



Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

33rd Saturday/Sunday after Pentecost

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org January 23-24, 2021

Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

Saturday, January 23

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 24

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Tuesday, January 26

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, January 27

7:00 pm Bible Study (online only)

Thursday, January 28

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, January 30

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

4:00-5:00 pm St Nicholas Food Pantry

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 31

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Annual Parish Meeting following Liturgy

DATES TO NOTE

Orthodox Great Lent Begins Monday, March 15

Western Easter is on Sunday, April 4

Orthodox Pascha is on Sunday, May 2

Announcements

➤ **This Sunday is Sanctity of Life Sunday**, marking the sad anniversary of the legalization of abortion in the United States. While we are thankful that the abortion rate has gone down in the US over the last 40 years, abortion on demand is a tragedy, especially because the vast majority of abortions are for convenience. Orthodox Christianity condemns the act of abortion as violence against innocent and defenseless humans.

➤ **The St. Nicholas Food Pantry needs your donations!** Our monthly food pantry will be open to the community this Saturday from 4-5 pm. Saturday, January 30th, 2020 will be the first day. Please help support this parish ministry and our local community by bringing non-perishable donations to stock our pantry. All donations can be placed in the donation box by the back door of the church basement. Please contact Mat. Ashley or Kate Skowron for additional information.

➤ **The Annual Parish Meeting** will take place on Sunday, January 31 after the Divine Liturgy. Only members in good standing may participate. Officer and organization reports must be submitted by today to Kristie Mertz.

➤ **Church offering envelopes are now available at the Candle Desk.** Individuals or families who generally donate via automatic payment may not have been issued envelopes. If you wish to have a set of envelopes or you cannot locate yours, please see Kristie Mertz.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* Geroge Shaytar, Sandi Tirpak, Paul Yewisiak, *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Kristie Mertz** for the health of Uncle Gerard Teunissen. From the **John Mahalchak family** for the health of John, Cheryl, Gregory, Daniel, Mary, Kayla Elizabeth, Kevin, and Steven. From **Mat Nancy and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant Dn Joseph Mell (8 years); for the health of family; many years Gregory! From **Charles Wasilko** for the departed servant Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of Greg Mell and Larry Polny on their birthdays. From **John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza** for the health of Galina Vilkov. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family; happy birthday and many years to Larry Polny! From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant of God Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of Larry Polny and Greg Mell on their birthday. Many Years!

Thank You

➤ to Bob and Mary Beth Madalinsky for sponsoring all categories of monthly donations for February: (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$25, Incense \$10).

This Thursday at 7:30 pm, Fr Thomas will host the first **Virtual March for Life** in the OCA. Metropolitan Tikhon will speak along with a leading Orthodox bioethicist. Chris Humphrey's work at Vision for Life will also be highlighted. You can view it live on the OCA's YouTube and Facebook pages.

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: Job

Scripture reference: Book of Job

Questions to ask/review:

- Who was Job? What are some nice things that Job possessed?
- How did Job suffer?
- How did Job respond?
- Did his friends help him? Why did his friends fail to help him?
- How would you have reacted if they had been your friends?
- What or who do you think causes suffering in the world?
- Why did God allow Job to suffer? Why does God allow suffering in the world?

Suggested Activities at home:

Write a card, pray for, or visit with someone who has endured suffering recently.

Prayer: Lord, help us to bring comfort to those who are suffering.



St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Hymns and Readings for Saturday, Jan 23

Tone 2 Troparion of Saturday

Apostles, martyrs, and prophets,
Holy hierarchs, saints, and righteous ones,
Having fought the good fight and kept the faith,
Ye have boldness towards the Saviour.
Intercede for us with Him, for He is good. //
and pray that He may save our souls.

Tone 4 Troparion (St Nicholas)

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility, and a teacher of
abstinence.
Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to
you!
Because of your poverty riches were granted to
you!
O holy Bishop Nicholas,
pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of
ages. Amen.*

Tone 8 Kontakion of Saturday

The universe offers thee the God-bearing
martyrs,
As the first fruits of creation, O Lord and
Creator, //
Through the Theotokos and their prayers
establish Thy Church in peace.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon of Saturday (Psalm 31/32)

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O ye righteous.

