the other hand, if our souls are clean, then our bodies will also be clean. It is not our bodies which control our lives, or even our minds, but our souls. And it is our souls that we are called on to cleanse, cultivate and refine first of all. It is the spiritual which has primacy in our lives. Once our souls are clean, then our minds and our bodies will also be cleaned.

Neither can we serve two Masters, the master of the material world and the master of the spiritual world. One must be superior to the other. Thus we cannot serve God, the master of the spiritual, and Mammon, the master of the fallen world. The word Mammon is simply the word in the language spoken by Christ for 'money'. This saying runs counter to the whole ideology of modernity. Our societies are called 'capitalist', for they are based on investments, stock exchanges, 'capital', in other words, money. Indeed the whole modern world is ruled by currencies, whether the dollar or some other currency dependent on the dollar. Furthermore, the philosophy which guides modern governments and much of human nature is called 'monetarism', in other words the belief in the primacy of money in human life and human



motivation. Such a philosophy causes panic and depression both among those who have no money and also among those who have a lot, for such a philosophy excludes God from the workings of society and men, basing everything on the idolatry of paper and electronic numbers.

'Take no thought for your life', says Our Lord. The birds are nourished by God, the flowers grow,

and they take no thought. We are told not to devote ourselves to what might or might not happen tomorrow. No-one by taking thought, can add anything to his stature. The Gospel tells us to do our best and then leave the rest to God, to trust in God. Modern life, on the other hand, tells us to constantly worry, to be stressed. Such worry only causes depression, for it excludes God and His loving providence. On the other hand, there is nothing inevitable in the life of those who believe in God and His providence. Even the most horrendous situations can evolve positively, if we let God into our lives and societies. If we include God, then we can exclude worry and depression.

We can see this in our own lives and in the lives of those around us. In the last few years we have all known apparently impossible circumstances and situations, dead ends, which have been resolved by unexpected events. Those unexpected events are solutions which have come from the providential love of God. As they say: 'Man proposes, but God disposes'. The fact is that we do not always, if ever, know what is best, simply because we do not have a long-term view, let alone the eternal view of God which utterly changes all our perspectives. However, 'Your Father knows you need all these things', says

Christ. And He tells us that if we put the spiritual first, then all other things will work out around that: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all those things will be added unto you'.

It is no coincidence that this Gospel reading coincides this year with the Sunday of all the Local Saints.

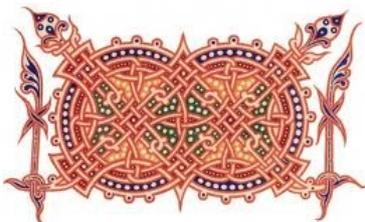
However, because last Sunday was the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist, this year the Church moved the Feast of the Local Saints to this Sunday. This is the Sunday when local Orthodox Churches remember their own Saints: the Russian Church remembers the Saints of Russia, the Romanian Church those of Romania, the Americans remember the Saints who shone forth in America, on Mount Athos they remember the Saints of Athos, and so on.

Today's Gospel is also a Gospel for all the Local Saints. For what did the Saints do? They simply put the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first. These values, to put the things of the spirit first, are the values of the Saints of God. They are exactly the opposite of the values of modern society, which puts anti-Gospel and anti-spiritual values first. By following the Gospel, we challenge all the crudity and barbarianism of the modern world. And spiritual values prove that the only true revolution is the revolution that occurs in individual human lives and societies as a whole, when human hearts and souls put the spiritual first.

May all the Saints of our lands pray to God for us that we may come to partake of their values and their lives.

Amen.

Fr. Andrew Phillips



HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from June 28 to July 20, 2020

Sunday June 28 (Third Sunday after Pentecost - fish allowed):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

1:30 pm - Baptism Lilian A. Lemnei

Monday June 24 - Synaxis of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul:

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

Sunday July 5 (Fourth Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

Sunday July 12 (Fifth Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

Sunday July 19 (Sixth Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

Monday July 20 -

Holy Prophet Elias:

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy



The Holy Glorious and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles

Today the Holy Church piously remembers the sufferings of the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Apostles Peter and Paul.

St. Peter, the fervent follower of Jesus Christ, for the profound confession of His Divinity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," was deemed worthy by the Savior to hear in answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon ... I tell thee, that thou art Peter [Petrus], and on this stone [petra] I build My Church" (Mt.16:16-18). On "this stone" [petra], is on that which thou sayest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" it is on this thy confession I build My Church. Wherefore the "thou art Peter": it is from the "stone" [petra] that Peter [Petrus] is, and not from Peter [Petrus] that the "stone" [petra] is, just as the Christian is from Christ, and not Christ from the Christian. Do you want to know, from what sort of "rock" [petra] the Apostle Peter [Petrus] was named? Hear the Apostle Paul: "Brethren, I do not want ye to be ignorant," says the Apostle of Christ, "how all our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor.10: 1-4)....

