



Храм Благовіщення Пречистої Діви Марії

Українська греко-католицька церква
1206 Valley Road, Melrose Park, PA 19027

Телефон: 215-635-1627 · Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ukrainianbvm>, Instagram: [@ukrainianbvm](https://www.instagram.com/ukrainianbvm); Web: <https://www.ukrainianbvm.org> о.Роман Олійник, парох · roliynyk75@gmail.com · cell. 215-776-1688

Таїнство сповіді: Вірні можуть приступити до Таїнства сповіді щосуботи з 4:00 Р.М. до 5 Р.М., в неділю з 8:00 А.М. до 9:00 А.М., перед-після Літургією та за вимогою. **Прийдімо до Христа щоб обмитися від наших гріхів та зцілитися від наших недуг. Він чекає на нас!**

Таїнства Хрещення та Подружжя – прошу звертатися завчасно до пароха, щоб гідно приготувитися до Таїнств.

РОЗКЛАД:

СУБОТА (6/27) – @9:30 АМ Літургія за померших @4 РМ – сповідь, @5:00 РМ – Літургія + КАТЕРИНИ ТА СТЕФАНА ОФІРА РОДИНИ КУШНІР

НЕДІЛЯ (6/28) – 5-неділя після Зіслання Св. Духа, Маттеу 8:28-9:1, @9:30 АМ – БОЖЕСТВЕННА ЛІТУРГІЯ ЗА ПАРАФІАН

НАСТУПНИЙ ТИЖДЕНЬ:

ПОНЕДІЛОК (6/29) – СВВ. ВЕРХОВНИХ АПОСТОЛІВ ПЕТРА І ПАВЛА, Матея 16:13-19, @9:30 АМ – Літургія + МАРІА НУД OFFERED BY MARIJA LESKIW; @6:30 РМ – Літургія та МОЛЕБЕН ДО НАЙСВЯТІШОГО СЕРЦЯ ХРИСТОВОГО

ВІВТОРОК (6/30) – СОБОР СВВ. СЛАВНИХ І ВСЕХВАЛЬНИХ ДВНАДЦЯТИ АПОСТОЛІВ, Марка 3:13-19, @9:30 АМ – Літургія + JAROSLAW FEDORIJCZUK OFFERED BY OKSANA & LEWKO STROCKIY AND MOLEBEN

СЕРЕДА (7/1) – СВВ. БУЗСР. І ЧУДОТВ. КОСМИ Й ДАМ'ЯНА, Мат. 13:31-36, @9:30 АМ – Літургія ЗА УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ВОЇНІВ

THURSDAY (7/2) – Положення чесної ризи Пресвятої Богородиці у Влахерії, Луки 10:38-42, 11:27-28, @9:30 АМ – Літургія – ПРИВАТНІ НАМІРЕННЯ

FRIDAY (7/3) – Св. мч. ЯКИНТА, Мат. 13:44-54, @6:30 РМ – Літургія в НАМІРЕННІ МАТЕРІВ В МОЛИТВІ

SATURDAY (7/4) – @7:00 АМ Літургія за померших; @4 РМ – сповіді, @5:00 РМ – Літургія - ПОДЯЧНА В ДЕНЬ НЕЗАЛЕЖНОСТІ США

SUNDAY (7/5) – 6-НЕДІЛЯ ПІСЛЯ ЗІСЛАННЯ СВ. ДУХА, МАТЕЯ 9:1-8, @9:30 AM – ЛІТУРГІЯ ЗА ПАРАФІЯН

ФІНАНСОВИЙ ЗВІТ : 6/20 – 6/21 WEEKLY OFFERING-\$1,503, HOLIDAYS - \$128, FLOWERS -\$112, UKRAINE AID - \$965, OTHER - \$15 **TOTAL COLLECTED- \$2,723**

ДЯКУЄМО ЗА ВАШУ ПІДТРИМКУ!

