

CHURCH BULLETIN	V. Rev. Fr. George Veselinovic, Parish Priest Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146 412.622.4714 (cell) 412.856.8166 (office) dj.veselinovic@yahoo.com www.stnicholasmonroeville.org stnicholasmonroeville@gmail.com	SUNDAY December 16, 2018
--------------------	---	-----------------------------

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Colossians (3:4-11)

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel: Luke (17:12-19)

As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him, and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

TROPARION TONE IV

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the Apostles: Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!

TRANSFER OF THE RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS, WONDERWORKER

TROPARION TONE IV

The day of the joyous celebration has come; the city of Bari rejoices and with it the whole universe leaps from joy, singing the spiritual songs and psalms. For today, the holy feast, on the occasion of the transfer of the honorable and exceedingly healing relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, has shone forth with the radiant rays, like the sun that does not set, driving away the darkness of temptations and calamities from those who faithfully exclaim to thee: òSave us, as our protector, O great Nicholas!ö

KONTAKION TONE IV

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earthborn from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day!

KONTAKION TONE III

TRANSFER OF THE HOLY RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS, WONDERWORKER

Your relics, O Saint Nicholas, came out as a star from the east to the west. The sea was sanctified by your journey, and the city of Bari, through you, has received the grace. For working for us, you have appeared as an excellent, wonderful and merciful Wonderworker.

KONTAKION OF THE THEOTOKOS - TONE VI

Steadfast protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator: do not despise the cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you do always protect those who honor you.

SAINTS COMMEMORATED TODAY – *Holy Prophet Zephania; Venerable John the Silent*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will be having a Christmas play on Jan. 6th following Divine Liturgy. ALL children will have a role, so all parents need to attend and bring their kids.

Also, there will be [mandatory] play practice on Sunday Dec 16th, 23rd, and 30th (last 3 Sundays in December) as well as MANDATORY dress rehearsal on Saturday Jan. 5th from 11-2. Lunch will be served to the children. Also, if anyone has any "Nativity" scene costumes like animals or angels that they would like to donate, please see Protinica Karen.

Today - Our Choir and Tamburitians are celebrating their patron saint day St. Nicholas. Lunch will be served after Divine Liturgy. Menu: Shrimp bisque, hearty vegetable soup, poga a, and salad. Please try and make the effort to attend and show our support.

December 19th - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia. Liturgy at 10.00am. Cutting of the Festal Slava Breads will follow.

January 6th - Christmas Eve. Following Divine Liturgy, our beloved children will perform a Christmas play. Lunch will be served.

January 6th - Christmas Eve service will begin at 6.00pm. Traditional lighting of the Yule tree/ Badnjak will follow. A rich and wonderful dinner following the service will be in the church hall with entertainment provided by Srpski Sinovi/ Serbian Sons. Invite your family and friends and celebrate the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All are welcome/ Dobro do-li!

January 13th – A Serbian New Year's Eve Celebration "A Night in Belgrade" will take place at 5:00 p.m. in the church hall. Dinner will be provided and entertainment by Srpski Sinovi/Serbian Sons.

Beautiful Christmas Cards ó Available to purchase at the tutor's desk. \$20/pack or \$2/each.

The "Noodle-makers" of St. Nicholas began their work to help replenish the Maintenance Committee Fund this past Tuesday and will continue for at least 4 weeks. To place orders for home-made noodles, please call Rose Cheran (412 824-7609). Donations of flour and eggs will be deeply appreciated. If you have a noodle machine you are not using, we would love to use it! If you want to help by making noodles or packaging them on another day, call or email Pat Kolar (412 445-0536; patkolar@verizon.net).

PURSE BASH - A Planning Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 18, 2018, at 7 p.m. for a new fund raiser, a Purse Bash. The Purse Bash is scheduled for March 2, 2019. Ladies, this will be a fun event. Please plan on attending this meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Sondra Deaunovich at Sondra7890@comcast.net or 412-760-5796.

The Outreach Committee wishes to thank all those who have participated in the bake sale last week or who gave supplies or donations for the Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery. Today is the last day for contributions. The bake sale resulted in \$293, monetary donations thus far are \$638, and there are 17 bags of groceries. The groceries and money will be delivered to the monastery on Dec. 21. The sisters will be deeply grateful for everything. Hvala Vam!

The Committee for the 2019 SNF Summer Golf Tournament has met and is excited to begin planning for this big event for our church and local SNF lodges. To be successful, we will need everyone's help! There will be many opportunities for you to contribute. The Committee will keep you informed of our progress over the coming months. Pam Matejevich will be coordinating volunteers for the event which will take place August 7-11, 2019. Reach out to Pam or to Chairman Dushan Markoff to offer your help or ask any questions!

