

December 7, 2014: The 27th Sunday after Pentecost (The woman with a spirit of infirmity)

Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17:



Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound - think of it - for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

Every miracle done by our Lord Jesus Christ caused an increase in the level of anger on part of the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people. The healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity aggravated even more the ruler of the synagogue: *"But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath."* The fact that the woman was healed on a Sabbath was invoked by the ruler of the synagogue as the only reason for his "indignation." However, the real reason for his indignation was the fact that **Jesus healed the woman** and that **He healed her in his synagogue**.

I think that anyone would agree that a miracle worker has no problem being acclaimed and loved by the people and generating a great following. This is why the gospels often mention that Jesus was surrounded by a great multitude. The more people followed and believed in Jesus Christ, the less control the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people had over them. St John the evangelist is telling us that after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (after being in the tomb for four days), *"the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him..."* (11:47-48). In fact, in the next chapter of the fourth gospel we read that *"the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus"* (12:10-11).

The bent over woman, who had been tormented by Satan for eighteen years represents the whole of mankind (just as the man who had fallen among robbers and was helped by the Good Samaritan) who, at "the fullness of time," had lost its verticality and was unable to shake off the heavy burden of sins.

The fact that the man who had been left to die by the roadside and received the first aid from the Good Samaritan (Christ) was then taken and entrusted him to an inn (the foreshadow of the Church) with the specific instruction to care for him ("take care of him") as well as the fact that the woman with a spirit of infirmity was healed in a synagogue (also the foreshadow of the Church), constitute a good indication that man(kind)'s healing and restoration takes place in the Church.

Let us be attentive!

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Fellowship

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

**Baboş Costel & Camelia
Bazgan Maria & Fr. George
Bazgan Napolion & Valeria**

Thank you all very much!

Bible Study

During Advent, a program of Bible Study will be held on Fridays at 7:00 PM.

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.

Perogy and Bake Sale

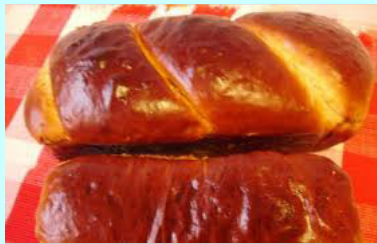
On Saturday, December 13, the Ladies Auxiliary will organize a PEROGY AND BAKE SALE from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

All of our ladies are kindly asked to bring their baked goods to the Hall on Friday, Dec. 12, between 6-8PM.

Thank you very much!

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.



THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The traditional annual Christmas Party will be held this year on December 21 in the main Hall, following the Divine Liturgy and regular fellowship.

All children are welcome!

NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Would you like to celebrate the arrival of 2015 at the Romanian Center, in a traditional Romanian atmosphere?

Then contact Liviu Sasu at 780-489-5381 for tickets (\$100/adults and \$20/children 7-14), and additional details.

MEMBERSHIP

We remind you that the membership contribution hasn't changed in the last few years:

\$100/person (\$200/couple).

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

Keep in mind that \$35 of each membership goes to the Archdiocese.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Membership or Contribution?

Spiritually speaking, we become members of the Church (the mystical body of Christ) when we receive the Sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion, which unite us with Christ (*"Do you unite yourself unto Christ? I do"*). Saint Paul the apostle says: *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?"* (I Cor. 6:15). So, since we are united with Christ, we are also united with the Church, His body, which He Himself established.

The Church is a divine-human institution, established by Christ, the Son of God, who was God (divine) and Man (human) at the same time and in the same person. The mission of the Church is to teach, sanctify and lead her faithful to salvation: *"And Jesus came and spoke to them (the apostles), saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Church as a human institution/community was established on the day of the Pentecost, when three thousand people were baptized: *..."and that day about three thousand souls were added to them"* (to the apostles) (Acts 2:41).

From the very beginning, the Church was supported materially by her faithful/members, as we read in the same Book of Acts: *"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need"* (4:32-35).

Since the churches in North America and their priests don't receive any material support whatsoever from any government, it is imperative that those who have been accepted into the community of the faithful (the Church) as spiritual members, contribute with their time and money, thus reaffirming their membership to the divine-human institution, the Church, and assisting her to continue her mission in the world.

It is for the reason of this double membership (spiritual and material) that the term membership is the appropriate one as opposed to contribution.

Fr. George Bazgan

A Christian's conduct in Church

Before I begin to address the topic of „church conduct,” it is important to address the question „Why do we come to church?”

We come to church on Sundays (the Day of the Lord) in order to reaffirm our vocation as liturgical beings, to continue our spiritual growth and to strengthen our communion with Christ and His Church which began when we were accepted into the community of the faithful through the Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Christmation and Holy Eucharist (Communion).

For an Orthodox Christian, attending the Divine Liturgy is not only a privilege but an obligation as well. It is a privilege in as much as we, as members of the visible Church are called to bring the Eucharistic elements (bread and wine), be part of their transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ and then, partake of them in the form of the Holy Eucharist, all this in the context of the Divine Liturgy, the highest form of prayer we can offer to God. It is also our obligation to attend the Divine Liturgy, obeying thus one of the commandments of the Church.

In order to benefit the most from our presence in Church we must keep in mind a few rules:

1. We should come to Church on time (before 10:00) in order to partake of the entire Divine Liturgy.
2. If the service is already in progress, we must stop and see what is going on. If we came in during the Scripture readings (Epistle or the Gospel), we should wait at the back of the church until the reading is over and then, quietly, take our seats.
3. We should pick up the liturgical books and follow closely the service, reading all prayers.
4. During the Divine Liturgy we are not allowed to talk to other people. We can do that at the end, during the fellowship.

Fr. George Bazgan