Просимо про молитву за воїнів, які захищають Україну від московської навали:
Назара, Володимира, Тараса, Гната, Володимира, Павла, Юрія, Олега, Віктора, Володимира, Руслана, Назара, Миколи, Артема, Сергія, Віталія, Миколу, Олександра, Василя, Максима, Юрія, Євгена, Богдана, Віктора, Ігора, Володимира, Мирослава, Андрія, Анатолія, Назара, Тараса, Михайла, Івана, Олега, Сергія, Владислава, Івана, Владислав, Івана

ВІДВІДИНИ ХВОРИХ- Ласкаво просимо повідомити пароха (215) 776-1688 про ваших рідних, знайомих, які хворіють і хотіли б посповідатися та отримати Таїнства Сповіді, Євхаристії та Єлеопомазаня. Парох готовий радо відвідати ваших рідних та близьких та підтримати в скрутний час.

Молимося за наших хворих та їхнє одужання: Slavomyra Bilas, Martha Moraczewski, Roksolana Narasymowuch, Бенджамін Карабін, Joseph Mannino, Роман Швед, Стефанії Іванович, о. Роберта, Тараса, Богдана, Оксану

Просимо зайти в нашу Facebook та instagram сторінку:

<https://www.facebook.com/ukrainianbvm>; Instagram: @ukrainianbvm Ми розміщуємо багато новин та повідомлень.

УРОДИНИ/СВЯТКОВІ ДНІ У ЛИПНІ: 7/9 PETER LABIAK, 7/9 ДАВИДКО ДІДУХ, 7/11 АНДРІЙ БАЗАРКО, 7/11 ХРИСТИНА ТЕРШАКОВЕЦЬ, 7/11 NICHOLAS STEFURAK, 7/13 SOPHIA ZALIPSKY, 7/16 ADRIANA SOLTYS, 7/17 DARKO LYLK, 7/20 NATALIA MYKIJEWYCZ, 7/25 DAVID WATTERS, 7/28 DAMON DANKO, 7/29 ALANYA WATTERS, 7/29 OKSANA ТКАШ.

Божого благословення на многая і благая літа! Якщо ми когось пропустили, прошу повідомте пароха.

Вічна л'ямпа офіра від родини Гіл в подяку за отриманні Божі ласки.

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ДОПОМОГА УКРАЇНІ:

Щиро вдячні за вашу допомогу для наших братів і сестер в Україні!

Зараз збираємо кошти на Літні табори для дітей зі сходу України (Запоріжжя. Дніпро, Київ – Ціль допомогти 10 дітям, які були травматизовані війною. Загалом потрібно зібрати - \$4,200.

Кошт реабілітації однієї дитини - \$30 в день; \$210 - кошт тижневого табору для 1 дитини; \$420 – кошт двотижневого табору для 1 дитини.

Ви можете виписати чек на парафію “Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church”, 1206 Valley Road, Melrose Park, PA 19027., Мемо: “UKRAINE AID – CHILDREN SUMMER CAMPS”.

Щиро вдячні за вашу жертвовність

ОГОЛОШЕННЯ ТА КАЛЕНДАР ПОДІЙ:

X XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXX **CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP IN COOPERATION WITH THE BASILIAN SISTERS – July 27– July 31.**

The camp will take place at the monastery of the sisters in Fox Chase. Children age: 7-14. Price: \$300 per child. If interested, please find registration forms in the back of the church or contact sister Dia 610-680-7962 or Sister Cornylia +380964362686 (Viber). We are looking for kitchen help during the camp.

X XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX **NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC PILGRIMAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 250 ANNIVERSARY OF THE US THAT WILL CONCLUDE IN PHILADELPHIA ON JULY 2-5, 2026.**

On Sunday, July 5, 2026, at 11:00am at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul there will be Solemn Mass on the occasion of the conclusion of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and the Independence Day that will be followed by the Eucharistic Procession from the Cathedral Basilica Saints Peter and Paul, downtown Philadelphia, to Saint John Neumann Shrine on the corner of Girard and N 5th Street (not far away from our cathedral). The procession is expected to depart from the Cathedral Basilica around 12:30pm and concludes around 1:30pm with the social to follow.

X XXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX **LITURGICAL PROPER**

Troparion and Kontakion: *Troparion (4): When the disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the glorious news of the resurrection and cast off the ancestral condemnation, they proudly told the apostles: Death has been plundered! Christ our God is risen, granting to the world great mercy. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

Kontakion (4): *My Savior and Deliverer from the grave, as God, has raised out of bondage the children of earth and shattered the gates of Hades; and as Master, He rose on the third day.*

Now and for ever and ever: Amen. Theotokion (4): *By your birth, O Immaculate One, Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And your people, redeemed from the guilt of their sins, celebrate as they cry out to you: The barren one gives birth to the Mother of God and the nourisher of our life.*

Prokimenon: Prokimenon (4): *How great are Your works, O Lord; You have made all things in wisdom.*

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, You are exceedingly great. Prokimenon (4): *How great are Your works, O Lord; You have made all things in wisdom. Epistle: Reading of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (Rom 10:1-10)*

Brethren: My heart's desire and prayer to God on their behalf is for salvation. I testify with regard to them that they have zeal for God, but it is not discerning. For, in their unawareness of the righteousness that comes from God and their attempt to establish their own [righteousness,] they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for the justification of everyone who has faith. Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from [the] law, "The one who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will go up into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will go down into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is the word of faith that we preach), for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.

Alleluia Verses: Verse (4): *Poise yourself and advance in triumph and reign in the cause of truth, and meekness, and justice. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

Verse (4): You have loved justice and hated iniquity. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel: (Mt 8:28-9:1) *At that time, when Jesus came to the other side, to the territory of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs who were coming from the tombs met him. They were so savage that no one could travel by that road. They cried out, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?" Some distance away a herd of many swine was feeding. The demons pleaded with him, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go then!" They came out and entered the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea where they drowned. The swineherds ran away, and when they came to the town they reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs.*

*Thereupon the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they begged him to leave their district. He entered a boat, made the crossing, and came into his own town. **Communion***

Verse: *Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

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Sunday's Gospel Commentary:

The Holy Gospel describes to us a dramatic visible clash of good and evil. Jesus Christ goes beyond the Promised Land and enters the region of the Gadarenes, which lay north of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew tells us that he was met by two demon-possessed men who were so fierce that no one could pass that way. The Evangelist notes that they lived in the tombs (cf. Mt 8:28).

Interestingly, this description of the visible manifestation of the power of evil is a proclamation of some other power. Today we hear about three types of power that emanate from Christ the Lord. This is the power of God's presence, the power of good that overcomes evil, and the power of God's word, the command by which Christ performs the miracle of man's liberation. The Holy Apostle Paul tells us that these three types of power are nothing other than the manifestation of one and the same reality, which we Christians call the Gospel, the good news. The good news is not some information that we sometimes keep only in our minds. It is an objective power that God sends to man for his liberation and salvation. That is why the Apostle Paul, who probably experienced the full power of the Gospel of Christ, declares that he is not ashamed of it, "for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (cf. Rom. 1:16). The Evangelist Matthew seems to reinforce with every detail that we find in today's Gospel reading the drama of this encounter and the greatness of God's power. First of all, he says that there were two of those demon-possessed men (it is likely that there were many more evil spirits possessing these men). Instead, Christ is alone. This is very strange, because we often see the Divine Teacher together with his disciples; we read that a great crowd followed him. The author describes that He himself got into a boat and swam to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The second detail is who attacks whom first? Usually, the weaker one acts in this way under the influence of fear, supposedly anticipating the threat that awaits him. Here, the attackers are the demoniacs who come out of the tombs. On the one hand, they recognize the power and authority of Christ, and on the other hand, they say that the end has come for them, their kingdom. Evil has been defeated. Therefore, the demoniacs ask: "What do we have to do with you, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29). Christ is silent. Then they turn to Him a second time, trying to save face, because they know that He came to cast them out and deliver them, to save a person: "If you cast us out, send us into that herd of pigs" (Matthew 8:31). However, the Lord speaks only one word in today's Gospel: "Go." Jesus Christ also uses it when he speaks of the call of workers to work in the vineyard: "You also go into my vineyard, and whatever is just I will give you" (Mt. 20:4). This verb carries the liberating power of good. After all, only good gives true freedom, which for a person means living and doing good! And this is what opened before the eyes of those shepherds who saw what happened. This is the third detail of the dramatic clash of evil and good. Evil always brings destruction and death with it: a herd of pigs immediately throw themselves off a cliff into the sea and perish there. And good is always the source and bearer of true freedom: the two demon-possessed become free, return to their city, to their people. Good always saves, returns a person to their dignity and freedom.

In today's reading from the Apostle, Saint Paul says: what we have just heard in the Gospel is not a thing of the past. That good news that was proclaimed here, in the temple, is now being fulfilled by the power and action of the Holy Spirit! For every time the Church of Christ proclaims the word of God, Christ is present among us in the Holy Sacraments. His presence is unbearable for the devil and his servants, for any bearer of evil.

