

October 18, 2020
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! ~ Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na V'iki!

Divine Services for the Week:

- SUN., OCT. 18 TWENTIETH SUNDAY after PENTECOST,
Feast of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke
8:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY
+ Pete Yanchik, requested by his wife and family
- SUN., OCT. 25 TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY after PENTECOST
8:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY
+ Msgr. Michael Simodejka, requested by Prudy Peya

How Deeply is the Lord Rooted in You? This good seed is worthy of admiration. Rich and well-productive land brings forth fruit a hundredfold. They say that the best soils sometimes under cultivation produce a hundredfold, so this is a mark of every fertile and productive spot. One of the holy prophets said from the mouth of God, "And all nations shall congratulate you because you are a desirable land." (Mal 3:12) When the divine word falls upon a pure mind skillful in cleansing itself from things hurtful, it fixes its root deeply and shoots up like an ear of corn. It brings its fruit to perfection being strong in blade and beautifully flowered.
(St. Cyril of Alexandria)

October is Respect Life Month

*Let us Pray: For those nearing the end of life:
May they receive care that respects their dignity and protects their lives as they place their hope in the promise of eternal life; Let us pray to the Lord*



Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

October 20: Erin Zimmerman, October 21: Andrea Vargo, October 26: Alexander Hersh

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

October 19: Daniel & Erin Zimmerman

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

HOME – Eileen Batcha, Natalie Jugan-Diaz, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Josephine Maruhnich, Mary Salamon, John Simunick, Bonnie Taylor

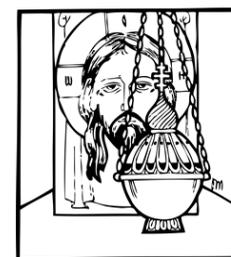
Hunter's Care Home (1916 Main St, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Mary Poiarkoff

West Hills Health & Rehab Center (951 Brodhead Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108) – Alice Haber

Epistle Readers – Oct. 18: Louisa Hersh – Oct. 25: Joanne Futato

Ushers– Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Oct. 18: F. Hersh – Oct. 25: R. Mudron



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

October 18 - 24, 2020

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

Deborah Folmar

(Health and God's Blessings)

Offered By:

Mary Elizabeth Olack and Family

Your regular attendance and sacrificial offerings benefit the overall welfare of our Parish



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel:

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

ECF Reflection: Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Last week we remembered the Fathers who defended the Orthodox faith at the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

It was in the 8th century that some men who were not Christians gained power and influence at the imperial court in Constantinople and began to say that we should not have icons of Jesus and the saints in Church. These men wanted nothing more than to cause division in the Church of God and this is why we heard in the Epistle, “have nothing to do with factious men.” Ultimately, the root of the error which they promoted was the denial of the material, created world could be a bearer of divine life. This is so important because it separates the apostolic and orthodox churches from the rest of Christianity today.

First it is important to remember that we do not worship wood but rather we honor the ones depicted in the icons. Just as we hang pictures of our loved ones, so we do well to paint images of the saints who are very much present to us today.

And we do so not because they are dead, but because they lived and continue to live the divine life. The saints are the men and women who are filled with the divine life and bear the image and likeness of God himself. And when Divine Life is our life, then our life is no longer mortal life but eternal life.

We hear in the Gospel today about the seed which falls on bad ground and that which falls on good ground. As the Lord explained to His Apostles, and explains to us today, the ground represents the heart, and the seed is the word of God. The seed is Christ Himself Who comes and makes His dwelling within us. The seed is Christ Who makes His life our life.

It is for this reason we celebrated the memory of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and also that we paint and honor and reverence the Saints depicted in the holy icons, because their heart was the “good soil” into which the seed, the word of God, was planted deeply. They were filled with Divine Life and now live with God forever.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

1. Is the soil of our heart ready to receive the Word of God or are we rocky ground? Do we hunger for the things of God?
2. Is our Christian life choked by the concerns of this world and by the distractions that are all around us?

PRACTICAL STEPS WE CAN TAKE TO PUT DOWN A DEEP ROOT!

1. Do we come earlier to Church each Sunday to grow in Divine Life?
2. Are we patient in the face of adversity and kind to those who hate us and are mean to us?
3. Do we pray regularly before the icon of Christ in our home?
4. Is our life “disciplined” and are we striving to live the life of holiness?

IT’S NOT EASY BUT THE REWARD IS ETERNAL!

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

As we hear the Parable of the Sower, Our Lord presents to us the different types of earth — the path, the rock, the soil with thorns, and the good soil? And so, I ask you today, what type of soil are you? What is the condition of your heart?

Are you like a path, that is hard, untilled, devoid of any fertility because it is constantly trampled upon? Are you closed to allowing the divine seed from finding any way into your heart and mind? If you find yourself to be a worn and beaten path, then drive away any flocks of birds that might come to snatch away the word of God. Then awake! And cultivate yourself through prayer, and the reading of the word of God — the scriptures, so that you may be like productive and well-tilled soil that will bring forth fruit to the glory of God and for your salvation.

If you are like the rock, that upon hearing the word receive it with joy but have no root and in time of temptation fall away; like those whose faith has not been proved and depends only on words and not applying your life to the living of the Gospel; like those who enter the Church, who feel pleasure in seeing many assembled together, but once you have left the Church, you have forgotten to live the Liturgy daily in your life; if you are like those who in times of trouble forget God and the Church, then do not despair, for today is the day of salvation. Today is the day to lift yourself out of your troubles and find refuge and shelter in Christ.

