

Message from Fr. Michael...

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In the Holy Gospel reading today, we heard the story of a rich man asking the Lord about inheriting eternal life. During the time that Jesus walked the earth, a wealthy Jew was often wealthy because he had worked with the oppressive Romans often at the cost of his own people. We heard that he adhered to the commandments yet he betrayed his own people. His obedience to the Law of Moses was a superficial obedience and was not a spiritually deep routed one with love. He displayed a false piety which served to distract others from his unpius ways. He learns that "to inherit life" he must sell his possessions, "and give to the poor" and become a follower of Jesus he turns away in sorrow "for he was very rich." He is condemned for his love of worldly things.

The rich man places greater value on his earthy treasures than those he should lay up for himself in the Kingdom of Heaven. He is so consumed with his love of wealth that he is truly lost. He is willing to give up eternal salvation in order to hold on to his worldly possessions. It is though he loves his possessions more than he loves God. Although the rich man stated, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" St Clement wrote that this was a trick by the rich man to try to "convict Christ of introducing laws of His own and of dishonoring the commandments spoken by the most wise Moses" (Commentary on Luke, Homily 122, quoted in ACCS, NT, vol III: Luke, p., 283).

The rich man was not looking to establish a friendship with our Lord. The rich man was fooling no one but himself. He was actually poisoning his own soul through his own misguidedness. Salvation, i.e. inheritance of eternal life, joy, and peace could have been granted to him and all he had to do was to follow Christ. If he understood and adhered to a life of self-denial, then he would have moved away from the temporal or worldly things and sought refuge with those things which are everlasting. Brothers and sisters, are we leading a life of misguidedness? Are we too concerned about what we could acquire on Black Friday shopping in stores? Are we too busy complaining about the workings of our church without trying to help God's Church? Do we sit back and let others labor for God while we do nothing to keep God's Church lovingly united? Do we point our finger at others while not realizing that there are three fingers pointing right back at us? St. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians:8-12: "If there be a ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man has and not according to what he has not" Are we the rich man who walks sad due to not being ready for joy? We are not that type of person! For that type of person prefers to carry the weight of his own sin rather than acquiring the freedom that is gained from taking up the Cross and following our loving Lord, Jesus.

May we lay up treasures in Heaven as our prayers ascend as one, I remain
In His service,

+Fr. Michael

Leondos Styppi, Patriarch of Constantinople

Martin, Bishop of Tours

Saint Martin, the great luminary of Gaul, was the son of pagan parents. When he was still quite young he became a catechumen; at the age of twenty-two he received Holy Baptism. Then he undertook the labours of a monk, and was afterwards consecrated Bishop of Tours, renowned as an ascetic and wonderworker, a faithful shepherd of Christ's flock. He converted many both from paganism and heresy, cast out demons and raised the dead, and while undertaking all the apostolic burdens of a bishop, he never ceased to be a simple monk and man of prayer. His monastery became a center of monasticism not only for Gaul, but for all of Western Europe. A widely celebrated incident of his life took place when he was still a catechumen, fulfilling his military service. Seeing an ill-clad beggar asking alms at the gate of the city of Amiens and being overlooked by passersby, Saint Martin, having nothing else to give, rent his military cloak in two with his sword and gave half to the beggar, so that he might cover himself in the cold. That night, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him, clothed with the half of the cloak he had given to the beggar. Saint Martin's cloak, from which "chaplain" is derived. Saint Martin reposed in peace in the year 397.

8th Sunday of Luke

John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria



Saint John was born in 555 on the island of Cyprus in the city of Amathus; his father, Epiphanius, was a ruler of Cyprus. The Saint was consecrated Archbishop of Alexandria in 608. A man of exemplary uprightness, in his zeal for Orthodoxy he strove mightily to fight the many heresies among the Christians in Egypt; but above all, he was famous for his singular generosity, humility, and sympathy towards all, especially the poor. His mercy was so great that the report of it reached the Persian invaders of Jerusalem, who desired to see him because of it. Saint John reposed in 619, at the age of sixty-four.

FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Michalena (Skiadas) Sukenik, Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon, and Presbytera Magdalena Michalopoulos. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today we will have a 1 year Memorial Service for Mary Gianakouros. May her memory be eternal! Mary is survived by her beloved children, Frank, Harry, and Annie, as well as by her grandchildren. Our prayers and best wishes go out to the entire Gianakouros and Papastrat families. May God bless them and may He continue to shine His divine light on them.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today, we will have a General Assembly in our church fellowship hall. We will be reporting fundraising income of 2017 and accepting nominations for the 2018-2020 Parish Council. Although everyone is invited to attend and listen to the proceedings, only members, who are in good standing and have paid their dues for 2017, will be allowed to vote and entertain discussion on agenda topics.

SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES FOR 2017 CHRISTMAS SEASON

Saturday, December 16

Divine Liturgy - 10:00 am (at Holy Trinity Church in Binghamton)

Sunday, December 17

Sunday Feast of St. Dionysios of Zankythos and the Prophet Daniel

Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Sunday School and Greek School X-mas Pageant to follow the Divine Liturgy (Annunciation Church)

Sunday, December 24

Morning of Christmas Eve

Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Orthros 9:00 pm

Christmas Divine Liturgy 10:00 pm

(Since we are having Christmas Liturgy which concludes at or before midnight, there will be no services on Christmas Day in the morning)

Sunday, December 31

Sunday after the Nativity

Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Monday, January 1, 2018

The Circumcision of the Lord and the feast day of St. Basil the Great

New Year's Day

Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 am

Saturday, January 6, 2018

Feast of Holy Theophany

Orthros 8:45 am and Divine Liturgy 9:45 am

The Great Blessing of the Waters is to be at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on this day

Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael (607) 795-1474. For any building, facility or church property issues, please contact Parish Council President Steve Anastos, (607) 296-9799. Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.