



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

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The 27th Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading Luke 13: 10 - 17

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on

which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

Apostle Reading Ephesians 6: 10 - 17

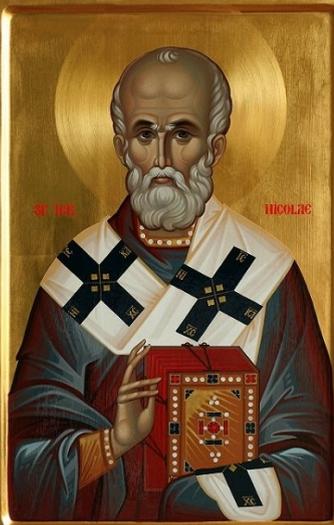
Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in

the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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Synaxarion. Sunday December 9, 2018 (The 27th Sunday after Pentecost - fish allowed): Conception of Holy Theotokos by the Righteous Anna; Righteous Hanna, mother of Samuel the Prophet

On Hypocrisy

In the Gospel reading for today we hear about the healing of the woman who had an infirmity of eighteen years, and she was healed on the Sabbath day.

As is usual, in the readings of the Gospel, there is an inner and an outer meaning. The outer meaning is pretty clear to see, when Jesus Christ rebukes this synagogue leader. It is very clear how foolish his words were. So we know the outer meaning that there is no time prescribed especially for mercy. All time is for mercy. God implants in us an understanding of things, and we have to be able to judge rightly. And we know when we should show mercy. There is no time when man should put some law ahead of showing mercy.

There is an inner meaning, too, because this woman was all bent together. She could not straighten up. She could in no wise lift herself up. There is a great meaning to that infirmity that she had, and our Lord's healing her on the Sabbath day.

Our Lord was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and this was a habit of His. This is a very Jewish habit to speak all day in the synagogue on the Sabbath. And we try to emulate that in a poor way, unfortunately like the apostles did it, because of our sins and laziness. Not like the early Christians did it, who had so much zeal. But we serve the All Night Vigil and we serve the Divine Liturgy and we preach at the Liturgy and I often preach at the Vigil as well because we need to know as many holy things as we can.

We need to continually be feeding ourselves with holiness, because we're so continually, unfortunately, imbibing the bitter dregs of the world. So we must do something to dilute that and to eventually cast it out. And if you do not meditate upon holy things, you won't become holy. It's too bad that we don't spend all day speaking of holy things. It would be good if we did.

The purpose of our gathering together on Saturday and Sunday is to worship, to expect God to do something to us by partaking of His mysteries to be sure, to have enlightenment, the medicine of immortality within us. But



also, to taste something of the sweetness of the Church's theology. It's God-breathed, you know. The services are inspired by the Holy Spirit and they breathe *as the Holy Spirit breathes*. And if you listen and if you pray, you can hear it. You can hear God in His services.

Saturday and Sunday are consecrated to our remembrance of God. Unfortunately we do not Him remember every day. Unfortunately, we fall into grievous sin. We get distracted. But if we can struggle to pay attention on Saturday and Sunday, whatever our position (I struggle to pay attention, too) - God

will enlighten us. Of course, we will break bread together, most of us, and be able to taste of the heavenly bread.

But I tell you, if you don't come here with an expectation that God will teach you and enlighten you and make you straighten up, as one who cannot lift yourself up, and if you do not struggle, then you will come away today poor and wretched and unenlightened. You might commune but you won't have received any benefit from this heavenly food because you won't have struggled.

So you must struggle. Struggle by coming to the vigil and having expectation that God will teach you, listening as well as you can. And when you fall away from listening, pull yourself back. I don't know any other way to do it. I don't know any other way to explain it. You just struggle and struggle and struggle. And eventually God will indeed make us capable of those things that we are struggling to do. He will help us.

"And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." (Luke 13:11-13)

The God-man can just say, "Thou art loosed.", and she was loosed from her infirmity of eighteen years, long standing pain and sadness over her infirmity. It was a long time, and the fathers say that this was mentioned

so that we could know, this was God's work. This is in God's territory. God can heal a man. No man can heal another man. And this is a very simple miracle. There is not much fanfare to it. There is not much of a lead up to it, such as in the miracle of Jairus' daughter (Cf. Mark 5:22-42; Luke 8:41-56), where there is a whole procession that occurs. And that has something to each us.