If you are like the soil whose seed is choked by thorns, whose life is choked and confused by worldly cares and desires; whose life is, as the prophet Hosea said “becomes a handful that can produce no meal” then today is the day to begin cleaning out the thorns. Today is the day to remove from your life — to tear up by the root — whatever is injurious and distances you from a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And if you are like the good soil, worthy of admiration, well productive and abundant in fruit, then take care. Beware that your fertile soil does not become dry, but water it daily with the Word of God, who said, “The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Word, come into come into our hearts and minds and cultivate our lives for His glory! Amen.



Parish Bon Fire Night and Tailgate ***Saturday, October 31*** ***6:30 P.M.***

Everyone is encouraged to bring tailgating style food for your crew along with chairs and blankets. Come and get warm and toasty by the fire!

Decorate your trunk, if you like, and bring candy for the kids (and adults!)

Vatra: A bonfire in which Rusyns gather around the fire to share food, music and each other's company.

A Note from Fr. Geoff

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we near election day in this presidential election year, I wanted to write to you briefly about the Catholic conscience and the political realm. As Catholic Christians we are not “at home,” so to speak, in this world. The political establishments of this world rarely line up with Catholic ethics and social teaching. And yet, we are called to be active members of the society in which we live, always working for a more just and peaceable society.

The Church is very clear that the clergy are not to be actively involved in partisan politics. However, political life is one of the important areas in which the “priesthood of the laity” is exercised. The Church does not ever advocate or campaign for any given candidate. But the role of the Church is to help form the consciences of the laity. The laity then, in good conscience, participate in the political realm.

The US Catholic Bishops state that, while Catholics may disagree in good conscience over the best *ways* to “build a more just and peaceful world through morally acceptable means,” our ethical commitments are not up for debate. We are all to “seek to advance the common good – by defending the inviolable sanctity of human life from the moment of conception until natural death, by promoting religious freedom, by defending marriage, by feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, by welcoming the immigrant and protecting the environment.” Unfortunately, neither of America’s major political parties has a platform that lines up perfectly with what we are taught by our Church.

However, I think it is important to note three things. First, that not all ethical questions are of equal value. Human life is of infinite value in Catholic thought. This includes not only the right to life, but also the right to the means to live a fruitful, dignified, and meaningful life. Second, that “a good end does not justify an immoral means.” Simply because a cause is right, does not mean that we can do absolutely anything in support of it. And third, Catholics can legitimately disagree about the best course of action to bring about a more just and peaceful world. As our Holy Father has said, the Church is there to form consciences, not to replace them.

(I want to recommend two articles by my friend, the author David Mills, who for years wrote a column for *The Pittsburgh Catholic*. Both of these articles are available online on the *Our Sunday Visitor* website and I’ll put the website links below.)

But the main thing I want to say about the election is that the election is just *one part* of your Catholic vocation and obligation as laypeople in the world. Take the time to think through your ballot carefully. Vote for whom you – honestly and in good conscience – think you must vote for. But then leave it there. Politics is an imprecise art. Too often we vote for the candidate of our choice and that is the end of our political involvement. It should not be so. Whoever is elected, and whether we are happy with that result or not, we must continue to do our part to pursue a more “just and peaceful world.” One pastor friend of mine put it this way: we cast a ballot for the president we want to hold accountable for the next four years. Don’t simply vote for the candidate of your choice. But continue to be involved in working for what is right. And whatever the outcome, do not lose heart! Our hope is not ultimately in human politics, but our confidence is in Jesus Christ and him alone.

Finally, I want to say a word about Catholic ethical standards as they appear in the Scriptures. We often think of “ethics” or “morality” in terms of the big, hot-button issues like abortion and sexuality. And, of course, our faith has something to say about them. But our faith also has something to say about *how* we go about advocating for the right position. Jesus tells us who the “blessed” ones are in **Matthew 5:3-12** and **Luke 6:20-26**. We are given a vision of the Kingdom of God in the Virgin’s beautiful Canticle in **Luke 1:46-55**. And St. Paul tells us what a Christian life, infused with the Holy Spirit looks like in **Galatians 5:13-26**. I would encourage all of us to read these scriptures – especially the Galatians passage – the day after the election. And I urge us all to commit to treating each other – especially those who are on the other side of the political aisle from us – with the dignity due them as children of God. Remember that just as God has been merciful and gracious to you, you are called to be merciful and gracious to others, even those who are gravely mistaken.

It is my prayer that we might become a light on a hill, that others will see in us a winsome and attractive life of joy and peace in the Spirit of God, and be drawn to our Lord through the way that we engage in the public sphere.

With prayers and blessings,
Fr. Geoff

Suggested articles:

- “The Church Does Not Tell Us Whom We Can and Can’t Vote For, and Here’s Why”
<https://osvnews.com/2020/08/25/the-church-does-not-tell-us-who-we-can-and-cant-vote-for-and-heres-why/>
- “Abortion and Voting: What Does the Church Teach?”
<https://www.osvnews.com/2020/09/08/abortion-and-voting-what-does-the-church-teach/>

See also the US Catholic Bishop’s Document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*:
<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>

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**Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, David Klacik,
Louisa Hersh**

**E.C.F. coordinator: Jo Ann Hersh
Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff**

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
 Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
 Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
 Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
 Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
 Pirohi Sales 2nd Friday of each month, Sept. through May
 St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate

"If but ten among us lead a holy life, we shall kindle a fire which shall light up the entire city."

