

A Voice in the Wilderness

The Newsletter of St. George Reformed Orthodox Christian Church



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Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory be Forever!



Volume 8 Issues 3

34th Sunday after Pentecost – Christ heals a blind man

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A young man sat for an interview with a big American corporation, and most of the questions were questions about qualifications and skills. There were questions about training and experience and about what makes the young man a strong candidate for the position. But sometimes the interviewers in situations like this, they like to ask a bizarre question that forces the

candidate to think on his feet. And so the interviewer turns to the young man and asks, “Well you are well-qualified for the job. But I have one last question, young man, what is the meaning of life?” And without missing a beat, and with a big smile on his face, the young man said “That’s an easy one. I’m a Christian. For me, in life there is one goal. I am here so that I might enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and take as many people with me as I can!”

Beautiful answer. “I am here so that I might enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and take as many people with me as I can!” This is a perfect summary of the life to which Christ calls us. This is a perfect summary of the life into which we are baptized. To enter the kingdom of heaven and to take as many people with me as I can! And this morning, we do enter the Kingdom of heaven.

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**** 34th Sunday after Pentecost ****

***** St. Euthymius the Great *****

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 18: 35-43

St. George Orthodox Christian Church is a community of believers who strive to live a life according to the Gospel of Christ and the teachings of the Church.

We worship God in Trinity -
Father+Son+Holy Spirit.

We are dedicated to living out Christ’s commandment to, *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, ad with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.*

Time and the Church by George Mantzaridis (cont’d from last week)

With the acceptance of God’s loving-kindness, as a force that elevates us from earth to heaven, people see new ways of orientating themselves within the straight line of history. Eternity is linked with temporality. So every day, every hour, every moment on the time-line assumes a limitless breadth and unfathomable depth.

It becomes the vessel of eternity and is available as an opportunity for the communication of that which has passed with

that which is transcendent. The eternal becomes admixed with the temporal. And time is not restricted to an evanescent and irreversible stream, but, rather, every moment provides people with the opportunity of being inducted into the infinite love of the eternal God.

The Church is not subject to time, but leads us from time to eternity. As the body of Christ and a communion of glorification, the Church inducts the world into the king-

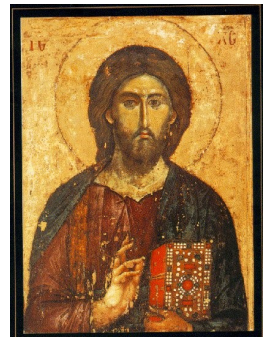
dom of God. But again, as the body of Christ and communion of glorification, the Church manifests the kingdom of God to the world. The world and the kingdom of God are linked and woven together, creating in this way the eschatological period of the presence of the Church. The time of history becomes the ‘locus’ of induction into eternity.

Transcendence of the world is realized in Christ within the Church
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We invite all to worship in our services. Sunday Divine Liturgy begins at 9:30 AM

If you have any questions about the church or would like to speak with our pastor, please call Fr. Matthew at 607-280-1586

Glory be to
Jesus Christ.
Glory be Forever.





Troparion to St. George

As the deliverer
of captives
and defender
of the poor,
healer of the infirm
and champion of kings,
victorious great
martyr George
intercede with Christ
our God
for our souls
salvation.

News and Notes

We welcome all who are worshipping with us today and invite you down to the church hall for our social hour.

Pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5.17)

We ask that you keep the following in your prayers: Esther, Clement John, Mother Onufria, Olga, Candice, Lillian, Anne, Claudia, Meg, Xavier, Pam, Jennifer, Larissa, Stephen, Louise, Marcia, George, Joseph, John, Katie, Regina, Dorothy, Peg, Christopher, Jackie, Karoline, the homeless, the hungry, those victims of abuse and violence, and those persecuted for their faith in Christ.

Sayings from St. Seraphim of Sarov

On Worldly Matters

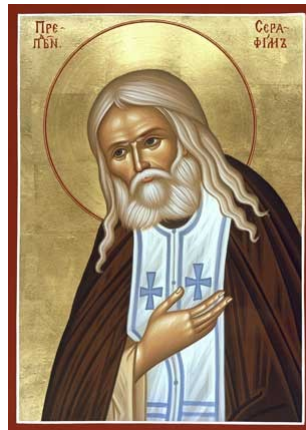
“Excessive care about worldly matters is characteristic of an unbelieving and faint-hearted person, and woe to us, if, in taking care of ourselves, we do not use as our foundation our faith in God, who cares for us! If we do not attribute visible blessings to Him, which we use in this life, then how can we expect those blessings from Him which are promised in the future? We

will not be of such little faith. By the words of our Savior, it is better first to seek the Kingdom of God, for the rest shall be added unto us (see Mt. 6:33).”

Peace in Christ

“There is nothing better than peace in Christ, for it brings victory over all the evil spirits on earth and in the air. When peace dwells in a man’s heart it enables him to contemplate the grace of the Holy Spirit from within.