This is the presence of victory. According to the apostle Paul, "with the heart one believes to justification, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation" (Rom. 10:10). It is so important to speak and proclaim this word of God that we have heard, to turn it into action! For it is we who today Christ wants to fill with His presence, He wants to invest good in us with His power. It is to us who will leave the temple that Christ's liberating words will be addressed: go, be bearers of My word, cast out the evil spirit, his servants, from that space of life to which the Lord God sends you.

There is one more detail that is extremely important for us, those who listen and receive the power of God's word today. This story ends with another meeting — the whole city came out to see Jesus Christ. Again, He is alone with the whole city. But what choice did the inhabitants of this land make? They saw that they had suffered losses — they had lost a herd of pigs. Perhaps people placed great hope in this herd, because it was the embodiment of their food security or was their property. As is known, those peoples considered the pig an unclean animal. It was, as it were, an icon of their passions, lusts, and sins. The Holy Fathers, indicating that people cherish their own sins, use the figurative expression that we feed our herd of pigs that we carry within ourselves.

The people were afraid and made their choice. They expelled Christ from their city.

This scene encourages everyone who hears this word of God today to choose which side to stand on - the side of good or evil, the power of the Lord or the slavery of the evil spirit, the good news of the Gospel of Christ or despair, fatigue, weakness that comes only from the weakness of a person tormented by evil, enslaved.

What choice will we make when we listen and stand now in the temple before the living Christ present among us? The Gospel invites us to be filled with that good, to transform that verb into our own action, to not tire of doing good.

At one time, Patriarch Lubomyr said this: every time you do good, you are very strong. If people are tired - like, for example, our people, who are resisting the bearers of death who have invaded our land - then what should they do? Do good! Even a small good deed is already a victory.

(His Beatitude Sviatoslav)



ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

#1206 VALLEY ROAD, MELROSE PARK, PA 19027

CHURCH TELEPHONE: 215-635-1627 • <https://www.facebook.com/ukrainianbvm>;

Instagram: [@ukrainianbvm](https://www.instagram.com/ukrainianbvm) Web: <https://www.ukrainianbvm.org/>

REV. ROMAN OLIINYK, PASTOR roliynyk75@gmail.com • CELL -215-776-1688

CONFESSIONS: 4:00 P.M. to 5 P.M. on Saturdays, 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. on Sundays before/after each Divine Liturgy or by appt. If you need to see a priest for a spiritual talk and help, please contact the pastor. **FOR SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATIONS AND MATRIMONY** PLEASE NOTIFY THE PASTOR IN ADVANCE.

SATURDAY (6/27) – @9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY FOR DECEASED; @4 PM – CONFESSIONS, @5:00 PM – DIVINE LITURGY + KATERYNA AND STEFAN OFFERED BY KUZHNIR FAMILY

SUNDAY (6/28) – FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, MATTHEW 8:28-9:1, @9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY FOR PARISHIONERS

NEXT WEEK CALENDAR

MONDAY (6/29) – THE HOLY, GLORIOUS APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL, MATTHEW 16:13-19, @9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY + MARIA HUD OFFERED BY MARIJA LESKIW; @6:30 PM – DIVINE LITURGY AND MOLEBEN TO CHRIST

TUESDAY (6/30) – THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY, GLORIOUS AND ALL-PRAISEWORTHY TWELVE APOSTLES, MARK 3:13-19, @9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY + JAROSLAW FEDORIJCZUK OFFERED BY OKSANA & LEWKO STROCKIY AND MOLEBEN

WEDNESDAY (7/1) – THE HOLY UNMERCENARIES AND WONDERWORKERS COSMAS AND DAMIAN, MAT. 13:31-36, @9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY FOR UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS

THURSDAY (7/2) – THE PLACING OF THE PRECIOUS ROBE OF OUR LADY THE MOTHER OF GOD, LUKE 10:38-42, 11:27-28, @9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY FOR SPECIAL INTENTION

