



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

The Parable of the Sower

Troparion of the Resurrec- tion, Tone 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst de-
stroy death! To the thief,
Thou didst open Paradise!
For the myrrhbearers, Thou
didst change weeping into
joy! And Thou didst com-
mand Thy disciples, O Christ
God, to proclaim that Thou art
risen, granting 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. Togeth-
er 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 trium-
phant hosts! We, your serv-
ants 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 Un-
wedded Bride!

The 16th Sunday after Pentecost Tone 7, October 13th , Luke 8:5-15

The parable of the Sower, which is the gospel read for the 18th Sunday after Pente-
cost (Lu. 8:5-15) is one of the best known of the gospel texts. But this parable may
perhaps be better known in its negative aspects (the instances of the seed that does
not grow) than in its positive aspect. Generally speaking, we know that the seed
grows if it falls on “good ground”, but we may not see precisely and concretely
enough the conditions set out in the gospel for its germination.

Jesus explains to his disciples — he did not say this to the crowd — that the
sowing represents the word of God. The sower, that is to say God himself or his
Son, casts the seed. Sometimes the seed falls by the side of the road, but the passers-
by tread on it and the birds eat it; thus those who are at the roadside receive the word,
but the devil comes along and takes it out of their hearts. Sometimes the seed falls
on a rock, and from lack of moisture dries up and withers; thus those who have re-
ceived the word with joy, but have no roots, lose what they had received when temp-
tation comes along. Sometimes the word falls among thorns, and the thorns choke it;
thus worldly cares, riches and pleasures suffocate the word which had begun to take
root. And sometimes the word falls “on good ground”, and it produces a hundred
times for one; thus is it with those who have received it with a sincere heart and cling
to it with patience.

It is enough for the word to fall “on good ground”. The reasons why the
sowing did not bear fruit in the other instances show the conditions that are neces-
sary for true spiritual life. We must not stand at the roadside within range of passers-
by; a certain withdrawal from the world, a certain silence, a certain contemplation
(which vary in each case, but are necessary in *all* cases without exception) will pro-
tect what has been divinely sown. The ground on which the seed falls must have
moisture in it, it must be frequently and regularly watered; this means that we must
have constant and regular recourse to prayer and to other sources of grace, without
depending on moments of emotion or “inspiration”. We must not lightly reject a
fixed framework, such as timetables and rules of life: they may constitute a useless
hindrance to the free flight of eagles, but most often they are a help to children and
cripples that we are. We must not allow the thorns, that is to say the attractions and
distractions of the world to suffocate the word: these are not only reprehensible pas-
sions, or earthly riches or ambitions; often entertainment which are not necessarily
harmful in themselves (travels, parties, the theatre, novels, etc.) hinder and intimate
relationship between God and us. The “good ground” is a mixture of natural gifts
and of grace (and grace can, moreover, make up for the deficiencies of nature). But,
even where “good ground” exists, no spiritual life is possible without *daily* and pa-
tient effort, without repressing certain things, without a certain regularity and stabl-
ity, as much in material life as in mental life (the “roots”), without meditation and

Announcements and Activities

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30PM..

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, October 13th. At 10AM

Coffee Hour— This week's Coffee Hour is our bagels and Coffee week. Next week's coffee hour will be sponsored by Larissa.

Church School/Adult Education— will next be held on Sunday, October 27th, at 9AM.

Parish Council— will meet today, after Liturgy and Coffee Hour.

Diocesan Assembly —will be held this week. Our parish will be represented by Fr. Lawrence and council member Michael Miller. Please pray for us and for the work of the Council.

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. **Catherine**— eye. **Philip**— special request. St. John Monastery— threat of fire. **Novice Alexandra**— who recently had surgery and is recovering. **Linda**— general health. **Grandson of Larissa.** **Rebecca**— Philip's daughter, health issues. **Abbess Victoria**— recovering. **Reposed John.**

examination of conscience (the terms may be modern, but the Desert Fathers practiced these things). In short, the seed of the word cannot grow in us without a certain asceticism. Asceticism is not in fashion: people prefer talking about mysticism. But no true mystical life exists without a serious ascetic foundation: the word of God will not take possession of our soul if we have not cultivated the ground and cut back the thorns

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

From the Lives of the Saints... THE HOLY MARTYRS CARPUS AND PAPYLUS

Carpus was Bishop of Thyateira and Papyrus was a deacon. They were born in Pergamum where they finally suffered for the Christian Faith at the hands of the evil proconsul Valerius, during the reign of Decius. Valerius tied them to horses and dragged them to Sardis, where he subjected them to harsh tortures. Then an angel of God appeared to them, healed them of their wounds and encouraged them. Carpus's servant, Agathadorus, followed his master with great sorrow. Valerius then condemned him to torture as well. The saints were again tied to horses, and were dragged from Sardis to Pergamum. They tied holy Carpus to a tree and flogged him so that his body was covered with wounds, and his blood flowed like a stream, soaking the ground; but Carpus smiled in the midst of these horrible tortures. When they asked him why he was smiling, the holy martyr replied that he saw the heavens opened and the Lord seated on His throne, surrounded by Cherubim and Seraphim. As Papyrus was being tortured, by prayer he healed a man blind in one eye, and many who witnessed this came to believe in Christ the Lord. Thrown to wild beasts, the martyrs remained unharmed. Then they were thrown into a fiery furnace. Agathonica, Carpus's sister, also leaped into the fire, but the fire did not consume them. Finally, they were all beheaded with the sword, in the year 251 A.D. Thus, after their righteous endeavors, they received a wreath of glory in the Kingdom of Christ.

THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR ZLATA OF MEGLIN

Zlata was born of poor peasant parents (who also had three other daughters) in the village of Slatina, in the province of Meglin. She was a meek and devout girl, wise in the wisdom of Christ and golden, not only in name*) but also in her God-fearing heart. Once when Zlata went out to get water, some shameless Turks seized her and took her to their home. When one of them urged her to become a Moslem and be his wife, Zlata fearlessly replied: "I believe in Christ and Him alone do I know as my Bridegroom. I will never deny Him, even though you subject me to a thousand tortures and cut me into pieces." When her parents and sisters found her, her parents said to her: "O daughter, have mercy on yourself and on us, your parents and sisters; deny Christ in words only, so that we can all be happy, for Christ is merciful. He would forgive such a sin, committed due to the necessities of life." Her poor parents, sisters and relatives wept bitterly. However, the noble soul of St. Zlata resisted such diabolical snares. She answered them: "When you counsel me to deny Christ the true God, you are no longer my parents or my sisters. I have the Lord Jesus Christ as my father, the Theotokos as my mother, and the saints as my brothers and sisters." The Turks then cast her into prison for three months, flogging her every day until her blood soaked the ground. Finally, they suspended her upside down and lit a fire, to suffocate her with the smoke; but God was with Zlata, and gave her strength in suffering. At last they hanged her from a tree and cut her into small pieces. Thus, this brave virgin gave her soul up to God, and went to dwell in Paradise in the year 1796 A.D. Pieces of her relics were taken by Christians to their homes for a blessing.

*) "Zlata" means gold.--Trans.

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)