

Sunday of Orthodoxy

John 1:43-51

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man (KJV)

We are blessed to be nourished by the reading of the Gospel in God's Holy Church. The heart, mind and soul are nourished with the reading of the Holy Gospel. The Holy Gospel enriches the lives of attentive listeners.

Today God's Church celebrates the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The image of the Lord Jesus Christ taking on human flesh is on believers' minds. Christ, His Mother and the Saints being depicted in icons is celebrated throughout the Orthodox world.

In the current Gospel, Jesus said unto Philip "Follow Me." Andrew, Peter and Nathaniel are also mentioned in the Gospel. Believers have responded to the invitation to follow Jesus Christ for more than twenty centuries.

The joy of experiencing Jesus Christ continues to the present day. Jesus Christ brings joy to the heart, mind and soul. During Great Lent, serious believers seek to increase the joy of Jesus Christ in their lives.

The Lenten journey to Pascha is now underway. Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving characterize the journey. Believers are expected to firmly repudiate sin in their lives and be more firmly immersed in the life in Christ.

God's Holy Church provides the nourishment for believers to grow in Christ. The Church offers additional services during Great Lent which foster and encourage repentance.

Ideally, believers complete Great Lent being more like and unified with Christ. The journey to Pascha brings about a transformation in believers. The heart, mind and soul are to be filled with the joy of Christ's Resurrection.

Unity with Christ is experienced through repentance, confession and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. The Church encourages repentance, confession and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

Reaching out in prayer enables believers to move forward in and with Christ. Christ is ever-present to embrace believers seeking cleansing of sins and peace in the heart, mind and soul.

In this world full of turmoil and uncertainty, lasting peace is found in the Lord Jesus Christ and in Christ's Church. The Lord Jesus Christ embodies peace, direction and nourishment.

The Church provides structure for the journey to Pascha. Serious believers live each day according to the structure and calendar of the Church. Serious believers do their best to live in Christ where they are located.

Prayer and fasting are possible in all locations. With God's help, believers are expected and very able to fast in thought, mind and soul. Every effort to repent and join with Christ during Great Lent will benefit the believer.

The journey to Pascha can seem long at this early point in Great Lent. The time will pass quickly. Each day is a blessing and an opportunity to increase the life in Christ.

The time of life is to be treasured and used wisely. Time is not repeated. The Lord gives believers life and life is to be lived to the glory of God. Believers find peace, purpose and direction for life in the Lord.

Great Lent helps believers put life in perspective and to refine the life in Christ. Repentance and confession enable the weight of sins to be lifted. Life in Christ is renewed in Communion.

Wisdom exists in recognizing the treasure of Great Lent and the immeasurable value of the Lenten journey. The anticipated joy of celebrating Pascha strengthens believers for the journey.

Much is to be learned from and about the Church and the Lord during the Lenten journey. The contents of the Divine services of Great Lent illumine the believer's heart, mind and soul.

The Lord is due gratitude for each moment of life. Thank God for the opportunity to repent, confess and to begin anew in Christ. The journey to Pascha is a collective journey for all believers in God's Holy Church.

Believers change for the better to the extent Great Lent is honored and by the investment made. The Church encourages all believers to increase in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Participating in the journey to Pascha is voluntary.

Believers' honoring Great Lent value every moment. With great anticipation serious believers look forward to the conclusion of Holy Week. The joy of experiencing Jesus Christ's Resurrection exceeds all joy.

The First Sunday of Great Lent. The Sunday of Orthodoxy. St. Theophilactus the Confessor, Bishop of Nikomedia. March 8/21, 2021.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic