

**January 24, 2021: THE 31ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
(The healing of the blind man of Jericho)**

Epistle reading: I Tim. 1:15-17:

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

Gospel reading: Luke 18:35-43:



"Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may

receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God."

In the gospel reading of this Sunday, we learn about God's healing power conferred upon those who know how to pray. We also note some of the contrasts that existed in the society of that time, contrasts that are also present in our society: the blind man was poor ("*a certain blind man sat by the road begging*") in terms of material things but rich in faith and hope in God's mercy; although he was blind, he was able to feel/see the presence of the Lord and to understand the importance of the opportunity presented to him.

The persistence of the blind man paid off. He wasn't deterred by those who wanted to silence him, but he cried even louder: *"Then those who went before warned him that **he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"**"*

The main conclusion of this story is that we should use the opportunity presented to us here and now (this time and the life we have) to feel the presence of the Lord who is passing by and pray with persistence the prayer of the heart and mind: **"Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!"**

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Service Attendance

Due to the continuing State of Emergency, and the recent measures imposed by the provincial authorities, the maximum number of people attending Church services is 20.

In order to give more people a chance to attend, we ask those who attended last Sunday, to skip this upcoming Sunday, establishing some sort of a rotation system. Also, only one person from the same family, please!

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.

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!