FRIDAY (7/3) – THE HOLY MARTYR HYACINTH, MAT. 13:44-54, @6:30 PM – DIVINE LITURGY MOTHERS IN PRAYER GROUP INTENTIONS

SATURDAY (7/4) – @7 A:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY FOR DECEASED; @4 PM – CONFESSIONS, @5:00 PM – DIVINE LITURGY – THANKSGIVING FOR GOD’S GRACES RECEIVED

SUNDAY (7/5) – SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, MATTHEW 9:1-8, @9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY FOR PARISHIONERS

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Please pray for soldiers defending the freedom in Ukraine: Volodymyr, Nazar, Pavlo, Viktor, Taras, Michael (missing in action), Volodymyr, Hnat, Victor, Yuriy, Oleh, Victor, Volodymyr, Andrew, Ruslan, Rostyslav, Nazar, Vitaliy, Mykola, Oleksandr, Vasyl, Maksym, Yuriy, Evhen, Bohdan, Viktor, Ihor, Volodymyr, Hryhoriy, Myroslaw, Andriy, Myroslaw, Dmytro, Ivan, Oleh, Ivan, Serhiy, Vladyslav, Vladyslav.

Please remember to pray for the sick and homebound of our parish and those who have requested our prayers: Slavomyra Bilas, Martha Moraczewski, Roksolana Harasymowych, Benjamin Karabin, Joseph Manino, Roman Shwed, Stefania Iwanowicz, f.Robert Hitchens, Taras, Oksana, Bohdan

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FINANCIAL REPORT: 6/20 – 6/21 WEEKLY OFFERING-\$1,503, HOLIDAYS - \$128, FLOWERS -\$112, UKRAINE AID - \$965, OTHER - \$15 **TOTAL COLLECTED- \$2,723**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR STEWARDSHIP! MAY GOD BLESS YOU!

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VISITATION OF THE SICK - If you would like father Roman to visit a member of your family, please call him at (215) 776-1688 to arrange a visitation. It is our responsibility to make sure our loved ones will receive the Sacraments, especially in the time of illness.

PARISH FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM – JOIN OUR SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY TO STAY UPDATED WITH A WEALTH OF INFORMATION! CONNECT WITH US AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/UKRAINIANABVM AND FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM: [@UKRAINIANBVM](https://www.instagram.com/ukrainianabvm)

Birthdays/Anniversaries in July: 7/9 Peter Labiak, 7/9 Davyd Didukh, 7/11 Andrew Bazarko, 7/11 Xrystyna Tershakovec, 7/11 Nicholas Stefurak, 7/13 Sophia Zalipsky, 7/16 Adriana Soltys, 7/17 Darko Lylyk, 7/20 Natalia Mykijewycz, 7/25 David Watters, 7/28 Damon Danko, 7/29 Alanya Watters, 7/29 Oksana Tkach.

Eternal lamp offered by the Hill's family in memoriam of father and grandfather

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!!! HELPING UKRAINE – CHILDREN SUMMER REHABILITATION CAMPS

We announce a special Fundraising campaign: Goal to help 10 children from eastern and central part of Ukraine, affected by constant bombings, attend a summer rehabilitation camp for mental and spiritual healing. **It costs \$210 to support one child from eastern Ukraine to go for 1-week rehabilitation summer camp and \$420 for 2-weeks camp . Last year our parish sponsored 10 children. Let us help Ukrainian children again to help from the wounds of the war.**

You may write a check to "Annunciation of the BVM Ukrainian Catholic Church" with "Ukraine Aid – Children Summer Camps" in the memo and mail to 1206 Valley Rd, Melrose Park, PA 19027.

Thank you! May God bless you!

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP IN COOPERATION WITH THE BASILIAN SISTERS – July 27– July 31.

The camp will take place at the monastery of the sisters in Fox Chase. Children age: 7-14. Price: \$300 per child. If interested, please find registration forms in the back of the church or contact sister Dia 610-680-7962 or Sister Cornylia +380964362686 (Viber). We are looking for kitchen help during the camp.

