



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

The Healing of the Centurion's Servant

Troparion of the Resurrec- tion, Tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death! He has become the firstborn of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy!

Troparion of the Annuncia- tion, 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 the Annuncia- tion, 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 4th Sunday after Pentecost Tone 3, July 21st , Matt. 8:5-13

Last Sunday, we heard St. Paul tell us that we are “justified by faith”. The Gospel for the fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Matt. 8: 5-13) shows us what sort of faith it is that justifies. At Capernaum, a Roman centurion obtains from Jesus the healing of his servant who is sick. The healing is in answer to his act of faith: ‘Go thy way: and as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee...’. This centurion is not one of the children of Israel. Nor does Jesus ask him for any profession of intellectual belief; he puts him to no test of doctrine. Yet, nevertheless, it is in the centurion, and not in the most ‘orthodox’ Jews that Jesus finds the sort of faith he looks for: ‘Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel’. What goes to make up the centurion’s lived and saving faith? It is not identified with adherence to any dogma, nor with the performance of rites or the carrying out of legal precepts. It is based, first of all, in profound humility: ‘Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof . . .’ Then, it is all tensed to hear the Lord’s word: ‘But speak the word only . . .’.

The word of the Lord, here, is not only received with respect and faith, but it is desired and sought, as a principle of power and salvation. This word, which the centurion awaits with his whole being, he does not intend to separate from everyday life, by placing it in a ‘religious’ setting. ‘Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.’ The centurion believes that Jesus word will enter his life, will erupt into its domestic realities, and bring about a definite result. Lastly, the centurion’s faith is a predisposition to obedience. He says: ‘I am a man under authority’, I command soldiers and servants; what I tell them, they do. He, himself, is under the command of superior officers, and he carries out their orders. He thus finds it natural that Jesus should command and that he should be obeyed instantly. He awaits Jesus’ command. This, then, is the centurion’s faith, the faith that Jesus praises. And this is the sort of faith that Jesus looks for in us: a confident giving of our whole selves to the word which saves and gives life. This faith does not exclude either a clearly defined belief in revealed truths, or a meticulous practice of the divine law; but a faith which relied entirely on such belief or practice, and lacked the inner dynamic that sends the centurion to Jesus, would be a dead faith. The living faith of the centurion – ‘a man under authority’ - implies the submission of the will to Jesus’ word. As soon as the centurion puts his request to our Lord, he places himself under his authority, ‘between his hands’. I, too, must become a ‘man under authority’, a man who, having placed his whole life under the direction of the Lord, finds in this obedience and trust, at every moment, the security and certainty of which those who are a law unto themselves can know nothing.

(taken from, *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church)

Announcements and Activities

Divine Liturgy for Passionbearers Boris and Gleb: Wednesday, at 9AM.

Great Vespers— Saturday, 5:30 PM.

Divine Liturgy — Sunday, at 10AM.

Coffee Hour— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Nina and Tricia. Next week's Coffee Hour will be our monthly potluck.

Church School— will begin in late September, early October.

July BBQ— we're just a week away. We'll need people present to assist with various aspects of the Fundraiser, which will take place from 10AM to 2PM But we will begin cooking food and setting up much earlier. Please come and work and, if you are a meat eater and are able, buy your dinner(s) a meal to help us in our fundraising.

Parish Council— met last Sunday We adopted a monthly budget that was in the black and discussed a number of things relative to the Consecration, to an impending stewardship drive, and replacing Aaron C on Parish Council—as he is in Idaho for at least 1 year.

Consecration Committee— will meet, briefly, on Sunday, August 4th, during Coffee Hour.

Pray for... Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather. **Reposed**— Kalche. Eutychia's husband: **Stephen— battling cancer.** **Barbara H.** health issues. **Archbishop Benjamin**— our Vladyka, parkinsons. **Luci F.** recovering from knee procedure. Fr.'s grandson, **Christian, joint pain and problems from an inherited gene.** **Monk who is suffering from heart issues.** **Archpriest Matthew Tate**— a leader of diocese that is **battling Leukemia.** **Archpriest James,** seizures.

From the Lives of the Saints... THE HOLY PROPHET EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was the son of a priest from the town of Sarir. He was taken into captivity in Babylon with King Jehoiachim and many other Israelites. Ezekiel prophesied for twenty-seven years in captivity. He was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah. While Jeremiah taught and prophesied in Jerusalem, so Ezekiel taught and prophesied in Babylon. The prophecies of Jeremiah were known in Babylon, and the prophecies of Ezekiel were known in Jerusalem. Both of these holy men agreed in their respective prophecies, and both were mistreated and tortured by the unbelieving Jewish people. St. Ezekiel had fearful and unheard-of visions. By the river Chebar, Ezekiel saw the heavens opened, and a cloud and fire and lightning, and four wild creatures like molten copper [Ezekiel 1:4]. One creature had the face of a man, the second the face of a lion, the third the face of a calf [ox], and the fourth the face of an eagle [Ezekiel 1:10]. The face of the man signified the Lord Incarnate as a man; the face of the lion, His divinity; the face of the calf, His sacrifice; and the face of an eagle, His Resurrection and Ascension. Another time, he was shown a vision of the resurrection of the dead. The prophet saw a valley full of dry, dead bones, and when the Spirit of God descended upon them they came to life and rose to their feet [Ezekiel 37:1-10]. He also saw the most terrible destruction of Jerusalem, when the wrath of God slew all but those who had been marked with the Greek letter Tau [Ezekiel 9: 1-7]--which corresponds to our letter "T," which is also the sign of the Cross. The malice of the Jews did not spare even this holy man. Infuriated at him for having rebuked them, the Jews tied him to the tails of horses and tore him apart. He was buried in the same sepulchre as Shem, the Son of Noah.

THE VENERABLE SIMEON AND JOHN

These two young men left their homes and relatives: Simeon left his aged mother, and John left his young wife. Both received the monastic tonsure at the hands of Abbot Nikon in the Monastery of St. Gerasimus, and withdrew into the desert, where they lived an austere life of self denial for many years. They chastised their bodies with rigorous asceticism to the point that they resembled two withered trees. One day Simeon said to John that, according to God's command, he must depart from the desert and go among the people and serve God there. John gave him this counsel: "Guard your heart against all that you will see in the world. Whatever you touch with your hand, do not allow it to touch your heart. Whatever you eat with your mouth, let not your heart take delight in it. When you use your feet to walk, let there be peace within you. And whatever you do outwardly, let not your mind be disturbed by it. Pray for me, that God does not separate us from one another in the future life." St. Simeon accepted the counsel of his companion, embraced him and then left the desert and went among the people as a "fool for Christ," to teach men and to convert them to the Faith of Christ. He pretended insanity before men, but his heart was a temple of the Holy Spirit, in which dwelt unceasing prayer. He possessed abundant grace from God. He could discern all the inner secrets of men, both close at hand or afar off, and had the power to heal men from evil spirits and sickness. Dancing in the streets like a madman, he would suddenly approach people and whisper their secret sins in their ears, and call them to repentance. He appeared to sinners in dreams, rebuked them, and called them to repentance. Thus it was with Bali, a pagan actor who openly mocked Christian shrines--St. Simeon appeared to him in a dream and rebuked him, and he repented and became a good Christian. A young libertine went out of his mind from sexual promiscuity. Confronting this insane young man, St. Simeon struck him across the face with his hand and said: "Do not commit fornication." At that moment the unclean demon departed from the young man, and he became well.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai

"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)