



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

The Rich, Young Ruler

The Troparion of the Resur- rection, Tone 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb. The guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure Body. Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting Life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee!

Troparion of Annunciation, Tone 4

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Kontakion of Annunciation, Tone 8

O Victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

The 31st Sunday after Pentecost, January 15th, Lu. 18:18-27

The gospel for the thirty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Luke 18:18-27) tells us of a rich and powerful man — a ruler— who asked Jesus what was needed to inherit eternal life. Jesus reminds him of the commandments. “All these have I kept from my youth up...” He lacks one thing, Jesus tells him: to sell all his goods and distribute them to the poor. “And come, follow me...” But the man goes sorrowfully away, “for he was very rich”. And Jesus says that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes it is material wealth which stops a man from entering the Kingdom but there are possessions other than money. Beauty, intelligence, perhaps some disordered human affection or bad habit: these, just as much, can be hindrances which Jesus tells us to free ourselves of before following Him. What are the earthly goods which hold and hinder me, personally, from following Jesus? How can I put these possessions to the service of the poor, and thus liberate my will? The gospel for this Sunday faces each one of us with this question. It is a good question to consider at the time of Christmas, at the time when Jesus comes to us in complete poverty, possessing nothing.

The Epistle (1Tim. 1:5-17) consists of only three verses, and begins with the phrase: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief...”. We know these words well, for the Church repeats them to us before each communion. Today, let us give a few moments to consider two aspects of Paul’s affirmation: on the one hand, to the humble avowal by which we admit the seriousness of our own sin; on the other, to the certainty that Jesus has come into the world precisely to save us from our sin. Repentance and pardon: these are the two poles of the mystery of our redemption, of which Christ’s sacrifice is at the center.

Taken from the Year of Grace of the Lord, by a Monk of the Eastern Church

***From the Lives of the Saints....* THE VENERABLE PAUL OF THEBES**

Paul was born of wealthy parents in Lower Thebes in Egypt during the reign of Emperor Decius. Paul, with his sister, inherited all the property of their parents. But his brother-in-law,

Announcements and Activities

Akathist to St. Moses the Black— Monday, at 5PM

Divine Liturgy for St. Athanasius— Wednesday, at 9AM.

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

House Blessings— Father Lawrence has a sign-up sheet out in the Social Hall. It runs through next Sunday. Most dinner-time slots are filled. We can start scheduling the next week if you'd like to. Just see Fr. Lawrence about the day you desire.

Church School/Adult Ed.— January 29th, at 9AM.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Brian, Kerrie and Aaron. Next week's Coffee Hour will be replaced by a potluck before our Annual Meeting. Bring your favorite dish.

Parish Council— met. We discussed the Annual Meeting and adopted a Treasure's report showing we finished the year in the black, as you'll see in your packet of reports.

Annual Meeting— our year end meeting will take place after the Liturgy and a potluck meal next Sunday, January 22nd.. **All parish members should be present.** Voting members are those who are

at least 18 years old; have been to Confession and Communion at least once in the last 12 months; and regularly support the parish through their gifts of Time, Talent and Resources. We will need to establish a quorum so even those who may not have the strength to stay for the whole meeting, generally around 60-90 minutes can come long enough for your name to be counted. Your parish council and I thank you..

Pray for... Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy**— who are ill. **Matushka Ann Hopko**, reposed. **Jonathan**— ill. **Sonja**— Sunday's daughter-in-law who gave birth through C-section and is recovering. Congratulations! Reposed **Metropolitan Herman**, former Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America. **Reposed Armand**— former member of our parish.. **Reposed Barbara Ranjo**. **Reposed Matushka Ann Hopko, Tom Wood**— heart surgery. **Fr. And Matushka's Granddaughter Annabella is battling and persistent illness.** **Reposed: Fr. Maximos of St. Silouan Monastery, Laure**— battling Cancer. **Laure**— battling cancer. **Paul**— ill **Ralph-ill Archpriest Lawrence**, from Canada, progressive eye disease. **Tsige Roman**— our beloved Tsige reposed on December 3rd. Please keep praying for her homeland of Ethiopia. **Brian**— ill.. **Jonathan**— ill. **Katia**— sister of Shkbarra's **Grace**, Heather's goddaughter.