He who dwells in peace collects spiritual gifts as it were with a scoop, and he sheds the light of knowledge on others. All our thoughts, all our desires, all our efforts, and all our actions should make us say constantly with the Church: “O Lord, give us peace!” When a man lives in peace, God reveals mysteries to him..”



Time and the Church (cont'd from p.1)

through the grace of the Holy Spirit (Cf. ‘Let grace come and let this world pass away’). The Church is not eradicated together with the world. The end of the world, which will be the end of time, will not also be the end of the Church. The Church leads to the kingdom of God. The manifestation of the kingdom of God does not occur all of a sudden, but is gradual. In the same way, the end of the world will not occur just like that, but will appear first as a preliminary engagement and then as the final resolution. The initial engagement as regards the end was the devastation of Jerusalem and the resolution will be the final extirpation.

When Christ refers to the end of the world, He links the devastation of Jerusalem with the extirpation of the world and ends with the declaration: ‘Truly, I say to you: this generation will not pass away before all this comes to pass. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not’ (Matt 24, 34-5). The devastation of Jerusalem occurred before the

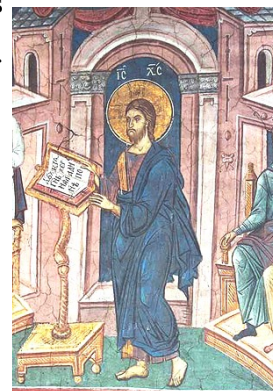
generation to whom Christ was talking passed away. And the final extirpation will occur before the generation of Christians has passed away (St. John Chrysostom, *Homily on Matthew 77*).

Like its beginning, the end of the world cannot be pinpointed at a particular moment in time. The beginning and end of the world are conceived by people only in relation to their conventional position in time. So although they are not subjective phenomena, they are inevitably associated with the subjective position of humankind in history and, as the will of God, are beyond our comprehension. It would therefore be more correct to talk not of the end of the world, but of the mystery of the end of the world, which will also be the mystery of the end of time. We should also speak in the same way of the mystery of the beginning of the world, which is also the mystery of the beginning of time.

Before time, and after time, there is eternity and perpetuity, which are be-

yond time (Cf. Basil the Great, *On the Hexameron*, 1, 5). Time acquires meaning because it is linked to eternity and perpetuity. It becomes real history because it is united to eschatology (Cf. O. Clement, *Transfigured in Time*). History makes no sense without some sort of ending. And after the advent of Christ, the end of history exists in every one of its moments. So, for the Church, the meaning of history lies in the boundless depths of each of its moments, not in the external alterations of the flow of time. In the Church the length of time acquires value with the application of its depth. And the depth of the time and of history offer the only substantial justification of their length.

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(Homily on the Parable of a blind man, cont'd from p.1)

The Divine Liturgy, the joyous celebration of our Eucharistic worship within the messianic community of baptized believers -- this is given to us as the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ is in our midst. He opens the beautiful gate, He announces that Blessed is the Kingdom. Christ proclaims his gospel over us. And Christ offers himself to us in a sacrifice of praise as we gather together as one body around the one chalice. The Liturgy reveals the Kingdom, and the sign of the Kingdom is joy, and hope, and the anticipation of eternal life with Christ in the fullness of the Kingdom after his second and glorious coming.

These are bold words, but this is our vision and has been for 2000 years. Christ is in our midst, he is with us, and he opens to us a vision of the Kingdom most clearly at this, the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. You and I, we enter the Kingdom this morning, but will we also bring along as many others as we can? Or do we seek to enter alone. To keep this Kingdom a secret. To keep the life of Father Son and Holy Spirit all to ourselves.

This morning in Jericho, a blind beggar hears the approach of Christ and says to himself, "here is the one I have heard reports of. Here is the one with the words of life, the one who can set me free." And the blind man calls out for mercy, he calls out to be included, he calls out to receive the gift of Christ himself. And the followers of Jesus, they do everything they can to sideline the man. To shut him down, to maintain the distance. St Luke writes that "those who went before [Jesus] warned [the blind man] that he should be quiet." These followers of Christ are in the Kingdom. They enjoy the fellowship of the Master. They are guests at the heavenly banquet. But to them, the Kingdom has boundaries. To them, there is very much is an inside, and there is an outside. Some belong, and some don't. And to them, the blind beggar, the one who pleads to enter the Kingdom alongside the insiders to the followers of Christ the blind man is on the outside.

Does our Kingdom have boundaries, a Kingdom where some belong, and some don't? We are working hard to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but are we working just as hard to take along as many others as we can? The blind man had a need, a need that only Christ could answer. And he cried out, he made his need known. It was obvious. But the disciples warned him that he should be

quiet. The blind man disturbed them. As baptized members of the church, what voices do we ignore? What needs do we turn away from? Who do we want to keep quiet? What boundaries are here? If there are some who are ministered to and some who just seem too complicated to help, it's only because we are doing what we can, with what we have.

