

HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

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The 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading Matthew 8: 5 - 13

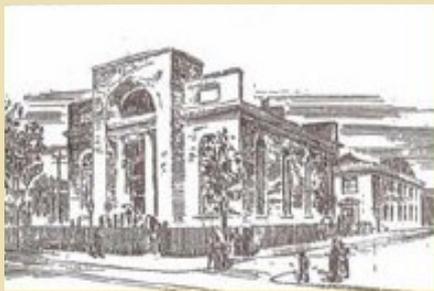
At that time, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he

does it." When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Apostle Reading Romans 6: 18 - 23

Brethren, having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to right-

eousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



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Synaxarion. Sunday July 18, 2021 (Fourth Sunday after Pentecost) - Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council: Holy Martyr Emilian of Durostorum (Silistra, Dobrogea); Holy Venerable Pambo of Mt Nitria (Egypt); Tuesday July 20: Holy Prophet Elias

The Centurion – the Man of Faith

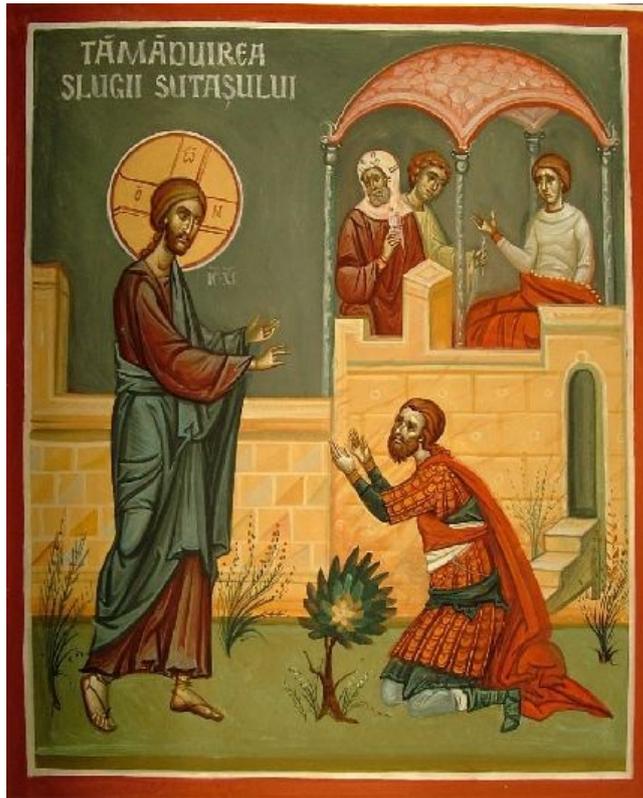
As we have heard, today's Gospel concerns the healing of the servant of the centurion. In the Roman Army the rank of centurion was given to a soldier who was at the head of one hundred soldiers. There are two particularly striking things about this centurion.

First of all he was clearly a man of virtue for he cared for the health of his servant. He was not one of those who considered human life expendable. He did not say to himself: 'My servant is ill, I'll let him die and tomorrow I will buy a slave at the market to replace him'. He must therefore have taken very seriously his responsibilities towards the one hundred soldiers under his command.

Secondly, his attitude towards other human-beings is confirmed by the fact that this centurion had implicit faith in Christ, the Creator of all human-beings, and in His power to heal. 'Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed'. This faith was far greater than that of the Jews. Despite their Old Testament heritage, all that they could do was criticise, find fault and destroy. The centurion, on the other hand, had complete faith in the power of Christ.

In return for these qualities Our Lord granted the centurion, and so all the faithful human race whom the centurion represents, two things.

Firstly, Christ grants the Kingdom of Heaven to the centurion and to all faithful humanity. The Kingdom is no longer for the Jews only, but it is opened up to all. 'Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven'. In other words it is no longer race that gives salvation, but faith. The Jews took it for granted in a racist way, that they would be saved and not the rest of humanity. But today it is revealed that we shall be judged according to our faith, not according to some external sign of nationality or facial features or skin-colour.



Faith is now, in the words of Christ, the one quality that opens up the Kingdom of God. No artificial human boundaries and standards serve any purpose any longer, it is faith in the grace and power of God that saves.

Secondly and following on from this, this Gospel reveals to us that it is faith that determines not only our future in the Kingdom of God, but it also determines our present. 'As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee'. In the context of the centurion, of the man of faith, these words are comforting and healing. But these words are terrible for those without faith. They say that as we believe, so shall it be done unto us. If we believe in virtue, so we shall receive virtue. But if we believe in vice, so we shall receive vice. Those who live by the sword

shall perish by the sword. If we love our neighbour, they will mostly love us. If we hate our neighbour, they will mostly hate us. Our lives are determined by the faith in them. Our lives are determined by our beliefs. Without faith, our lives are empty. With faith, our lives are full.

This understanding of this Gospel proves that our only chance of happiness in this world or the next is to believe in, and so base our lives on, the highest virtues. If we do this, then our lives will be transformed, not only in the here and now but also in the life to come. And what is the highest virtue? All mankind will agree that it is Love. And this is the Christian Revelation, in the words of St John the Evangelist, that God is Love.