an idolater, wanted to confiscate Paul's share of the property and threatened to betray Paul before the judge as a Christian if he did not cede his property to him. This misfortune, coupled with the heroic examples of self-sacrifice by the Christian martyrs that Paul saw with his own eyes, motivated him to give his share of the property to his sister. The he, as a pauper, withdrew into the desert, where he lived an ascetic life until his death. To what spiritual heights this ascetic giant reached was witnessed by no less a person than St. Anthony the Great, who once visited Paul and saw how the wild beasts and birds of the air ministered to him. Returning from this visit, Anthony said to his monks: "Woe is me, my children! A sinful and false monk am I, a monk only in name. I saw Elias, I saw John in the wilderness--and in truth I saw Paul in Paradise!" St. Paul lived 113 years and peacefully reposed in the Lord in the year 342 A.D.

THE VENERABLE JOHN KALYVITES [THE HUT DWELLER]

John was born of wealthy and distinguished parents in Constantinople during the reign of Leo I. He was their only child. Drawn by an inclination for the spiritual life, the young John secretly fled with a monk to a monastery in Asia Minor. For six year in this monastery, he remained in the greatest abstinence, prayer and obedience toward the abbot. Then the devil assailed him with the temptation that he should leave the monastery, return home to his parents, and live with them there as a nobleman. Indeed, he did return to the home of his parents dressed as a beggar. He saw his parents but did not want to make himself known to them. He took up lodging as a beggar in their courtyard, living on the crumbs that the servants threw to him and enduring much ridicule from everyone. John lived thus for three years, constantly praying to God that He save the souls of his father and mother. When John fell ill and sensed death approaching, he made himself known to his parents--who recognized him by a precious book of the Gospels which they had given him in his childhood and which he had kept for himself as his only possession. And so, this young man, even though he was very wealthy, defeated the devil and saved his soul and the souls of his parents. He reposed in the Lord in about the year 450 A.D.

THE VENERABLE GABRIEL OF LESNOV

Gabriel was a Slav and a companion of St. Prochorus of Pchinja and St. John of Rila. He lived a life of asceticism in the tenth century at Kratov, on Mount Lesnov, where he erected a church dedicated to the Holy Archangel Michael. The beautiful church now located there was built by Jovan Oliver, a duke of Tsar Dušan. St. Gabriel was a miracle-worker both during his life and after his death. He reposed in the Lord near the end of the tenth century.

THE HOLY MARTYR PANSOPHIUS

Pansophius was the son of the Alexandrian proconsul Nilus. Abandoning worldly honor and riches, he was tonsured a monk as a young man. For twenty-seven years, he lived a life of strict asceticism, raising his spirit to the higher world. During the reign of Decius he was dragged before the court, where he was flogged for the name of Christ, and under great torture he gave up his soul to God.

REFLECTION

Do not ever think that God does not hear you when you pray to Him. He hears our thoughts, just as we hear the voices and the words of one another. And if He does not act immediately according to your prayer, it is either because you are praying to Him in an unworthy manner, or because you ask something of Him which would be detrimental to you, or because He, in His wisdom and providence, delays the fulfillment of your petition until the proper moment. Father John of Kronstadt writes: "As by means of the electric telegraph we speedily communicate with persons who are far away from us, so likewise, by means of lively faith--as though through telegraph wires--we speedily communicate with God, with the angels and saints. As we trust entirely in the speed of the electric current and in its reaching its destination, so likewise should we completely trust in the speed of the prayer of faith and in its reaching its destination. Send your petition to God and the saints by means of the telegraph of faith, and you will speedily obtain an answer." And again, in another place, St. John writes: "God and the created spirits, and the souls of the departed--as well as those of the living--are sentient beings; and thought is rapid and in some manner omnipresent. Think of them with your whole heart, and they will be present with you. God will surely be with you always; and the others, by the gift and power of God, will also be with you."

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)