But brothers and sisters, a church that does not seek to enter the Kingdom and to bring as many others along as we can cannot rightly be called "church." Church by its nature is missionary, it is apostolic, it is sent out into the world so that Christ might save it. But in the end, there is only one question. To those around us - do we give them Christ? Do we reveal to them the same Kingdom

revealed to us this morning? Do we reveal to them the shared life of Father Son and Holy Spirit that is also shared us in this joyous celebration of the Divine Liturgy? The blind man wanted one thing. He wanted Christ. The disciples did not give that to him. Instead they warned him that he should keep quiet. His need for Christ disturbed them.

Perhaps like you and me, perhaps the disciples were confused, or even scared. Maybe the need of that blind man crying out for mercy was just too big for them. They weren't sure how to handle it, just as we are overwhelmed by the profound needs we see in our neighbors and friends and family members.

The needs of a world which cries out for a savior each time

we turn on the tv or open the paper. According to St Luke this morning, it is interesting to note that Jesus does not stop and correct his disciples. His focus is not in the sins of his followers.

His focus is on the need of the beggar. Scripture reports that Christ goes straight to the blind man and heals him. What the disciples do not realize, and I think what we often forget, is that Christ is a Savior who is constantly on the move in this world. He moves through Jericho. He moves through Salem. He moves through every town and city, every home and neighborhood and calls us to join him. To walk by his side, and to share his work of healing and mercy. Christ is already at work among those who need him. He is always and already moving into the suffering of others. Our job is to join him and to offer Christ to others, to reveal to others through our love, a Savior who is already in our midst. Christ leads us in the path toward salvation. We need only follow the Word of Truth and be saved.



The Church in our Lives by Elder Emilianos of the Holy Mountain

The church, dear ones, in which we are now, every church, is a cast, a pattern, a type, an image, a piece of heaven. When we were in the church, we really felt we were in heaven. Why is there such a big dome on? To lift our heart directly to the sky. Why is there a beautiful gate that opens when it is running? To show us how heaven opens. Why is it full of crosses? Why is it on top of the image of Christ that works? To show that, when we are here, we are transported to heaven. We live secret but also real heavenly moments.

That is why Gregory Palamas says that the church is "in a high place, angelic the other and over-the-space" a hyper-space in which we find ourselves. The temple tells us, "In the heavens he makes man, and ... he has seen this thing on all God" the church takes us and brings us up and shows us before God's own. Do we feel it? When we come to the church, are there sensations in our soul that capture this reality?

But what are we humans! We know all the breeds of dogs and horses, we know the kinds of plants, the brands of cars, the radio, but sometimes we do not know those that are directly related to our lives. That's why I want you to watch today what I'm saying to you.

Everything around us, the endless depths of the ocean, the heights of the heavens, the thousands, and the myriad of stars, if we think, we will understand that it really is but the slum of our land. One day - have you seen the clusters climbing when they want to raise apartment blocks - so everything that exists in the universe will clutter. There will be nothing left; only the spiritual heaven where Christ is. So let's get our eyes on us.

We are in the church. It is the most suitable place to see the sky. But what is the window? How do we open it? But it's so simple. The Window is the divine function we perform. Because but we are going to cast our gaze on such spiritual things, let us turn our soul to the Holy Spirit, and let us pray it to cast its headlamp into the darkness of our thought, in order for us to feel, to believe, to understand, to we make our possessions all that are made and are spoken and heard in the divine mode.

You come with so much trouble and into the cold stand upright. You do not have to waste your trouble. So let us pray the Spirit of God, and we will not have any incomprehensible thought within you. We must not leave here if

our hearts do not worship God if we do not feel our souls being thrown into the sky and have seen all that are done to him.

When we finish our discussion, you have to feel what a saint of our Church says: "Now my soul is a scepter, and I can hold you the flame, so I praise you on the way." Oh, my God, he said, I listened to you, I was listening to you, I saw you next to me • I felt you pierce my heart with my arrows, burn my soul, light a flame that I cannot bear. That is why I praise you and I leave by taking with you. He will teach us all the truth.

Our window is the Divine Function, the so-known in our life, which we have been accustomed to since our childhood, and that there is nothing like it on earth or in the sky.

How does it work? "Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen". Why does the priest start this way? What does she want to say? In front of us Christ opens an exquisite spectacle. In front of us is a heavenly vision. Christ in front of us opens his kingdom. As you go to a store and the merchant opens the fabric of the fabric and you see it, you catch it, you test its endurance, you see its beauty and you say that I will buy, so does Christ at that time. In front of our eyes he opens his kingdom, to see it, to feel it, to make it happy and to say: This I also choose for my life. Does our soul feel this?



The priest understands that hour at the altar. He is beating his heart, going blind, as Paul was blinded on the way to Damascus when he saw Christ. His eyes are spiritually seeing the dazzling light of God. That's why he joyously proclaims, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Your glory in your kingdom, Christ, fills everything. Have you seen when they decorate the bride to photograph her, how does her big veil catch the whole room and the curtains of her garment cover the floor to show her glory and beauty? So precisely the Church of Christ at that time stretches out to the whole space in front of our eyes.

What is this blessed, glorified, honored, superior to any other kingdom? It is the kingdom of the heavens; the kingdom of God is the paradise in which Christ hath set us; it is our holy Church. The king is the Trinitarian God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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