But here, Jesus Christ, matter of factly, as the God-man, as the one who created us, cast out Satan with only a word. "Thou art loosed," by the authority of the God-man. Now man cannot do this. This woman was bent. She was crooked. Solomon says, "*I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.*" (Ecclesiastes 1:14-15)

"Thou art loosed." Our Lord tells her, "Thou cannot help Thyself, but I, the God-man can. And I have come to help, and I will. Thou art loosed from thy sins, from thy passions.' And why do I say that? Because crookedness is a metaphor for sin and for tempestuousness, for being lost in the vanity of the world. 'I am the healer. I came to heal thee.

I came to make thee able to see me. You cannot see me when you are bent down. You can only see the ground. But I will straighten you up, and then you will see Me, as I am.'

Why was this woman oppressed? I told you before, again, I say it was her sins that oppressed her. This is a great mystery. We don't always know why a person suffers. Sometimes they suffer because of their sins, sometimes not. But that is God's territory. We cannot delve into these matters. We must only speak of them with fear and trembling, so as not to offend the Divine Majesty.

Some people grow old and fat and they are wicked. Some people are young and they die in virtue. Some people struggle and never seem to be able to get around the problems of life. Other people have a relatively easy time of it. God knows for each man what his position in life should be for the best possibility for his salvation, and we don't know. But this woman was bent and crooked, so the crookedness indicates that she was suffering because of her sins. And she suffered manfully. She suffered for eighteen years. And she came to the temple, and she was hoping to be cured.

There is another incident where Christ cures someone. I can be so bold and say that this woman had sins is because of this incident. "*And, behold, they brought to*

him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9:2)

What an odd thing that must have been to hear. Here a person comes laid out, unable to move their limbs, and Jesus Christ says, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Some of these people must have thought, "Well, yes, but don't you see what's wrong with the man?" And then others thought, "He blasphemeth." But this man was sick because of his sins, and this woman was crippled because of her sins. And God enlightened both of them. He healed them of their sins first. He loosed this woman of her infirmity so that she could look up at the God-man, and then she could commence to live a Christian life.

Our Lord came indeed to straighten out crookedness. The Baptizer says - this is quoted from Isaiah, which is a prophecy about the Baptizer - "*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.*" (Luke 13:11-13)

This man, this sinner, this prideful and arrogant person looking for the glory of men, would not address the Lord directly, but our Lord indeed directly talked to him and to all of the pharisees and the other fellow sinners who wanted the glory of men, and gave up mercy for their pride. Why is this man a hypocrite? He's putting on airs. He cares nothing for mercy, but only for show. "*An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.*" (Proverbs 11:9) So it says, the holy Solomon says, in his proverbs. And then, our Lord says, concerning the scribes, the pharisees, the synagogue leaders, and all those others who are hypocrites,

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." (Matthew 15:7-11)

This principle that Christ gives about food and about true defilement is the same principle about whether or not one should heal on the Sabbath day. Of course one should heal on the Sabbath day!. One should heal on any day.

One should show mercy on any day, in any circumstance. And to even ask the question shows the abysmal ignorance of the interrogator. *“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”*, you people who question in silly and obtuse ways the mercy of God, *“for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”* (Matthew 23:13)

To be called a hypocrite is indeed a terrible thing. And hypocrisy is something that is probably present in each one of us. It is a sin. We must confess it. We must root it out.

Our whole society is full of hypocrisy. Our whole society runs on hypocrisy. It is a lie. It is trying to look like something we are not. It is not being genuine. It's making false promises. It's not showing mercy when we proclaim ourselves to be Christians. It's not praying for our brother when we see he has a need because we have some other task that troubles us. It's not living the Christian life when we have made that promise in our baptism.

Oh yes, hypocrisy is a great sin. And if a man looks inside himself, he should say, *“Thou hypocrite.”* And the moment he says those words he should think about what our Lord says about hypocrites and he should fall on his face and be like the publican who said, *“God, be merciful unto me a sinner.”* (Cf. Luke 18:13-14)

Now this woman was called a daughter of Abraham. And why? On account of her faith. *“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”* (Matthew 23: 32) This woman was not dead. This woman was alive in faith. She had faith, and therefore she was considered a daughter of Abraham.

And Jesus said in another place to a man, who had also been healed of his infirmity, having nothing wrong with him physically but being filled with the sin of lust for wealth, that is Zacchaeus: *“This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:9-10). So indeed he is a son of Abraham, and this woman is a son of Abraham, and not because of her virtue but because of her belief, and because of her desire to live virtuously.

But He wouldn't say such a thing about the ruler of the synagogue now, would he? He called him a hypocrite. Here is what Jesus has to say about the hypocrites.

