

Dec. 1, 2013: The 15th Sunday after Pentecost (The greatest commandment)

Epistle: II Cor. 4:6-15:

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Gospel: Matthew 22:35-46:



Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and

with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.” He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

We are slowly approaching the great Feast of the Lord's Incarnation, Christmas. Throughout the Christmas Fast, which began on November the 15th, we journey, just like the Magi, guided not by a star, but by the light of the Sun of Righteousness ("*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*") and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, toward the place of our encounter with Christ, our Savior, cheered on by the Orthodox Church, who sings every Sunday morning: "*Christ is born, glorify ye Him! Christ comes from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! All the earth sing unto the Lord and sing praises in gladness, O ye people, for He has been glorified!*" The journey is difficult and we face all kinds of temptations. However, God, in His divine providence, is giving us the necessary strength and power to overcome all obstacles and achieve our destination, as St. Paul is assuring us in the epistle reading of this Sunday: "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*"

The Lord's incarnation is the greatest testimony of God the Father's infinite love for mankind, who sends His only begotten Son so that "*whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life*" (John 3:16). This is why the Lord's Nativity is called the **Feast of divine love**. And since God initiates the salvation of man(kind) through such an unprecedented and undeserved sacrificial love, man is expected to respond with the same kind of love, which involves all of his spiritual and physical potential: "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" Please note that the measure of love required by God is "**all**," not partial. And this is because He gave us **all that He had: His only begotten Son**. *This*, He says, *is the first and great commandment*. And, just as a verification and daily exercise of our total and sacrificial love of God, He gave us a second commandment: "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*"

Those who have ears to hear, let them hear!

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Fellowship

The following families are scheduled to look after this Sunday's (December 1) fellowship:

**Magda & Jason Forner
Eugen & Florica Gheorghe
Liviu & Carmen Luca**

Thank you all very much!

Vespers Service

During the Christmas Fast, Vespers will be celebrated every **Saturday at 5:00 PM.**

Following the Vespers Service, Confession will be heard for those who want to prepare for Holy Communion.

NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Would you like to celebrate the arrival of 2014 at the Romanian Center, in a traditional Romanian atmosphere? Then **contact Viorel Ciocan at 780-994-2304** for tickets (\$80/adults and \$15/children -7-14), and additional details.

THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The traditional annual Christmas Party will be held this year on **December 22** in the Main Hall, following the Divine Liturgy and regular fellowship. **As of November 24 2013**, the preparations for the Sunday School Christmas Party program have begun. **All children are welcome!**

BAKED GOODS FOR CHRISTMAS

Those who are interested to buy baked goods (cozonaci) for Christmas, please contact Psa. Maria at 780-473-0029, to place your order, before December 8.



MEMBERSHIP

At the Annual General Meeting, held on February 24, 2013, the decision was made to keep the membership contribution unchanged: \$100/person (\$200/couple).

We encourage everyone to pay their membership as soon as possible!

Keep in mind that \$25 of each membership goes to the Archdiocese.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!