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LITURGICAL PROPER

Troparion and Kontakion: *Troparion (4): When the disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the glorious news of the resurrection and cast off the ancestral condemnation, they proudly told the apostles: Death has been plundered! Christ our God is risen, granting to the world great mercy. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

Kontakion (4): *My Savior and Deliverer from the grave, as God, has raised out of bondage the children of earth and shattered the gates of Hades; and as Master, He rose on the third day.*

Now and for ever and ever: Amen. Theotokion (4): *By your birth, O Immaculate One, Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And your people, redeemed from the guilt of their sins, celebrate as they cry out to you: The barren one gives birth to the Mother of God and the nourisher of our life.*

Prokimenon: Prokimenon (4): *How great are Your works, O Lord; You have made all things in wisdom.*

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, You are exceedingly great. Prokimenon (4): How great are Your works, O Lord; You have made all things in wisdom. Epistle: Reading of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (Rom 10:1-10)

Brethren: My heart's desire and prayer to God on their behalf is for salvation. I testify with regard to them that they have zeal for God, but it is not discerning. For, in their unawareness of the righteousness that comes from God and their attempt to establish their own [righteousness,] they

did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for the justification of everyone who has faith. Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from [the] law, “The one who does these things will live by them.” But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will go up into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down) or ‘Who will go down into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is the word of faith that we preach), for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.

Alleluia Verses: Verse (4): *Poise yourself and advance in triumph and reign in the cause of truth, and meekness, and justice. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

Verse (4): You have loved justice and hated iniquity. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel: (Mt 8:28-9:1) *At that time, when Jesus came to the other side, to the territory of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs who were coming from the tombs met him. They were so savage that no one could travel by that road. They cried out, “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?” Some distance away a herd of many swine was feeding. The demons pleaded with him, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of swine.” And he said to them, “Go then!” They came out and entered the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea where they drowned. The swineherds ran away, and when they came to the town they reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs.*

*Thereupon the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they begged him to leave their district. He entered a boat, made the crossing, and came into his own town. **Communion***

Verse: *Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

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Sunday’s Gospel Commentary:

The Holy Gospel describes to us a dramatic visible clash of good and evil. Jesus Christ goes beyond the Promised Land and enters the region of the Gadarenes, which lay north of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew tells us that he was met by two demon-possessed men who were so fierce that no one could pass that way. The Evangelist notes that they lived in the tombs (cf. Mt 8:28). Interestingly, this description of the visible manifestation of the power of evil is a proclamation of some other power. Today we hear about three types of power that emanate from Christ the Lord. This is the power of God’s presence, the power of good that overcomes evil, and the power of God’s word, the command by which Christ performs the miracle of man’s liberation.

The Holy Apostle Paul tells us that these three types of power are nothing other than the manifestation of one and the same reality, which we Christians call the Gospel, the good news. The good news is not some information that we sometimes keep only in our minds. It is an objective power that God sends to man for his liberation and salvation. That is why the Apostle Paul, who probably experienced the full power of the Gospel of Christ, declares that he is not ashamed of it, “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (cf. Rom. 1:16). The Evangelist Matthew seems to reinforce with every detail that we find in today’s Gospel reading the drama of this encounter and the greatness of God’s power. First of all, he says that there were two of those demon-possessed men (it is likely that there were many more evil spirits possessing these men). Instead, Christ is alone. This is very strange, because we often see the Divine Teacher together with his disciples; we read that a great crowd followed him. The author describes that He himself got into a boat and swam to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The second detail is who attacks whom first? Usually, the weaker one acts in this way under the influence of fear, supposedly anticipating the threat that awaits him. Here, the attackers are the demoniacs who come out of the tombs. On the one hand, they recognize the power and authority of Christ, and on the other hand, they say that the end has come for them, their kingdom. Evil has been defeated. Therefore, the demoniacs ask: “What do we have to do with you, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:29). Christ is silent. Then they turn to Him a second time, trying to save face, because they know that He came to cast them out and deliver them, to save a person: “If you cast us out, send us into that herd of pigs” (Matthew 8:31). However, the Lord speaks only one word in today's Gospel: "Go." Jesus Christ also uses it when he speaks of the call of workers to work in the vineyard: "You also go into my vineyard, and whatever is just I will give you" (Mt. 20:4). This verb carries the liberating power of good. After all, only good gives true freedom, which for a person means living and doing good! And this is what opened before the eyes of those shepherds who saw what happened. This is the third detail of the dramatic clash of evil and good. Evil always brings destruction and death with it: a herd of pigs immediately throw themselves off a cliff into the sea and perish there. And good is always the source and bearer of true freedom: the two demon-possessed become free, return to their city, to their people. Good always saves, returns a person to their dignity and freedom.

