



# HOLY TRINITY

## ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



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# CHURCH BULLETIN

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## The 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading **Luke 7: 11-16**

*At that time,* Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, 'Do

not weep.' Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, rise!' The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen among us!' and 'God has looked favourably on his people!'

Apostle Reading **Galatians 1: 11-19**

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who

had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.



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**Synaxarion.** Sunday October 10, 2021 (The 20th Sunday after Pentecost): The Holy Martyr Evlambius and his sister Evlambia; Holy Righteous Bassianus and Theophilus the Confessor. Thursday, October 14: Holy Righteous Paraskeva of Iași

## Sermon for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We heard of one of the miracles of Christ in today's Gospel reading. That miracle was the raising of the widow's son at Nain.

In this Gospel we see our Lord revealing Himself as the Son of God, the promised Messiah of Israel, by raising the dead. When Saint John the Baptist wanted to know if Jesus was the Christ, the promised one of Israel, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus. Jesus responded to them "tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." (Luke 7:22)

It is interesting that this revelation of Jesus as the Son of God occurred in the shadow of Mount Tabor; the village of Nain is located in a valley below Mount Tabor. It was on Mount Tabor that our Lord was transfigured revealing the fullness of His divinity to His disciples Peter, James and John.

Is our Lord just performing this miracle to reveal Himself as God or out of compassion for the widow as the Gospel states? The answer to both of these questions is yes but there is a deeper meaning to this miracle. From the beginning of time man has feared death. This fear of death comes from not knowing what will happen to the soul once death occurs. Thus, there is a fear of all that can take away biological life. Our Lord reminds us "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matthew 10:28)

This should remind us that our bodies are just garments for the soul. We are further reminded of this on Great and Holy Friday in the Holy Prophet Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. In this vision God asks "Son of man,



can these bones live?" Ezekiel answers "O Lord GOD, you know." (Ezekiel 37:3) In this vision the dead are brought back to life and the souls of the departed are reunited with their bodies. Through this prophecy we see that the body may become worn out but, God will renew it by reuniting soul and body once more in the resurrection.

If we should not fear our physical death, what then should we fear? We should fear is that which can kill our soul. Who or what can kill our soul? The answer

to this question is that we kill our own soul through our sin and failing to care for the soul. The Gospel reminds us that we must not just care for the body in the parable of the rich man with many store houses. The man in this parable thinks that he can rest and take it easy because of his many possessions however; our Lord says to him "Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you." (Luke 12:20)

How then can we care for the soul? The answer is given in the Gospel of the Last Judgment by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, taking in the stranger, clothing the naked, and visiting those that are sick or in prison. (Matthew 25:31-46)

While caring for the soul in this manner is most helpful, the most important thing that we can do is to avoid sin. We must realize that to live a Christian life we must live our lives according to a set of rules. That not everything is permissible as Saint Paul reminds us "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Thus we must always keep in our minds that we can do anything through our free will but is it in keeping with the





of God so that we avoid sin. One of the ways to avoid sin is to question our motives and thoughts against the following four questions.

Is what I am about to do or say honest?

Is what I am about to do or say unselfish?

Is what I am about to do or say loving?

Is what I am about to do or say pure?

If whatever we do or say cannot pass through these four questions it is probably not in line with God's will for us. We should avoid actions that cannot pass through these questions because they will lead us into sin which will kill our soul.

In our human fragility, we are not perfect. Thus, no matter how hard we try not to sin we will fail due to our own imperfections. God provides a way for us to heal our souls once we have inflicted damage on our soul through sin. That healing grace comes through our repentance. That is the full repentance of acknowledging our sin before God and His appointed witness; the priest. This type of healing through repentance is only given through the Holy Mystery of Confession. Our Lord tells us this in the Gospel when He said to His disciples "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:18)

So my dear brother and sisters in Christ tend to your souls through acts of mercy, avoid sin and confess your sin for our Lord said "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). Amen

**Fr. Milan Medakovic**

## **HOLY TRINITY'S** Liturgical Schedule from October 10 to October 17, 2021

### **October 10 (20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost):**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:00 am - Sunday School

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

### **Tuesday October 14 - Holy Righteous Paraskeva of Iași:**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

### **Sunday October 17 (21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost) -**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:30 am - Sunday School

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour



## Saint Parascheva of Iași - a Divine Gift to the Romanians

This year marks 380 years since the translation of Saint Parascheva's relics from Constantinople to Iași, on June 13, 1641. The celebration of this important event began on June 12-13, 2021, and continues until October 14, Saint Parascheva's feast day.

As His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania put it, the Righteous Saint is indeed "a great gift for the Romanian people", and one of the most popular — if not the most popular — of all the saints whose relics are on the territory of Romania.

Saint Parascheva the New was born into a wealthy and noble Christian family, in Epivat (in the province of Thrace, near Constantinople — now in Turkey), on the shores of the Marmara Sea. Her pious parents gave her and her older brother, Euthymius, a solid religious education, and raised them in the tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church.

One day, while Parascheva was attending the Divine Liturgy with her mother in the "Church of the Holy Theotokos", she heard the Lord's words, "Whoever wants to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mark 8, 34). These words pierced her heart like an arrow, and had a profound effect on her.