In another context, it was written that, *“They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith*

unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” (John 8: 39) So this is why I tell you that this woman was a daughter of Abraham on account of her faith. You can see that to be called a son of Abraham or a daughter of Abraham means that you believe and act according to your belief. And even though this woman had some sins that had bound her, God released her. And now she was able to live virtuously.

There is a practicality that I think we should inculcate in ourselves, that we can learn from this particular passage of scripture. It's easy to see that one should show mercy on any day. And yet this man, this synagogue leader, this sinner, didn't see that, because he was so concerned about other extraneous details, and concerned about the boastful pride of life, and the honor of men. But if we're guided by the Holy Spirit, we can discern rightly. We can discern truly. We can see what is right and what is false. We can understand. We can know that the body is not for meat. Meats are for the body (Cf. 1 Cor.6: 13), and if one has a need according to the body, one eats according to one's need. We understand that principle in fasting. It is because the Holy Spirit inspires us, and makes us know. Makes us understand that only if we have humility, only if we expect and hope that God will fill us with His grace. And then of course we have to act upon His grace, and we have to root out this sin of hypocrisy that is being shown.

A hypocrite will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. And I also tell you that the vast majority of people in this life are hypocrites. It is true. It is very true. That is why there is so little piety in our day - because people give lip service. These people, their heart is far from me. (Matthew 15:8) Their lips speak about me but their heart is far from me, the Lord says. And that is what our day is like.

The baptizer only announced that this would occur, and the God-man made it so. Our Lord directly promises through the mouth of the God-inspired Isaiah:

“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” (Isaiah 42:16)

Only God can make that which is crooked straight. And so what happened when this woman was loosed from her infirmity? You would think that everyone would have been in awe before God and they would have fallen on their faces saying, *“Lord have mercy.”* **But what** happened?

“And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.” (Luke 13:14)

What amazing words. What amazing stupidity. This man was filled with envy and jealousy, and that’s what clouded his mind. His anger made him crazy to say such insane things. What kind of beast would liken mercy on the Sabbath day to common labor in the field?

Isn’t the Sabbath a day of rest, though? He’s right about that. The ruler of the synagogue is saying a partial truth you know. The Sabbath day is a day of rest according to the Jewish law. And our Sabbath, our day of rest, today, is the same, where we should rest in Christ and meditate on holy things. But is not Christ giving this woman

rest? Is He not fulfilling the Sabbath day? Indeed. This woman had eighteen years of no rest, of sleeplessness, and of hunger, and of pain, and of despondency. And our Lord, on the Sabbath, the day of rest, gave this woman rest. And this synagogue leader was too stupid, too full of pride, too full of arrogance to see this.

Notice how he addresses this question that he brings up. He does not say anything to Christ directly. He doesn’t have the *guts* to do it. But he is aiming for the glory of men, for the honor of men. So what does he do? He says this out to the congregation, so as to get partners in crime with him, so as to feel emboldened by other people being full of sin. But the Lord answered him very simply and plainly. And he said a word that does not occur very often in the scriptures, by the way. And when it occurs, you should be terrified, concerning what a hypocrite is.

“The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.” (Luke 13:14-17)

Root out from yourselves hypocrisy, brothers and sisters. If there is anything in you that puts on airs, if there is anything in you that forgets to show mercy, if there is anything in you that looks for the honor of men, if there is anything in you that is lazy and does not wish to worship God at the appointed times, then you have something to repent from: your hypocrisy. Because you made promises, as I made as well. It’s true, I suppose on a small level, moment by moment we fall into moments of hypocrisy.

That is why God will loose us - He is there to loose us -from our infirmity. If we struggle against such things, God will indeed loose us. But if we do not, then we will fall into the depths of hell, maybe not even knowing it. Maybe we’ll be very surprised on Judgment Day when our Lord says, “I don’t know you”. (Cf. Luke 13:25) ‘I don’t know you because

you are a hypocrite. And I have no concourse with hypocrites. I told you everything you needed to know. I gave you everything you needed. And I had children that were suffering, lack of bread and jail and derision for my sake and they still prayed with fervor. And you lived without care and without thought. You lived as a hypocrite. You are no better than the ruler of the synagogue, and you can go join him.’

Let us not be hypocrites. Let us ask God to enlighten us. And in any sin that we have, whether it be hypocrisy or any other sin, let us fall down before Christ. Let us ask Him to forgive us. And then we have to seal our part of the bargain. We have to make an effort to live according to His commandments. May God help us in all things. Amen.

