

## December 13, 2020: The 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (The parable of the Great Supper)

### Epistle: Colossians 1:12-18:

*Give thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

### Gospel: Luke 14:16-24:



*Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot*

*come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’”*

What a great honor! What a privilege to be invited to the Lord's Supper! How can I show my thankfulness to the Almighty God for including my name on the list of those invited to the Supper? What have I done to deserve this?

Twelve days before the redeeming Feast of the Lord's Incarnation, the invitation of our Savior goes out to all people: *"Come, for all things are now ready!"* The emphasis is on the adverb **"now"**. What does this **"now"** mean? This is a reference to a specific time in history. It is the time St. Paul the apostle calls **"the fullness of time"** (Galatians 4:4). We can call it **"God's moment."** It is the time when God the Father decided to implement His eternal plan for the salvation of mankind; It is the time of the Lord's Nativity. It is "now" and not "then," before His Nativity, because "then" the door to the divine Supper/Banquet room was shut, the access was not possible. All those who lived before the first coming of the Lord, even the patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament fell asleep in the hope of hearing this invitation. Therefore, the Lord's invitation *"Come, for all things are now ready"* is addressed both to those who lived before His Nativity as well as to those who lived and will live after His Nativity. The Lord's invitation transcends time and generations. This being the case, its main characteristic is its permanence, meaning that it is just as valid today or a thousand of years from now as it was when Christ the Savior addressed it in person. It is a "now" addressed invitation.

The only question is this: How are we going to respond to the invitation? Are we going to invoke excuses like those from the above gospel reading? Do we get the message conveyed by this parable that by coming up with excuses we in fact exclude ourselves from the Lord's Supper? Even a delay could have the same tragic consequences because each day of inaction is a missed opportunity.

As Orthodox faithful we have the unique advantage of participating in the Lord's Supper (the Divine Liturgy) every Sunday and Feast day. And if we truly participate, meaning that if we prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Eucharist and strengthen our communion with Christ and His Church, not only do we respond positively to His invitation, but we actually pre-taste of His Supper here and now.

**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: wearing a mask, washing hands, social distancing, etc.**

**Thank you all and may God keep us safe!**

**We are live streaming the Liturgy**

As we continue to operate under these restrictions, we are live streaming the Divine Liturgy on You Tube. To access the Sunday Services, [click here](#).

**BAKED GOODS FOR CHRISTMAS**

Those who are interested to buy baked goods (cozonaci) for Christmas, please contact [Psa. Maria at 780-473-0029](tel:780-473-0029) to place your order [before December 15.](#)



**Special Services during Advent**

During the Christmas Fast, we'll have [Vespers, every Saturday at 5:00 PM.](#)

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

## **MEMBERSHIP / PLEDGE**

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.

We also encourage you to **renew your financial pledge** and be as generous as you can.

**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!