Thus, after a deep meditation, the young girl that was only ten years old, decided to give her rich clothes away to the poor. Thus, to the exasperation of her parents who found the girl's charity more than they could understand or support, she began to dress poor people in her expensive clothes. As her parents objected and tried to get her to stop, to follow her calling, Parascheva fled from home. She abandoned her wealth and privileges, left her parents, and ran away to Constantinople. One could imagine how



much she was very impressed by the capital city of the Byzantine Empire, a city full of churches with many relics and wonder-working icons. There she met some zealous ascetics who instructed her in the spiritual life. Thus, near relics of saints, she spent her time in prayer and meditating on the words of Christ.

To find their daughter, the parents began to travel from city to city. Parascheva succeeded in eluding them, by moving to Chalcedon, and then to Heraclea Pontica, near the Black Sea, where she settled at to the church of the Most Holy Theotokos. There she spent five years living an austere life of continuous prayer and devotion. When her parents died, she sold her properties and gave

the money to the poor. Thus, she gave up the world for the "desert", dedicating her life entirely to God through prayer and fasting, while she was still young in years. Her older brother Euthymius became a monk, and later he was consecrated as Bishop of Matidia.

During her prayers she received visions of the Holy Virgin Mary and in one of the visions, she was instructed to go to Jerusalem. After spending some time in the city, she joined a convent in the Jordanian desert. A few years later, she returned to Constantinople and then, at the age of twenty-five, moved to the village of Katikratia where, at the "Church of the Holy Apostles", where she lived the remaining two years of her life.

Then she made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she had long desired to venerate those places where our Saviour had lived and walked. **She did not return to Constantinople but, yearning to withdraw still further**



Constantinople but, yearning to withdraw still further from the world and its distractions, she crossed the River Jordan into the wilderness. She undertook ascetic struggles in the desert of Jordan. There she lived the ascetic life until she reached the age of twenty-five. An angel of the Lord ordered her to return to her homeland, saying: "Leave the wilderness and return to your homeland; it is necessary that you render your body to the earth there, and your soul to the habitation of the Lord." St. Paraskeve obeyed, and returned to Epivat in the village of Katikratia where she lived for two years in ceaseless fasting and prayer.

St. Paraskeva departed to the Lord at the age of 27, and was buried near the sea. Although, she was given a Christian burial, because no one knew who she was or where she was from, she was buried in an unmarked grave. However, it pleased God to reveal the glory of His saint and years after her repose, the villagers discovered St. Paraskeva's relics, fragrant and incorrupt. The relics were taken to the church of the Apostles Peter and Paul, where, by the prayers of the holy ascetic, many people were healed of various diseases and the blind received their sight. She remained there for about 175 years.

St Parascheva's relics were moved to Trnovo, Bulgaria in 1238 and placed in the cathedral. Patriarch Euthymius wrote her Life and established the day of her commemoration as October 14. When, in 1391, the Turks occupied Bulgaria, her relics were given to Mircea the Elder, Prince of the Wallachia (one of the former principalities of nowadays Romania) which, unlike Bulgaria, was not under the turks. In 1393 the relics were given to Princess Angelina of Serbia (July 30), who brought them to Belgrade in the Ružica Church. When Belgrade fell to Ottoman forces in 1521, the relics were translated to Constantinople and placed in the patriarchal cathedral.

In 1641, during the time of Patriarch Parthenius the Old of Constantinople (1639-1644), when the Patriarchate of Constantinople found itself in great financial need, the relics Saint Parascheva were given as a gift to the Prince of Moldavia, Vasile Lupu Voevod (1634-1653), in recognition of his financial support. The holy relics were lowered over the fortified wall of Phanar and were secretly transported to Iași (Jassy), the capital city of the Principality of Moldavia (Romania). As we have mentioned above,

on June 13, 1641, the relics arrived to Iași, and were settled in the Monastery of the Three Hierarchs where many healings took place.

On December 26, 1888, after being rescued from a fire, St. Parascheva's relics were placed in the Metropolitan Cathedral at Iași, where they remain until the present day. They can be venerated at any time, the Metropolitan Cathedral being usually open every day.

A severe drought in 1946-47 affected Moldavia, adding to the misery left by the war. Then, Metropolitan Justinian Marina took a courageous decision. In that period of Stalinist communism, when in Romania the Soviets were carrying the toughest anti-Christian persecution, Justinian initiated the first procession featuring the coffin containing the relics of Saint Parascheva.

The relics wended their way through the drought-deserted villages of eight Moldavian counties: Iași, Vaslui, Roman,

Bacău, Putna, Neamț, Baia and Botoșani. The offerings collected on this occasion were distributed, based on Metropolitan Justinian's decisions, to orphans, widows, invalids, school cafeterias, churches under construction, and to monasteries in order to feed the sick and old or feeble monks.

Saint Parascheva is venerated as the Protector of the city of Iași and of all Moldavia. Each year, on October 14, hundreds of thousands of Orthodox faithful and hierarchs from many countries gather in Iași to celebrate her feast day and to venerate her holy relics, which continue to work miracles. The line to venerate the relics can last for 12 hours and can be as long as 2.5 km (i. e. 1.553 mi).

Orthodox Romanians have placed many churches under the protection of the St. Paraskeva. Thus, only in the Romanian Patriarchate there are over 250 churches dedicated to St. Paraskeva.

Let us pray the Venerable Paraskeva to intercede for us, sinners, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, saying with St. Nikolai Velimirovich: "By your prayers, help us in the misfortunes of life. Through the clouds of earthly sorrow bring us light, like a rainbow – O chaste virgin, most wonderful, Holy Mother Paraskeva!"

**(Edited by Fr. Nicolai Buga)**