In today's reading from the Apostle, Saint Paul says: what we have just heard in the Gospel is not a thing of the past. That good news that was proclaimed here, in the temple, is now being fulfilled by the power and action of the Holy Spirit! For every time the Church of Christ proclaims the word of God, Christ is present among us in the Holy Sacraments. His presence is unbearable for the devil and his servants, for any bearer of evil.

This is the presence of victory. According to the apostle Paul, “with the heart one believes to justification, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation” (Rom. 10:10). It is so important to speak and proclaim this word of God that we have heard, to turn it into action! For it is we who today Christ wants to fill with His presence, He wants to invest good in us with His power. It is to us who will leave the temple that Christ’s liberating words will be addressed: go, be bearers of My word, cast out the evil spirit, his servants, from that space of life to which the Lord God sends you.

There is one more detail that is extremely important for us, those who listen and receive the power of God’s word today. This story ends with another meeting — the whole city came out to see Jesus Christ. Again, He is alone with the whole city. But what choice did the inhabitants of this land make? They saw that they had suffered losses — they had lost a herd of pigs. Perhaps

people placed great hope in this herd, because it was the embodiment of their food security or was their property. As is known, those peoples considered the pig an unclean animal. It was, as it were, an icon of their passions, lusts, and sins. The Holy Fathers, indicating that people cherish their own sins, use the figurative expression that we feed our herd of pigs that we carry within ourselves.

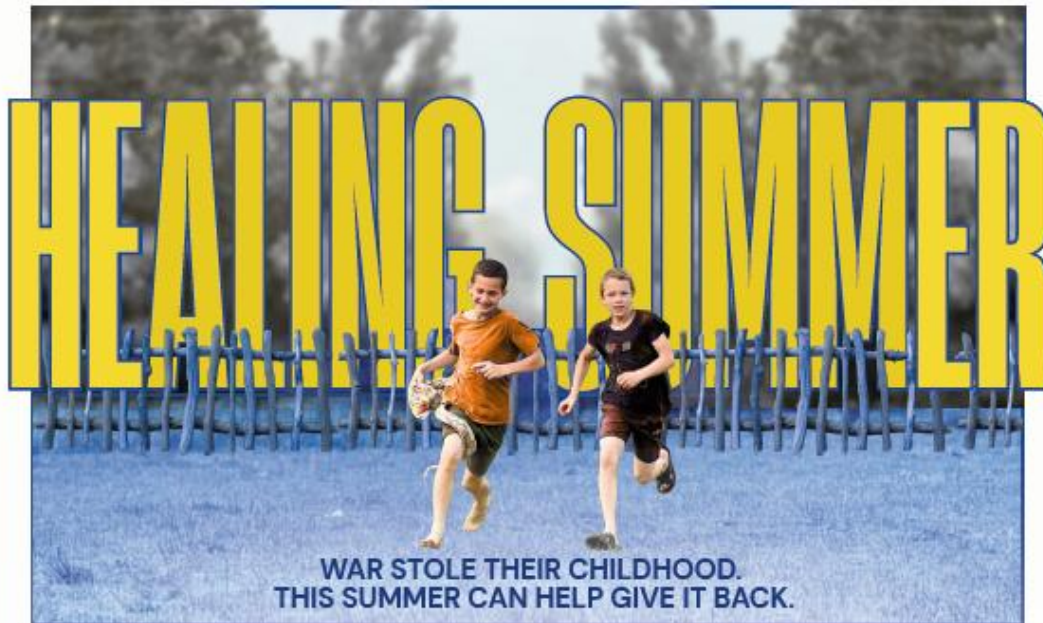
The people were afraid and made their choice. They expelled Christ from their city.

This scene encourages everyone who hears this word of God today to choose which side to stand on - the side of good or evil, the power of the Lord or the slavery of the evil spirit, the good news of the Gospel of Christ or despair, fatigue, weakness that comes only from the weakness of a person tormented by evil, enslaved.

What choice will we make when we listen and stand now in the temple before the living Christ present among us? The Gospel invites us to be filled with that good, to transform that verb into our own action, to not tire of doing good.

At one time, Patriarch Lubomyr said this: every time you do good, you are very strong. If people are tired - like, for example, our people, who are resisting the bearers of death who have invaded our land - then what should they do? Do good! Even a small good deed is already a victory.

(His Beatitude Sviatoslav)



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