Maintenance Group is preparing for winter! Sauerkraut, sour heads, applesauce, smoked kielbassi, Italian sausage, smoked spare ribs, bacon, pumpkin pie, and organic potatoes will be available very soon to purchase for the upcoming winter months. Details to follow.

The St. Nicholas Sunday School will be selling candy from Dorothy's in White Oak for Christmas. Please see or call Sophie Vargo at (412) 466-2760.

REMINDERS

Adult Bible Study – Classes cancelled until further notice.

Vespers ó Saturday evening 6:00 p.m. Confession 6:30 p.m.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: The Ten Steps for Healing

Today's gospel reading, *Luke 17:12-19* gives us a plan for healing. Let's call it: *The Ten Steps for Healing*.

The Ten Steps for Healing are: 1) Approach Jesus, 2) Call out to Jesus, 3) Listen to Jesus, 4) Obey Jesus, 5) Go to the Priest/Church, 6) Glorify/Praise God, 7) Bow Down to Jesus, 8) Thank Jesus, 9) Go on Your Way, 10) Remember Your Faith. Let us understand that leprosy was a skin condition of varying degrees, the worst being the loss of fingers and toes. Leprosy rendered persons ritually unclean and unfit to worship God (Leviticus 13:3) and therefore lepers were isolated from the rest of the people. When we go through the ten steps, some of us will think of being cured of physical ailments. All of us should have in mind the spiritual illnesses we currently suffer from. Let us examine the Ten Steps for Healing in more depth.

1. Approach Jesus- In verse 12, Jesus enters a certain village and meets ten lepers. By this time in His ministry, Jesus was well known for His charismatic teaching and miraculous healings. Thus, the lepers, even though they stood far off, probably positioned themselves so that Jesus would run into them. Just like Jairus (Mk.5:22; Luke8:41), the Centurion (Mt.8:5), and others, we need to approach and draw near to Jesus so we can increase the likelihood that He will run into us. At the same time, we must be humbly aware of our current lack of health, including despair, resentment and jealousy, and how it separates/isolates us from God and each other.

2. Call Out to Jesus- In verse 13, the lepers lift up their voices and say, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" This is a cry of prayer very similar to the Publican (Lk.18:38), the Canaanite woman (Mt.15:22), and the Two Blind Men (Mk.10:47). The first step is a reaching out of the body. This second step is a reaching out of the heart and giving a voice to its desire. In the Prayer before the Great Entrance, it says, "O God, who art good and ready to hear? If we call out to God from the depth of our heart, He hears us and He will comfort us. Yet, we must make the effort to inform God that we are ready for Him to act in our life."

3. Listen to Jesus- Again, by this time, Jesus was a well-known teacher and the lepers most-likely were waiting anxiously to hear His words of wisdom in answer to their call. Indeed, for good communication to take place both parties must be willing to speak and to listen. Once we cry out in prayer, we must open our ears to listen to the healing words of Christ. If we are always talking, even in prayer to God, it will be difficult to hear what He is trying to tell us. Let us be silent in order to listen and to avoid having a one-way monologue with God.

4. Go to the Priest/Church- Jesus response to the lepers is, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." This is in accordance with the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 13&14) which prescribed how one was to become ritually clean from leprosy. More importantly, it underlines the necessity for sacrament and community in healing. In other words, we need to experience the concrete reality of God's healing grace in liturgical forms and symbols. It is essential for us to know that it's not just me and God but it is God working on me through other people, especially the priest, the one ordained by God's grace to minister to me. The Church is the only place you

can go to receive the Sacrament/Mystery of Holy Confession, Holy Unction and Holy Communion and the priest is the only one who can administer them to you. This communal experience helps to overcome the isolation and alienation that were mentioned in the first step. St. Euthymios said, "Look to yourselves, and preserve your souls and bodies in purity. Do not fail to attend the church services, and keep the traditions and rules of our community.

5. **Obey Jesus**- How did the lepers respond to Jesus' command? Did they question Him? Did they ignore Him? They obeyed Him for it says, "As they went, they were cleansed. The monastic fathers repeatedly lift up the virtue of obedience because it cuts off our self-will which is an expression of pride. St Euthymius, whose memory we keep today, said, "Whoever desires to lead the monastic life should not follow his own will. He should be obedient and humble, and be mindful of the hour of death. He should fear the judgment and eternal fire, and seek the heavenly Kingdom. Obedience is a great virtue. The Lord loves obedience more than sacrifice, but disobedience leads to death." Pride, of course, is thinking that we know best for ourselves, better than anyone else, including Jesus. Pride is the illness Adam and Eve suffered from that led them to disobey the life-sustaining command of God and brought alienation between themselves and their Creator. Our Holy Orthodox Christian Tradition, including the Scriptures, has numerous precepts and statutes that are equivalent to a doctor's instructions for getting well. We must be obedient and follow them to be healed.