From this day forth let us therefore shape our lives around the virtue of Love in the firm assurance and knowledge that all else will come aright as a result. For as we believe, so shall it be done unto us. Therefore let us live and believe with love for others.

Fr. Andrew Phillips

(Source: <http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/>)

Homily on the Day of the Holy Prophet Elias

When we read the Bible, the Third and Fourth Books of Kings about the amazing acts of the holy Prophet Elias, our mind is astounded by them; we are amazed at many things: his extraordinary zeal for the glory of God and his total fearlessness in the work of cultivating faith amidst a pagan people (and such were the people of Israel at that time); our mind is amazed when we read of his extraordinary miracles; and we are most of all amazed when we read about the incredible power of his prayer, for you know that he commanded the elements with it—he forbade the rain to fall upon the Palestinian land for three and a half years, and then again by his prayer brought rain down to the earth.

He brought down fire from heaven, and it burned the sacrifice that had been drenched with water.

It is to Prophet Elias's prayer that I would like to direct your attention, for there is not sufficient time to speak of all the great things he did. However, I would like to talk not only about *his* prayer. We know that there were great ascetics of piety, great saints who also worked wondrous and magnificent miracles.

But I want the thought to reach your heart that not only does this kind of prayer, which works manifest miracles seen by everyone, not only the prayer of the Prophet Elias, and the prayers of the apostles, prophets, and martyrs work miracles. I want you to understand that any prayer will work miracles.

What miracles does it work? Not those glorious and amazing miracles that the Prophet Elias wrought, no. It works miracles unknown to anyone other than the one in whose soul these miracles happen.

The kind of prayer that was made by St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Sergius of Radonezh, Sts. Anthony and Theodosius of the Kiev-Caves, St. Varlaam of Khutyn, St. Nilus of Sora, and many other monastic saints works unseen miracles.

St. Seraphim and St. Sergius were like angels in the flesh even while still alive; their souls were filled with deep faith, pure love for God and people. They shone with faith and love.

How did they attain such brightness?



They attained it by their prayer—first of all by prayer. True, also by severe fasting and vigil.

Do you know that St. Seraphim of Sarov stood for a thousand days and nights on a rock, praying to God? This amazing prayer made him an angel in the flesh. From this prayer divine love came to dwell in his soul, and his heart shone with such love that he greeted every person who passed by him with these words filled with love: my joy!

Do you see? Prayer worked a miracle in St. Seraphim's soul; it worked miracles in the souls of all the other monastic saints, of which there is an enormous number. Prayer worked

miracles of patience in the martyrs, and this unfathomable patience astounded the souls also of those who witnessed their torments. Often even the executioners who tortured them turned to Christ.

Thus, do you see that prayer that does not work obvious, astounding miracles works miracles in the hidden depths of human hearts.

It completely transforms these hearts, for the hearts of the monastic saints and martyrs are quite unlike the hearts of ordinary people—that mass of humanity whom Holy Scripture calls people of the earth, and I will dare to call “people of grass”, and it enflames the hearts of such people also.

Thus, know that in your prayer is the power of God, working miracles in your hearts. Know, that prayer is the most important of all the Christian's works. All his other works are small and insignificant, absolutely insignificant in comparison with the act and labor of prayer.

Just as every plant without water in dry soil withers, so also does the human soul wither if it is not fed with prayer. It also needs food and water, but a special water—that living water that Christ promised to the Samaritan woman when He talked with her; that water flowing in eternal life, about which he spoke in the temple in Jerusalem on the day of Mid-Pentecost.

This water is the water of God's grace, which is absolutely needful for every one of us. And we receive this living water, this spring of grace, through prayer.

But when I speak of prayer, I often get the reply, “I don’t know how to pray. Teach me how to pray.”

How do I answer?

First of all I answer that prayer is the greatest and hardest of all human works. We know that there is no difficult work that can be learned easily. Long study is needed for all such work, or for any art.

If long study is needed for human works, then is it even more needed for this greatest of all works. Study, study, and study endlessly—and you will obtain it.

But how should you begin this study? Here is how: there are many prayers that have been compiled and written by great God-pleasers, by great holy hierarchs, monastic saints, and martyrs.

Pray these prayers; do not imitate the Baptists who disdain these prayers and compose their own. Their prayers are weak and trite, for their spirit is worthless in comparison with the spirit of the holy fathers.

Do not think up your own prayers; pray using those prayers the Holy Church has taught you. However, when reading these prayers, delve into every word, catch yourself in every moment of straying, in every distraction from the words of prayer.

If you will pray like this, the holy prayers of the great God-pleasers will illumine your souls.

But there is yet another prayer—the Jesus prayer, which is the most important and necessary prayer for all monastics: “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*” This prayer truly works miracles, and is therefore considered extremely important, if not the most important of all.

