

August 9, 2015: The 10th Sunday after Pentecost (The healing of the epileptic)

Epistle: I Cor. 4:9-16:

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23:



And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move;

and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

The healing of the epileptic from this Sunday's gospel reading took place right after the Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor. The father of the young man who was an epileptic had come first to the apostles, hoping to gain his son's healing. When the apostles failed, the man came and knelt before the Lord and praying: *"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely;* We can only imagine the suffering of this heart-broken father, who is describing in details the severity of his son's fight with the evil spirits: *for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.*

When the young man is brought before Christ, He *rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.* One should conclude that this evil spirit was reluctant to come out of the young man. However, when the maker of heaven and earth, the Lord of the visible and invisible powers wills, they submit to His command.

Responding to His disciples' question *"Why could we not cast it out?"*, the Savior tells them (and us) what is needed in order to be victorious in the daily spiritual warfare with the evil spirits: **Faith**, **Prayer** and **Fasting**: *"Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*

Let us acquire these spiritual weapons so that we too, with unwavering **Faith**, persistent **Prayer** and genuine **Fasting**, may be victorious over the evil forces!

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Fellowship

The following families are scheduled to look after this Sunday's fellowship:

Andrei Florea & Mihaela
Anton Călin & Cristina
Bidea Ioan & Ana

Thank you all very much!

MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership as soon as possible. This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations for the rest of the year.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Holy Virgin's Dormition Fast

**Between August 1-15, the Orthodox Church
observes the Dormition Fast.**

**During the two-week fast, besides the regular Sunday Liturgy,
the following services will be held in our church:**

- Thursday, August 6: Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.**
- Friday, August 7: Akathist to the Holy Virgin at 7:00 PM.**
- Saturday, Aug. 8: Vespers at 6:00 PM.**
- Friday, August 14: Vespers at 7:00 PM.**
- Saturday, August 15: Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.**

**Those who want to have their confession heard,
can do so after any of these services.**

Archbishop Nicolae's Meditation at the Dormition Fast

Most Reverend Fathers,
Beloved Faithful,

Between August 1st and 14th the Orthodox Church has the Dormition of the Mother of God fasting period. This fast precedes the great Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God and was established by the Church as a special period for remembering the precious virtues of Virgin Mary and the fasting period with which, according to the Tradition, the Mother of our Lord prepared herself for her falling asleep. This fast was strictly kept by the athonite monks honoring both the Transfiguration and the Dormition, because, as we know, the Mother of our Lord is the Protectress of the Holy Mount Athos.

This is the newest fast of our Church. Its origin is founded in the 5th century, when the veneration of the Mother of God was growing and the Christians begun to keep a fasting period before the Dormition Feast. The date and length of this fast (two weeks) were established for the whole Orthodox world in 1166 in Constantinople at a local Synod convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch Loukas Chrysovergis. The St. Savva's Typicon and Teaching about Fasts from the Great Horologion establish a strict fast, with total fasting on Monday, Wednesday and Friday until the IXth Hour (3.00 pm) when we eat dry food. On Tuesday and Thursday we eat boiled vegetables, without oil and Saturday and Sunday we are allowed oil and wine. Fish is allowed only on August 6th on the Transfiguration Feast.

In this fasting period there is a special prayer rule: we read daily the two Paraklesis of the Most Holy Theotokos. In this office we ask the help and protection of the Mother of our Lord in all our sorrows and weaknesses. We call her "protection, treasure of healings, fervent intercessor and firm rampart, defender of Christians". We confess our faith in her supplications towards her Son, supplications that will help all those in distress.

The Dormition Fast is the proper time for us to read the Service of the Small and Great Paraklesis to the Most Holy Theotokos and to ask fervently her help and support. Our world is troubled by war and many Christians are persecuted for their faith. The Syrian conflict has led to the destruction of many churches and monasteries as well as to the killing of many Christians. Two bishops, Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John of Aleppo have been held hostage for more than one year. In Iraq Christians suffer great persecutions and banishment to the point that in the city of Mosul the whole Christian population has disappeared. The conflict in the Holy Land has restarted and the first victims are the Christian communities. The same state of conflict exists also in the Orthodox world at the border of Ukraine.

My paternal advice is that we use this fasting period for prayer to the Most Holy Mother of God asking for peace in the world, understanding between the different religious communities, and good thoughts for all those responsible, leaders of this world. With her motherly love and her great mercy She will help and protect us.

†**Archbishop NICOLAE**