Epistle of the Saturday (Ephesians 2:11-13)

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in
the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by
what is called the Circumcision made in the
flesh by hands—that at that time you were
without Christ, being aliens from the
commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the
covenants of promise, having no hope and
without God in the world. But now in Christ

Jesus you who once were far off have been
brought near by the blood of Christ.

Gospel of the Saturday (Luke 13:18-29)

Then He said, “What is the kingdom of God like?
And to what shall I compare it? It is like a
mustard seed, which a man took and put in his
garden; and it grew and became a large tree,
and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”

And again He said, “To what shall I liken the
kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a
woman took and hid in three measures of meal
till it was all leavened.”

And He went through the cities and villages,
teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.
Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who
are saved?”

And He said to them, “Strive to enter through
the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will
seek to enter and will not be able. When once
the Master of the house has risen up and shut
the door, and you begin to stand outside and
knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for
us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not
know you, where you are from,’ then you will
begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your
presence, and You taught in our streets.’ But He
will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you
are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of
iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and
Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of
God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come
from the east and the west, from the north and
the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

Communion Hymn of Saturday

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Praise befits
the just. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Ps 33:1)

Commentary on Today’s Gospel

Now, according to the nature of the mustard,
what is the significance of the comparison? This
grain is certainly common and simple; when we
come to grind it, it spreads its vigor. In the same
way, faith seems simple at first sight; but,
overcome by adversity, it diffuses the benefit of
its virtue, so as to penetrate also those who hear
or who read. Grain of mustard, our martyrs
Felix, Nabor and Victor³². They had the perfume
of faith, but they were ignored. The persecution
came: they laid down their arms, stretched out
their necks, and, slaughtered by the sword,
spread the beauty of their martyrdom through
all the borders of the world, so much so that it is
right to say: "Their echo was spread on all the
earth" (Ps. 18,5). But faith is otherwise
trampled, otherwise hurried, otherwise sown.
The Lord himself is a mustard seed. He had not
suffered damage, but, as with the mustard seed,
for lack of contact with Him, the people did not
know him. He preferred to be trampled on, so
that we would say, "We are the good odor of
Christ before God" (II Cor., II, 15); He preferred
to be in a hurry, so much so that Peter said,
"The crowds urge you" (Lk 8:45); He preferred
to be sown, like the grain that someone takes to
put in his garden. For it is in a garden that
Christ was arrested, and buried; He grew up in
the garden, He even rose there. And He became
a tree, as it is written, "As an apple tree among
the trees of the forest, so is my brother among
the young men" (Cant., II, 3). So you too, sow in
your garden the Christ? a garden is a place filled
with flowers and varied fruits? so that the
beauty of your works may flourish and the many
fragrances of the various virtues perfume it.
May Christ be where the fruit is. Sow the Lord
Jesus: It is grain when it is stopped, tree when II
resurrects, tree shading the world. It is grain
when it is buried in the earth, tree when it rises
to heaven. Press again, with Christ, and sow
faith. Faith is in a hurry when we believe the

crucified Christ. Paul pressed the faith when he
said: "And when I came to you, brethren, I came
not to preach to you with a language or a
wisdom raised the mystery of God; for I did not
judge fit to know among you anything but Christ
Jesus, and crucified" (I Cor., II, 1 ssq.). And as he
had learned to press the faith, he learned again
to raise it, saying: For now "we know no more"
the crucified Christ (II Cor., V, 16). Now we sow
faith when, according to the Gospel and the
readings of the Apostles and Prophets, we
believe in the Passion of the Lord; we therefore
sow faith, when we cover it in some way with
the ground loosened and moved by the flesh of
the Lord, so that, heated and pressed by its
sacred body, faith spreads itself. Whoever has
believed that the Son of God became man,
believes that he died for us, believes that he is
risen for us. I therefore sow faith, when I plant
in the middle of it's burial. You want to know
that Christ is grain and that Christ is sown? "As
long as the grain of wheat does not fall to the
ground to die, it remains alone; but when he is
dead, he brings back a lot of fruit" (Jn 12: 24).
So we did not err in saying what he himself had
already said. Now He is at the same time a grain
of wheat, because he strengthens the heart of
man (Ps 103:15), and mustard seed, because it
warms the heart of man. And although one and
the other frame of any point, It seems however
grain of wheat when it is question of its
resurrection? because He is the bread of God
who came down from heaven (Jn 6:33)? because
the word of God and the fact of resurrection
feeds souls, sharpens hope, strengthens love;
mustard seed, because there is more bitterness
and austerity to talk about the Passion of the
Lord: no more bitterness to cry, more austerity
to shake. So when we hear and read that the
Lord has fasted, that the Lord was thirsty, that
the Lord cried, that the Lord was scourged, that
the Lord said, at the moment of his Passion,
"Watch and pray, for not to fall into temptation"
(Matt. 26:41), seized, so to speak, by the harsh
taste of this discourse, we correct by him the too
pleasant sweetness of the pleasures of the body.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, Jan 24