6. **Praise/Glorify God**- When one of the lepers saw that he was healed, he returned and with a loud voice glorified God. Giving credit where it is due is an important aspect of our healing. The scriptures repeatedly affirm that we should give credit to God in an explicit manner when He acts in a powerful and miraculous way. This is one of our characteristics in God's design to glorify and praise Him. That's the way we are made or in other words, that's what we are made for. To not give glory and praise to God is to act contrary to our own nature. This outward acknowledgment is also important in sharing the Good News about God. How can others learn about Jesus' powerful love, care and help if we do not share it with them? It would be like finding a cure for a cancer but keeping it to ourselves and preventing others from having it. We would not think of such a thing. We must evangelize and share the cure that Christ Himself provides.

7. **Bow Down to Christ**- Some may think that praising and glorifying God is enough to give credit to the Author of healing. However, the one leper also fell down on his face at Jesus' feet. This gesture expresses a complete humility and submission. It says that Jesus is Lord and Master of my life. He is the number one person in my life. When we allow other persons or other things to supplant Jesus from the top slot of our life, then we start to have problems. God's love for us is infinite and wise. No other person cares for us and our well-being as much as Jesus. Any object, thing, habit, or job is not even capable of love, so why even let them be on top in the first place. God is the physician and healer of our souls and bodies. That's why we chant at the Small Entrance, "Come let us bow down to Christ and worship Him, the Son of God."

8. **Give Thanks to Christ**- The one leper gives thanks to Jesus, and Jesus notes the absence of the other nine. Both of these highlight the importance of being thankful. We write thank you

notes for the gifts we receive on our birthday and at Christmas. It is common courtesy and a way to show our genuine appreciation. More importantly, it helps us avoid taking the gifts, and the generosity behind them, for granted. When we give thanks, we take the view that the cup is half-full and this attitude helps us to see the many other blessings of God in our life. We chant Psalm 92:1 in the first verse of the First Antiphon of a weekday liturgy, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord and sing praises to Your name, O Most High One. It is good in the sight of God and it is good, meaning healing, for us."

9. **Go Your Way**- Jesus says to the one leper, "Arise, go your way," and in these words says, "Move on with your life." Healing implies change, movement and progress. Anyone knows that illness can stop us in our tracks. Even with a common cold, what seemed routine and easy becomes difficult. Tasks are not easy to complete when we do not feel well. It is much more difficult to see the signs of and diagnose spiritual illness because it is inherently self-blinding. Yet, one tell-tale sign is a sense of stagnation, the lack of growth and feeling stifled. Any of these should warn us and motivate us to get a check-up. Once healed, we are ready to move forward and to not return to our former state, no matter how familiar and comfortable it may be. At the end of the Liturgy, before the Prayer behind the Amvon, we pray, "Let us go forth in peace; let us pray to the Lord."

10. **Remember Your Faith**- Today's passage closes with Jesus saying to the leper, "Your faith has made you well." His words, which He says to many others, are a stamp or a seal upon the whole experience of healing. This is why, this is how it happened, remember that! Faith is belief, not just a propositional belief that God exists but especially a deep trust in the One God that truly exists. Again, believing is part of how God made us. So when we believe in Christ, we are fulfilling the image of God within us. "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36). We taste everlasting life on earth when we exercise our faith and experience God's healing. St. Euthymios said, "If someone tries to do something good in the place where he lives but fails to complete it, he should not think that he will accomplish it elsewhere. It is not the place that produces success, but faith and a firm will. A tree which is often transplanted does not bear fruit."

In conclusion, you may have noticed that the first five steps: 1) Approach Jesus, 2) Call out to Jesus, 3) Listen to Jesus, 4) Obey Jesus, 5) Go to the priest/Church, occur before the actual healing of the lepers. The last five steps, 6) Glorify/praise God, 7) Bow Down before Jesus, 8) Thank Jesus, 9) Go on your way, 10) Remember your Faith, occur after the healing. However, healing is not complete without all the steps. The other nine lepers were healed physically, but were they healed spiritually? Our body and soul are intimately connected and intertwined so what affects one will affect the other and vice versa. The health of our body counts for nothing if our soul is diseased with sinful passion and desire. Eventually, our soul's illnesses will catch up with us and our body. Ultimately, no matter how virtuous and healthy our soul is, our body will slowly break down, decay and die. However, a pure, holy and repentant heart will ensure that our soul lives eternally in peace and communion with God.

