

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 Brethren: He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, He gives to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food shall supply and multiply your sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You shall be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us shall produce thanksgiving to God.

Luke 7:11-16 (Gospel) At that time, Jesus went to a city called Nain, and His disciples and a great crowd went with Him. As He drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." And He came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"

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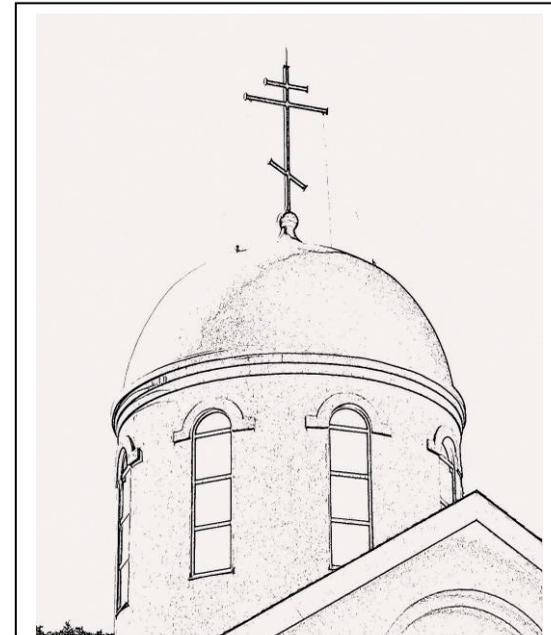
all, they will encounter the Gospel Truth and the salvific message of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The post I referred to suggests that Orthodox Christians do not invite people to Church. Why is this? It may be that they feel embarrassed by the shortcomings of their parish (the poor singing, the unfriendly parishioners, the underwhelming sermon, etc.). I fear though that they don't invite people because they are not convinced themselves of the true importance of the Church in their own lives, that they don't understand themselves what an incredible gift they already possess in the Orthodox Faith, that they have bought the lie that the Church is optional for them and their salvation.

People share what they value. People invite others to join them in activities that bring joy to their own lives. Perhaps people do not value their Church. Maybe they get no joy from participating in the Divine Services. It is possible that they do not perceive the presence of God in the worship and the fellowship activities of the local parish, and allow the parish's shortcomings to distract them. If any of these conditions exist, a change of heart is required. A shift of focus away from one's temporary earthly existence to the eternal Kingdom of God must take place. An urgency for one's salvation and the salvation of the world must be felt. The centrality of God and His Church in one's life must be deemed essential. The certainty that the Orthodox Faith provides the way to eternal life, and that life in the Church helps one to stay on the way must be embraced. Only then will one realize that the shortcomings of the parish are not important. Only then will one wish to share their Orthodox Faith and invite others to "come and see" the Gospel being played out at the local Church.

- Father Gary

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

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!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Fr. Deacon Alexander Smida, *Deacon*

Thomas Berger, *Senior Warden*

Reader Timothy Kozak, *Choir Director*

October 8, 2017

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Tone 1. Ven. Pelagía the Penitent (457). Ven. Dosiféi (Dositheus), Abbot of Verkneóstrov (Pskov—1482). Ven. Tryphon, Abbot of Vyatka (1612). Ven. Thaïs (Taíssia) of Egypt (4th c.). Virgin Martyr Pelagía of Antioch (303). Monk Martyr Ignatius of Prodromou (Mt. Athos—1814). Ven. Philotheus, Patriarch of Constantinople (1379).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Gospel: Luke 7:11-16

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Saturday – 7:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9 and Hebrews 13:7-16

Gospel: Luke 8:5-15 and Luke 17:1-13



Venerable Pelagia
the Penitent

Coffee Hour Teams:

Today – TEAM E (Bass, Petrides)

Next Sunday – TEAM A (Pasick, Stavrou Families)

Please pray for those who have willingly chosen to not worship and pray with us this morning. We pray that those sitting in darkness will see a great light – the light of the Risen Christ!

Keep up on OCA news by visiting www.oca.org, diocesan news by visiting www.nynjoca.org, and parish news by visiting www.occa-brick.org.

Welcome to our visitors who have joined us today for worship and prayer. We invite you to stay with us after today's services for an Agape Coffee Hour in our Parish Hall. Please sign our guest book before you leave, tell your friends and family members about us, and bring back one or two of them on your next visit!

Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are: **Dorothy Gornick, Tom Collins, Tom Kopec, Walter Romanofsky, Millie Podolak, Ann Marie Gahr, Dennis Gahr, Ron Madensky, Andy Popovchak, Dorothy Studier, Helen Ciurczak, Pauline Barnowsky, Suzanne Hanas, and Catherine Ratushnik.**

Annunciations

TODAY - We continue the **usual Sunday schedule** with Divine Liturgy served at 10:00am preceded by the Third Hour read at 9:45am.

TODAY – **Church School** classes resume in the Parish Hall at 8:45am. The **Adult Education Class** will meet in the church at 9:00am.

TODAY – During an expanded Coffee Hour, Father Gary will lead a basic **Question and Answer session** in the Parish Hall to discuss where the project now stands and what the future plans are.

The **activity of our diocese** is funded mostly by monies donated by the parish faithful through proportional giving. However, additional funding is necessary to support diocesan activities such as youth retreats, mission building, seminarian scholarships, and more. **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors** is the vehicle for collecting additional donations from those who can make them. Please visit the diocesan website or speak with Father Gary or Matushka Mary for more information on the DDB.

Inviting People to Church

An article recently posted on Facebook stated that 82% of people who do not go to church would go if one person invited them. This is an incredible statistic, and it is significant in this day and age.

As Orthodox Christians, we should desire that everyone participates in the life of the local Orthodox Church. We should desire it for them not because the music is beautiful (sometimes it is not), not because our fellow parishioners are friendly (sometimes they are not), not because their day-to-day lives will magically change after visiting (they probably won't), not because the sermons are excellent (I fully admit that they sometimes are not), and certainly not because we see them only as potential donors who will help with the church expenses and add to our census numbers.

We should invite people because at the Church and in her services, they will have the opportunity to encounter God in a uniquely intimate way: they will hear His Word, they will hear of His mercy and love, they will see iconographic images of people just like them – people who dedicated their lives to the saintly struggle of knowing and serving God in the times and places in which they lived, they will be surrounded by people who are struggling here and now (sometimes succeeding but often failing) to live similarly saintly lives. Most of

(Continued on back page)

MANY YEARS!

Birthdays this week:

Today – Jim Vivanco

Monday – Marko Tesla

Tuesday – Natalie May

Saturday – Christopher Graff

Saturday – Alexander Ciorlian

OUTREACH

- **Food Pantry donations** are *always* accepted. Place non-perishable food items in blue bin in the narthex
- **Clothing donations** are accepted on the last Sunday of each month. Place donations next to the food pantry bin.