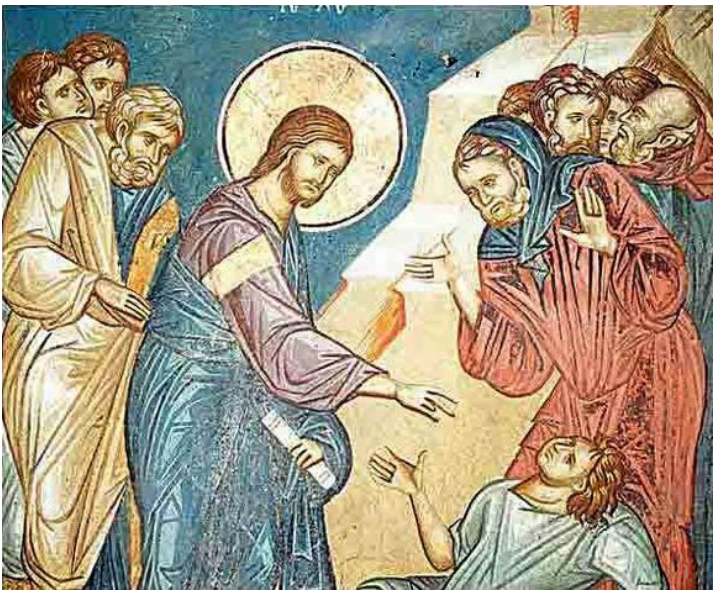


August 16, 2020: The 10th Sunday after Pentecost (The healing of the epileptic)

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

The Dormition of the Holy Virgin



"In giving birth, O Theotokos, thou hast retained thy virginity, and in falling asleep thou hast not forsaken the world. Thou, who art the Mother of Life, hast passed over into life, and by thy prayers thou dost deliver our souls from death" (Troparion).

Nobody can come up with a deeper, clearer, more meaningful, more assuring and more concise theology, concerning the Holy Virgin Mary, than the above troparion, sung in the Orthodox Church every year on August 15, when we celebrate the Falling Asleep of the Mother of all Christians, the Queen of heaven, the ever-Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.

Who can surpass or at least equal the wisdom of the Church Fathers, whose theology, the result of unceasing prayer, fasting and contemplation, constitutes today, as it has for almost two millennia, a precious and endless source of teaching and inspiration? This is, indeed, another example of how the worship of the Orthodox Church is both a means of prayer and of theological instruction at the same time.

According to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, the role of the Virgin Mary in the divine plan for man's restoration has not been limited only to the event of Christ's Nativity, nor has it ended with her falling asleep. Like a good Mother, whose love for her children never dies, the Theotokos continues to be an intercessor for us before the throne of her Son. This idea is clearly underlined by the troparion: *"and in falling asleep thou hast not forsaken the world."* Just as she intervened before her Son on behalf of those who, in Cana of Galilee, had run out of wine, we believe that she continued and will continue to be, not only an inspiration of purity, humility and love, but also a mediator and a companion in fervent

prayer for those who sought and will seek her help. The many visions of the Virgin Mary and the numerous miracles performed by her and experienced by countless people throughout the history justify and reinforce our belief. In fact, the last part of the troparion emphasizes our full confidence and hope in the much-needed help offered by the intercessory prayers of the Virgin Mary: ***“and by thy prayers thou dost deliver our souls from death.”*** We believe that, as the one who endured and overcame the adversities of life here on earth, she is our pillar of hope: ***“Forget not, O Lady, the ties of kinship with those who commemorate in faith the Feast of thine all-holy Dormition”*** (Great Vespers).

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Service Attendance

Due to the continuing State of Emergency, which limits the number of people attending Church services, we are asking our members to make sure that, for time being, only 1 (one) person from each family attend our Sunday Divine Liturgy.

We apologize for this inconvenience and hope that the restrictions will continue to be relaxed in the near future.

Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: washing their hands, social distancing, etc.

Thank you all and may God keep us safe!

Holy Virgin's Dormition Fast

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

Special services:

Vespers at 6:00 PM on: August 1, 8 and 14.

-Divine Liturgy: August 6 and 15.

Those who want to have their confession heard, can do so after the Vespers services.

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!

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.

Have a happy and safe Summer!

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 teach 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!