

September 20, 2020

The Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross

Epistle: Gal. 2:16-20:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Gospel: Mark 8:34-38:



When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

The invitation addressed by our Lord and Savior to follow Him, in today's gospel reading, comes in the context of the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy and life-giving Cross: *"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."*

Last Sunday, our Lord Jesus Christ told us that the reason for His voluntary and redeeming Passion was God's infinite love for mankind: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."*

In other words, He carried His own Cross to Golgotha (although He had no sin) out of love for us. His supreme sacrifice is supposed to stir a desire within us to be with Him, to follow Him, to follow His example. Every person comes to Christ from a different direction, from their own world and condition, carrying their own cross, enduring their personal Golgotha, but the motivation is the same for everyone: our (burning) desire to be with Him and our (genuine) willingness to respond with our own level of love to His infinite love. This desire and willingness can be sustained only by understanding and knowing what the true priorities of our life are, by a constant reminder about the invisible (spiritual) aspect of our being, which is of a much more importance than the visible (material) one: *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

By accepting and embracing (not trying to escape or avoid) our personal Golgotha with faith and love, we should reach a point where we can say with the Apostle Paul, in today's Epistle reading: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

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!

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!

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!