Tone 8 Troparion (Resurrection)

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!

Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//

O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

Tone 4 Troparion (St Nicholas)

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence.

Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to you!

Because of your poverty riches were granted to you!

O holy Bishop Nicholas, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tone 8 Kontakion (Resurrection)

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam.

Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,//

and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Theotokos)

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 intercessions and to intercede for us, O Theotokos

For you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (Ps 75/76:11)

Epistle of the Sunday (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 of the Sunday (Luke 18:35-43)

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Communion Hymn of Sunday

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Commentary on Today's Gospel

WHOSOEVER are yet without understanding, and accept not the faith in Christ, may justly have that said to them which was spoken by the voice of David, "Come and see the works of God, the miracles that He has put upon earth." For He wrought miracles after no human fashion, though He was in appearance a man such as we are; but with godlike dignity rather, for He was God in form like to us, since He changed not from being what He was, as the purport of the passage now read from the Gospels proves to us. "For the Savior, it says, was passing by. And a blind man cried out, saying, Son of David have mercy on me." Let us then examine the expression of the man who had lost his sight; for it is not a thing to pass by without enquiry, since possibly the examination of what was said will beget something highly advantageous for our benefit.

In what character then does he address to Him his prayer? Is it as to a mere man, according to the babbling of the Jews, who stoned Him with stones, saying in their utter folly, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; because |584 that You being a man make Thyself God?" But must not that blind man have understood that the sight of the blind cannot be restored by human means, but requires, on the contrary, a divine power, and an authority such as God only possesses? for with God nothing whatsoever is impossible. He drew

near to Him therefore as to the Omnipotent God; but how then does he call Him the Son of David? What therefore can one answer to this? The following is perhaps, as I think, the explanation. As he had been brought up in Judaism, and was by birth of that race, the predictions contained in the law and the holy prophets concerning Christ of course had not escaped his knowledge. He had heard them chant that passage in the book of the Psalms: "The Lord has sworn the truth to David, and will not reject it, that of the fruit of your loins will I set upon your throne." He knew also that the blessed prophet Isaiah had said, "And there shall spring forth a shoot from the root of Jesse, and from his root shall a flower grow up." And again this as well; "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." As one therefore who already believed that the Word, being God, had of His own will submitted to be born in the flesh of the holy virgin, he draws near to Him as to God, and says, "Have mercy upon me, Son of David." For Christ bears witness that this was his state of mind in offering his supplication, by saying to him, "Your faith has saved you."

Let those then be ashamed who imagine themselves not to be blind, but who, as the wise Peter says, are "sightless, and have darkness in their mind." For they divide into two the one Lord Jesus Christ: even Him Who is the Word of the Father, [but 2 Who became a man, and was made flesh. For they deny that He Who was born of the seed of David was really the Son of God the Father: for so, they say, to be born is proper to man only, rejecting in their great ignorance His flesh,] and treating with contempt that precious and ineffable dispensation by which we have been redeemed: and even |585 perhaps foolishly speaking against the Only-begotten, because He emptied Himself, and descended to the measure of human nature, and was obedient to the Father even to death, that by His death in the flesh He might abolish death, might wipe out corruption, and put away the sin of the world. Let such imitate this blind man: for he drew near to Christ the Saviour of all as to God, and called Him Lord and Son of the blessed David.