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt.10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him, preferentially, after the confession: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt.16: 19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these "keys" and the right "to bind and loosen." And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, "Receive ye



the Holy Spirit" and further after this, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, are retained" (John 20: 22-23); or: "whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye

shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven" (Mt.18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore "Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains

of his own sins," says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. "Simon of John" -- says the Lord to Peter -- "lovest thou Me?" -- and the Apostle answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and a second time it was thus asked, and a second time he thus answered; being asked a third time, seeing that as it were not believed, he was saddened. But how is it possible for him not to believe That One, Who knew his heart? And wherefore then Peter answered: "Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "And sayeth Jesus to him" all three times "Feed My sheep" (John 20:15-17).

Besides this, the triple appealing of the Savior to Peter and the triple confession of Peter before the Lord had a particular beneficial purpose for the Apostle. That one, to whom was given "the keys of the kingdom" and the right "to bind and to loose," bound himself thrice by fear and cowardice (Mt.26:69-75), and the Lord thrice loosens

loosens him by His appeal and in turn by his confession of strong love. And to shepherd literally the flock of Christ was acquired by all the Apostles and their successors. "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock," the Apostle Paul urges church presbyters, "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28); and the Apostle Peter to the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when is appeared the Prince of pastors, ye will receive unfading crowns of glory" (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

It is remarkable that Christ, having said to Peter: "Feed My sheep," did not say: "Feed thy sheep," but rather to feed, good servant, the sheep of the Lord. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor.1:13). "Feed My sheep". Wherefore "wolfish robbers, wolfish oppressors, deceitful teachers and mercenaries, not being concerned about the flock" (Mt.7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Pet 2:1; John 10:12), having plundered a strange flock and making of the spoils as though it be of their own particular gain, they think that they feed their flock. Such are not good pastors, as pastors of the Lord. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11), entrusted to Him by the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Pet 5:4). And the Apostle Peter, true to his calling, gave his soul for the very flock of Christ, having sealed his apostleship by a martyr's death, is now glorified throughout all the world.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, was changed from a robbing wolf into a meek lamb. Formerly he was an enemy of the Church, then is manifest as an Apostle. Formerly he stalked it, then preached it. Having received from the high priests the authority at large to throw all Christians in chains for execution, he was already on the way, he breathed out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), he thirsted for blood, but "He that dwells in the Heavens shall laugh him to scorn" (Ps 2:4). When he, "having persecuted and vexed" in such manner "the Church of God" (1Cor.15:9; Acts 8:5), he came near Damascus, and the Lord from Heaven called to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and I am here, and I am there, I am everywhere: here is My head; there is My body. There becomes nothing of a surprise in this; we ourselves are members of the Body of Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (Acts 9:4-5). Saul, however, "trembling and frightened", cried out: "Who art Thou, Lord?" The Lord answered him, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest."

And Saul suddenly undergoes a change: "What wantest

Thou me to do?" -- he cries out. And suddenly for him there is the Voice: "Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Here the Lord sends Ananias: "Arise and go into the street" to a man, "by the name of Saul," and baptize him, "for this one is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9: 11, 15, 18). This vessel must be filled with My Grace. "Ananias, however, answered: Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy Name" (Acts 9:13-14). But the Lord urgently commands Ananias: "Search for and fetch him, for this vessel is chosen by Me: for I shall show him what great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:11, 15-16).

And actually the Lord did show the Apostle Paul what things he had to suffer for His Name. He instructed him the deeds; He did not stop at the chains, the fetters, the prisons and shipwrecks; He Himself felt for him in his sufferings, He Himself guided him towards this day. On a single day the memory of the sufferings of both these Apostles is celebrated, though they suffered on separate days, but by the spirit and the closeness of their suffering they constitute one. Peter went first, and Paul followed soon after him. Formerly called Saul, and then Paul, having transformed his pride into humility. His very name (Paulus), meaning "small, little, less," demonstrates this. What is the Apostle Paul after this? Ask him, and he himself gives answer to this: "I am," says he, "the least of the Apostles... but I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me" (1 Cor.15:9-10).

And so, brethren, celebrating now the memory of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, remembering their venerable sufferings, we esteem their true faith and holy life, we esteem the innocence of their sufferings and pure confession. Loving in them the sublime quality and imitating them by great exploits, "in which to be likened to them" (2 Thess 3: 5-9), and we shall attain to that eternal bliss which is prepared for all the saints. The path of our life before was more grievous, thornier, harder, but "we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12: 1), having passed by along it, made now for us easier, and lighter, and more readily passable. First there passed along it "the author and finisher of our faith," our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb 12: 2); His daring Apostles followed after Him; then the martyrs, children, women, virgins and a great multitude of witnesses. Who acted in them and helped them on this path? He Who said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5).

Saint Augustin of Hippo