Learn this prayer, and begin with it. Learn it like this: close the door of your room. If you want you can stand, or if you want you can sit on a chair, or kneel. Lowering your head, look first of all to your heart, thinking and remembering which sin of the great multitude of your sins most torments your heart, which of them is the most hateful to God.

If it is fornication, or adultery, think about that sin; if it is greed, think about that before all; if it is mercilessness and cruelty or lack of love, concentrate your thought upon that first of all.

Standing, sitting, or on your knees, find the most serious of your sins, lower your head and beg the Lord Jesus first of all for forgiveness of this most important sin of yours... It is best to pray the Jesus prayer using your prayer rope, saying: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*”

During this time think about this most serious sin. Repeat this prayer no less than one hundred times, always concentrating your thought on the most serious and abominable of your sins. Beginning with this, make it a habit to remember all your other sins as well.

Praying the Jesus prayer, you will hold all the sins in your mind and ask the Lord for forgiveness not only of the most serious sin, but also for all your sins. This prayer will work a miracle in your soul. You will become ashamed; when you start confessing your onerous sin before God, you will feel the insistent desire to be free of it, to be loosed from this loathsome sin without fail.

Praying like this from day to day, you will more and more be freed from your main sin and from all your other sins, and your soul will be transformed.

You yourself will begin to notice how your relationship to your neighbors will change: you will notice that you are becoming more gentle, patient, meek, and humble.

You will treat people with great carefulness, you will take caution never to hurt or offend anyone. And the Jesus prayer will transform your heart and work this miracle—an unseen miracle of God’s grace in your heart.

This is what I wanted to tell you about prayer.

And if you want to cleanse your heart, if you want to stand without trembling before the Terrible Judgment of Christ, do as I advise you.

Pray, pray the Jesus prayer, and first of all repent and repent.

Repentant prayer should be your most important and constant prayer. However, according to the measure that it purifies your heart, you will learn to pray not only for yourself, but also for your neighbors both close and distant, and then for all mankind. Then the holiest, most God-pleasing prayer will come—prayer for those who hate and offend us.

Earlier I counseled you not to imitate the sectarians by making up your own prayers, and now I am telling you that there is a higher form of prayer—prayer without words, the cry of the soul to God, which opens the heavens and leads us to the most living communion with God.

May the Lord vouchsafe us all to attain such prayer!

But this will only come when we become true temples of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**St. Luke (Voino-Yasnetsky)
Archbishop of Crimea**

(Source: <https://orthochristian.com/>)

A Prayer to the Holy Prophet Elias

O most praiseworthy and glorious Prophet of God, Elias, who didst shine on earth by thine angel-like way of life, by flaming zeal towards the Lord God Almighty, as well as by splendid signs and wonders, and then, through the special good will of God to thee, wast taken up together with thy flesh to heaven in the chariot of fire, and wast granted to speak with the Transfigured Saviour of the World on Mt. Tabor, and now, in the habitations of Paradise standest ever before the throne of the heavenly King! Hear us, sinful and unprofitable though we be, who now pray before thy holy icon and earnestly seek refuge in thine intercessions. Pray for us to God Who loveth mankind, that He might give us the spirit of repentance and contrition for our sins, and by His Almighty Grace, help us to leave the paths of wickedness, and to prosper in all good things; that He strengthen us in the battle with our passions and wants; that He plant in our hearts the spirit of humility and meekness, the spirit of brotherly love and mildness, the spirit of patience and chastity, the spirit of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor. Drive out by thy prayers, O Prophet, the evil habits of the world, and moreover the ruinous and corrupting spirit of this age, which contaminates the Christian people with lack of respect for the divine Orthodox faith and the order of the Holy Church and the Lord's Commandments; with disrespect for parents and those in authority, and which casts people down into the pit of unrighteousness, perversion and ruin. Turn away from us, most glorious Prophet, by thine intercession, the rightful anger of God, and deliver all our cities and towns from drought and famine, from fearsome storms and earthquakes, from dealy contagion and illness, from the attacks of outsiders and from civil strife. Strengthen by thy prayers the Orthodox Christians, and ask, O Prophet of God, that the Lord will give our pastors a holy zeal for God, heartfelt concern for the salvation of the flock, wisdom in teaching and direction, devotion and strength in temptations; that judges may not be hypocritical nor corrupt, but show righteousness and sympathy to those who have suffered; that all in civil authority may show concern to those under them, mercy and justice; that civil servants may fulfill their duties rightfully; so that, having lived in peace and devoutness in this world, we may be found worthy to be communicants of the eternal good things in the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom belongeth honor and worship, together with His Unoriginate Father, and the Most Holy Spirit, for ages of ages. Amen.

(Source: <https://www.orthodox.net/trebnic/to-elias.html>)

HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from July 18 to July 25, 2021

Sunday July 18 (Fourth Sunday after Pentecost)- Sunday of the Fourth Ecumenical Council:

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
11:00 am - Sunday School
12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

Tuesday July 20 - Holy Prophet Elias:

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

Sunday July 25 (Fifth Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
11:00 am - Sunday School
12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

