

May 3, 2020: THE 3RD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (Of the Myrrh-bearing women)

Epistle: Acts, 6:1-7:

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Gospel: Mark, 15:43-47:



Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus observed where He was laid.

Christ is Risen!

The Scripture readings of this Sunday present to us events from two different times: The Epistle reading (from the Acts of the Apostles) allows us to catch a glimpse into the liturgical life of the first Christian community. It talks about the Agape, the fellowship meals that used to follow the Divine Liturgy (the Breaking of Bread) and also about the ordination of the first 7 deacons (*whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them*), by the Apostles, who were assigned to organize and oversee this charitable work of the primitive Church.

On this, the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing women, the Gospel reading takes us back, to the event of Christ's burial, to which they were eyewitnesses.

In order to dispel any doubt about the reality of Christ's death, St. Mark tells us that, before he released the body of Jesus to Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate summoned *the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time*. Only after he was convinced that Christ had died did Pilate give the body of Jesus to Joseph: *So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph*.

It is also worth noting the special care and piety with which Joseph handled the body of Jesus in spite of the fact that things had to be done quickly: *Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb*.

Both of these Scripture readings are about the ministry of serving, which our Lord and Savior emphasized when he washed the feet of His disciples at the Last Supper.

May the risen Lord bless us with wisdom and humility so that we can serve one another and together, our loving God, as liturgical beings!

Fr. George Bazgan

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 during the Summer months and for the rest of the year as well.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and, in accordance with the measures taken by our Hierarchs, for the time being, the following changes will go into effect:

- 1. The Divine Liturgy is to be attended only by the clergy, the chanter and those who help with the church service.**
- 2. Our Sunday fellowships are being suspended until further notice.**
- 3. All Sunday School classes are suspended.**
- 4. We ask all of you to observe the recommendations made by the health experts, such as: stay home if you are not feeling well, wash your hands, keep the social distance, etc.**

Don't forget to read our weekly electronic Bulletin, which comes out every Thursday, for other details and updates.

We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for the understanding!

May God keep all of us safe!

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR!

During these trying times, we expect some of families (individuals) of our community to experience a higher degree of hardship, in terms of paying the rent, groceries, etc.

In order to help them cope with such difficulties, we are announcing the creation of a Humanitarian Fund, called "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR."

Fr. George is committing \$500 per month for this cause until the current situation is resolved.

Those who want to contribute, with any amount, please call Mrs. Corina Sasu (780 – 200 – 1171) to make arrangements for payment.

Thank You and God Bless!

A Message for the Season

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We hope that you are healthy and that the news from your loved ones, from near or far, continues to be good!

We live in trying times in every respect: medical, economic, social, familial and, not in the least, spiritual-religious. I don't think there is anyone who disagrees that these times of concern for us and our families, insecurity, heightened stress and anxiety, will live forever in the memory of this generation and in the history of the whole world.

One thing is clear from all this situation: man is a fragile being.

As you already know, this pandemic also had and continues to have a very negative impact on the places of worship around the world. Religious services continue, but the believers who make up the living, militant and dynamic Church cannot be present. I miss every one of you, and sorrow fills my heart when I don't see the children with the candle in their innocent hands and the timid steps approaching the Holy Chalice for communion with Christ.

I urge you, especially now, not to forget those who are in much more difficult situations and to be the good Samaritans, pouring oil and wine, multiplied by prayer, over their wounds and troubles!

In the same context, I urge you not to forget our Church where some of you have married and/or baptized your children. The Church, as you know, does not receive any financial aid from any government or organization. Times are tough, but Church expenses are the same as before. In the words of St. Paul, *“Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not with regret or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to multiply all grace in you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work...”* (II Corinthians 9:7-8). Memberships, donations and pledges can be sent by regular mail, over the internet or directly at the Church.

Don't forget to pray more diligently and thank God for all the gifts and blessings!

For now, the services will be broadcast live via the Internet, and I urge you to take part, so that the church at home may be in communion of prayer and love with the Church, the house of our salvation and comfort.

May the good and merciful God bless you with health, peace, the joy of salvation and a good heart, and may the light of Christ's Resurrection be your true guide along your earthly pilgrimage

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With much love, thanks and gratitude,

Fr. George Bazgan

CHURCH DIRECTORY PICK UP

The 2019 Church Directory is now available for those who participated in this project. If your family came to the Hall for a photography appointment or submitted your own family picture (for \$15), then you will receive a Directory. There is no rush to pick up your family directory.

Under the current unusual conditions, it is better to contact Fr. George (780-473-0029) to make arrangements for pick up.

We appologize for the delay and thank you for your patience and support for this Church project!

Have a happy and safe Spring!

Prayer at the time of pandemic

O Lord, our God, who are rich in mercy and, with Your wise care, guard our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop this pandemic, as You have ceased the punishment of the people in the days of King David. You who are the Physician of our souls and our bodies, give healing to those contaminated with this disease, hastily raising them from their bed of suffering, to glorify You, the Most Merciful Savior, and protect those who are healthy from any disease.

Bless, strengthen and shield, O Lord, with Your grace, all those who, with love of people and sacrifice, care for the sick at their homes or in hospitals. Remove all disease and suffering from the people and teache us to value life and health as gifts coming from You.

Grant us, O God, Your peace, and fill our hearts with unwavering faith in Your protection, with hope in Your help, and with love towards You and our neighbor.

For Yours is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we give glorify: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!