Fr. Seraphim Holland



A Higher Love

In the modern world, we have all but forgotten the saints. Once upon a time, we used to name not only our children, but even our streets and our cities in honor of the saints of God, in order to seek their heavenly aid and intercession, and in order to continually bring these holy saints to our remembrance. On each day of the year, we kept the festival of not one saint only, but of many, sometimes even dozens on the same day.

But now, out of all the feast-days of the vast ranks and innumerable multitudes of the saints which have adorned Christ's Church and the whole of creation since the beginning of the world, we as a society (for the most part) remember only four. And even though this is already an unspeakable tragedy and an unbearable loss, what is yet more terrible is that we do not keep these four feast-days in order to honor the saints. No, we keep these feast-days in order to slander them. We keep four demonic festivals, drawing the children of God away from the Most High, and enslaving them to the miserable love of this dying life. My brothers and sisters, it is no coincidence that these four days have come to embody the precise opposite of their original spirit, the spirit of the saint. The demons have quite intentionally arranged for this to happen, because they realize the great significance that these four feast-days hold for us, and therefore they are not content merely to help us forget these soul-saving commemorations, but rather they choose precisely these times to loudly and insistently proclaim their own foul and hellish gospel.

On the feast day of St. Valentine – that holy martyr of Christ who renounced all worldly happiness in order to endure a tortuous death out of love for the Heavenly Bridegroom – we idolize and glamorize a carnal and sentimental worldly love, vainly hoping and imagining that such love will bring us to the heights of perpetual and irrevocable bliss. This myth of supreme romantic happiness is more powerful now than it has ever been before – despite the fact that it has never been more resoundingly refuted by reality than it is today, amidst our horrific landscape of shattered



families, divorces, adulteries, abortions, abuses, and all manner of degrading perversions and the ubiquitous objectification of the act of physical love. No, my brothers and sisters, true and eternal happiness is not to be found in the arms of another human being, but only in the loving embrace of our Savior Jesus Christ. And though marriage is indeed holy, undefiled, and blessed by God, it is by no means an end in itself: rather, like all of the Holy Mysteries of the Church, it can only be properly understood as a means of union with Christ. And it is the supreme and incomparable worth of this divine union – this, and no other – to which St. Valentine bore his martyric witness. But we forget his legacy and we blaspheme his name, using it instead to celebrate a festival to the foul goddess Venus.

On the feast of St. Patrick – that great missionary bishop who brought Christianity to the pagan tribes of the West – we turn back once again to the very drunken revelries and pagan debaucheries from which St. Patrick came to free us. He brought an end to the oppressive power of the demons in ancient Ireland, but today we keep his feast by celebrating and rejoicing in the oppressive power of the demon of addiction, which has wrought – and continues to wreak – such heartbreaking devastation everywhere around us. In our secular and hedonistic society, the abuse of alcohol and other chemical substances has become (along with sexual indulgence) the only remaining sacrament, participation in which is thought to bring us to a paradisiacal state of euphoric bliss, but in reality brings us only to a living hell. St. Patrick came to give us a higher joy and a more profound peace than can ever be found in the empty and soul-destroying rites of the demons. But we forget his legacy and we blaspheme his name, using it instead to celebrate a festival to the foul god Bacchus.

Next we come to the feast of All Saints, which (according to the Western calendar) has now become Halloween, a night on which even the most pure and innocent of our children are encouraged to costume

themselves as witches, demons, and all manner of foul and wicked beings. We somehow view this as endearing and entertaining, rather than as horrific and frightening. And rather than aspiring to imitate the lives of the holy saints and God-pleasers who have shown forth from among us, we instead regale ourselves with stories and films of hellish terror, somehow finding in this pleasure and amusement. Rather than friends of heaven, on this day we willingly choose to become the friends of hell, blaspheming the name of all the saints and keeping a festival to all the demons and pagan gods and goddesses at once.

And finally, we come to the saint we celebrate today: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, “Santa Claus.” In popular culture, Santa Claus is nothing other than the patron saint of consumerism – and therefore we keep his feast through an orgy of materialism. According to ancient lore, the mission of Santa Claus is to bestow virtuous children with virtue’s reward: more stuff. Although, it must be admitted that in recent years Santa has placed rather less emphasis on “making his list and checking it twice,” on finding out “if you’re naughty or nice.” Santa wouldn’t want to exclude anyone, or to hurt anyone’s feelings... and so, more or less everyone now “deserves” to get more stuff.

In other words, we have come to view Santa Claus in many ways as we view God: a benevolent (and mythical) character who asks nothing from us, and who exists only in order to give us exactly what we want. His one commandment: “Have it your way.” And we are only too happy to oblige.

