

SS. PETER AND PAUL

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Gospel Reading ~ Luke 14:16-24
Epistle Reading ~ Colossians 3:4-11
Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

Gospel Meditation

How often have we heard today's parable about those people who were called to the Bridal Feast of the King, and who refused to come: the one who had acquired a plot of land; he thought he was in possession of it; in reality, he was so attached to it that he could not detach himself from it: he was a prisoner of what he thought he possessed.

And so it is with whatever we imagine we possess; it is enough for us to have the smallest thing in our hand - and this hand is alienated to us; we cannot use it anymore, we cannot use our arm, our whole body is conditioned by what we possess, or imagine we possess: we are held a prisoner by it.

Others refused to come because they had bought five pairs of oxen: they had to try them, they had a task to fulfill, they had work to do, they had perhaps what they believed to be a mission in life, and therefore they had no time for anything except that that was their personal concern.

And the last refused to come because his heart was full of his own joy: having married, how could he be concerned with anyone else's marriage? He was full of his own joy - how could he participate in anyone else's joy? And so, they all turned away from the call.

Doesn't it apply very directly to us? Each of us possesses something that he deems so important that he is prepared to turn away from God - yes, from God: there is no time for prayer, there is no time for worship; to turn away from other people who need him because he is busy with his own business?

And how often happened that we are full of joy or of sorrow - but they are our own, we hug them to our heart, we have no time for anyone else's sorrow or anyone else's joy. But then, what should we do? We hear every Sunday in the Liturgy words that say, 'Let us lay aside all the cares of this life'; does it mean that we must turn away from the earth on which we live, from the tasks which are ours, from the joys and true sorrows that come our way? No!

And if joy has come into our heart, it is a gift of God; if sorrow has come into our heart, we can carry it to God, for it to be integrated in the mystery of salvation! - *Metropolitan Anthony Bloom*

This Week at a Glance

Thurs, Dec. 21st

9:30 am - Moleben for those suffering from Drug and Alcohol Dependence

Sat, Dec. 23rd

6:00 pm - Great Vespers

Sun, Dec. 24th

9:00 am - The Hours
 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy
 Coffee Hour
 Christmas Eve Vespers following Coffee Hour

Mon, Dec. 25th

9:00 am - The Hours
 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity

Congratulations!

To the newly
 Chrismated
 Kendra
 Kormos!

Christmas Eve Service

Based on majority consensus, we will change the Christmas Eve Service from 4pm as stated on the calendar to immediately after coffee hour. This is due to Christmas Eve being a Sunday and knowing many would not come back later in the day. This allows us to honor the Holy day and have time to prepare our Christmas Eve Holy Suppers.

Sunday of the Forefathers



Two Sundays before the celebration of Christmas, the Orthodox Church rejoices in the festival of the Holy Forefathers of the Old Covenant, including those who came before the giving of the Law. They foretold the coming of the Messiah and are redeemed by his saving Pascha. Together with the Canon of the Nativity of Christ, the following hymns are sung at the services of the day.

Let us offer praise to the fathers who shone forth before and during the Law; With righteous minds they served the Lord and Master Who shone forth from the Virgin, And now they delight in the unending Light. Let us honor Adam, the first-formed man and forefather of us all, Who was honored by the hands of the creator. He rests in the heavenly mansions with all the elect.

...

With his whole mouth, tongue and heart, the wondrous Enoch hoped that in the Spirit He might call with godly mind upon God, the Master of all. Having lived on earth in a well-pleasing manner, He has been taken up in glory. Let us hear the divine words of those who cry aloud, telling of the coming of Christ. For behold, He is born in a cave of an unwedded Maiden, and his awesome birth is foretold to the Wise Men by the suddenly appearing star.

There is a great difference between existing and living. Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. "Seek God, and your soul shall live" (Ps 69:32, LXX). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in perfect harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law.

The holy forefathers and mothers, together with all their descendants, have chosen life. They find it in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Life itself, God's incarnate Word. The celebration of the Winter Pascha is a celebration of Life in God's Word. For "Christ who is our life" has already appeared (Col 3:4). We have "beheld His glory" (Jn 1:14). Now that glory is hidden in the "form of a slave" (Phil 2:7), but it will be revealed at the end of the ages in power for those who "have loved His appearing" and "live in Him" (2 Tim 4:8; Col 2:6).

This Sunday of the Holy Forefathers is the Sunday that falls between December 11-17, the second Sunday before the Nativity. The ancestors of Christ according to the flesh are remembered on this Sunday of the Nativity Fast.

All the great Fathers and Mothers and Prophets of the Old Testament, starting with Adam, Abraham, the Righteous Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, including Holy Prophet Elias and Daniel, and concluding with Holy Prophet Zechariah (Zachary), Joachim and Anna, Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist and The Theotokos. They lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, 22:18).