Of course, the popular figure of Santa Claus has its basis in the life of the real St. Nicholas, who was known far and wide for his kindness and his generosity. He did indeed once throw three bags of gold through the window of a certain house, in which there were three young women without dowries whom their father was therefore considering selling into slavery (or worse). But note the striking difference here: St. Nicholas gave these people alms not in order to reward their virtue, nor simply for the sake of giving them something nice, but rather precisely in order to save them from sin! St. Nicholas saw material wealth for exactly what it really is: neither more nor less than a means by which we are to strive for “the one thing needful.” The secular world seeks to use wealth in order to give people an earthly paradise; St. Nicholas teaches us to use wealth in order to bring people to the true and only paradise: the Kingdom of Heaven.

And though he is famed for his gentleness, he is hardly what we would today call tolerant. He famously struck Arius a blow upon the face for his blasphemy during the First Ecumenical Council, and was vindicated for his zealous piety by the Most Holy Mother of God Herself. Moreover, he took what was far from a “live and let live” attitude towards those who held to differing religious beliefs: he would walk throughout his diocese, reducing to rubble the pagan idols and temples which he found there. Why do I relate these stories? Am I saying that we ourselves should start walking around striking blows to heretics and burning non-Orthodox houses of worship to the ground? Of course not: we ourselves possess neither the boldness nor the discernment of St. Nicholas, and if we were to imitate his outward behavior it would almost certainly proceed only from our own pride.

No, I relate these stories rather because St. Nicholas reveals to us a different *kind of* love than what passes for love today. He shows us a higher love, a heavenly love, a love concerned not with making others feel good, not with making them happy and comfortable, but rather with making them into *gods*. St. Nicholas loves all people so much that he does absolutely everything in his power to bring them to God – and that is exactly why he is known as the Wonderworker. And though our own deeds will no doubt be far more feeble, nevertheless we must strive to imitate this example of love as much as possible, and on no account settle for a love which desires anything less or other than salvation for the beloved.

But how did St. Nicholas acquire such love? And how did he gain the power to work the miracles which he worked – and still works – in such incredible abundance? Why has he become one of the most famous and well-beloved saints of all time – so much so that neither the demons, nor the modern secular world which they have formed, can possibly forget him, but must instead mock him and defile his memory as much as possible? The answer is simple, and is clearly revealed in the troparion of this feast: “thou hast attained the heights through humility.”

Truly, it was the humility of St. Nicholas which gave birth to his great love. It was his humility which gave him the power to work so many miracles. It was his humility which allowed him to accomplish his great ascetic feats. It was his humility which enabled him to give away all he possessed to the poor and the needy. And it was his humility which even allowed him to strike Arius on the face and to topple the pagan idols,

and to do so with absolutely nothing but love in his heart.

And how did he acquire such humility? The answer to this is also simple: through absolute obedience.

There is a story from early in his life, perhaps the most important story about him that there is to tell. After visiting the Holy Land, he was moved by a deep desire to go to the desert and to dedicate the rest of his life to prayer and repentance. Therefore upon returning to Lycia, he entered the monastery of Holy Sion which had been founded by his uncle. But the Lord said to him: "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there." And of course, St. Nicholas obeyed.

What a great lesson this is for us, the spoiled children of a world whose only command is: "Have it your way!" St. Nicholas was willing to renounce not only sin, but even the most holy desire of his own heart! How many of us are willing to follow such an example? How many of us are willing to set aside our own will completely, not only in what is sinful, but even in what we imagine to be pleasing to God? How many of us have truly cut off not only our own will, but also our own understanding?

Let me suggest a very simple criterion for answering each one of these questions: how many of us are saints? Because this is indeed the truth, the great truth revealed to us by the life of the Holy Wonderworker St. Nicholas: as soon as we truly and totally renounce our own will in all things, we will immediately become saints.

And that is worth far more than any number of stockings stuffed with all the treasures of this world. And so of course, that is the gift which St. Nicholas truly desires to give to each one of us on this feast day. Through his holy intercessions, may we become willing to receive it. Amen.

**A monk of Holy Cross Orthodox Monastery
in Wayne, WV (2018)**

Source: <https://www.holycross.org/blogs/sermons-homilies/>



HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from December 5 to December 12, 2021

Sunday December 5 (27th Sunday after Pentecost - fish allowed):

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

Monday December 6— Saint Nicholas the Wonder- worker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (fish allowed):

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

Sunday December 12 (28th Sunday after Pentecost - fish allowed):

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

