

SS. PETER & PAUL

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Gospel Reading ~ Matthew 8:5-13

Epistle Reading ~ Romans 6:18-23

The Placing of the Honorable Robe of the Theotokos at Blachernæ

*This Week at a
Glance*

Sat, July 8th

4:00 pm - Great
Vespers

Sun, July 9th

9:00 am - The Hours
9:30 am - Divine
Liturgy

Gospel Meditation

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”. This is what last Sunday’s Gospel left with us.

On the day of Pentecost the Lord sent down upon His Church the Holy Spirit. Just as all of nature which, after it had been warmed up by the sun, began to grow flowers, plants, and fruits — so the Holy Church, upon receiving the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, began to grow spiritual flowers — her wonderful Saints.

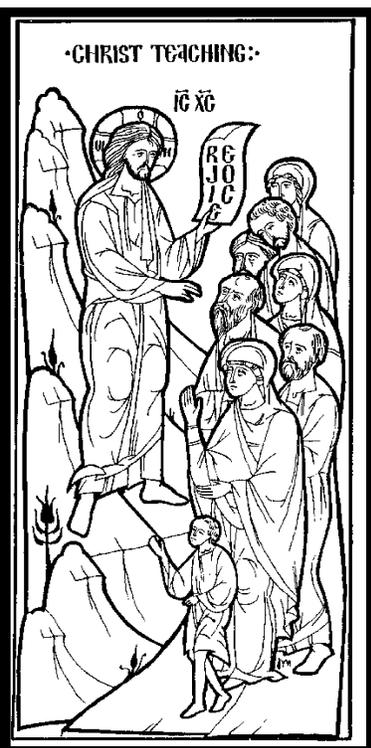
All the Gospel readings since the coming down of the Holy Spirit have been telling us what we must do to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven; what all the Saints did, how they sought and how they found “the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” We were given the commandments of the Lord. But today we are not given commandments, or a teaching. No, but rather life itself, a living example.

This Centurion had a servant. And this servant fell sick and was suffering terribly. And here the Centurion was told that among the Jews who were subject to him there was a remarkable man who had the supernatural power of healing. Now the Centurion was a pagan. He did not know Holy Scripture, he knew nothing about the Messianic expectations of the Jews. For him Christ was without doubt a great man, but nevertheless just a man, and subject to him besides. He could have sent for Him, summoned Him. But humility blots out all boundaries. His servant was in danger, and this man could help him.

The Centurion himself went to Christ. He went and asked: not for his wife, not for his son, not for his daughter, father or mother, but for a servant. And he asked a Jew, enslaved by Rome; a Roman citizen asked for mercy, as a slave would ask his master. And he brought his sorrow to Christ. He stood humbly and with bowed head waited for an answer. “I will come and heal him”, Christ quickly answered. How very simple. But look what happened here, to what incredible height the Centurion’s faith and humility rose. He stopped Christ: “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. Listen... “I am not worthy.” Now this is repentance. This is the same as if he had said: I am a sinner and you are a righteous man. “But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Only a word. Even the Lord was surprised at such faith. “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” And indeed the Centurion’s faith was so simple, so very humble. “I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh.” What do these words express? This is what: Thou art Lord over sickness and health, over life and death. Only say the word! One word!

And Christ said this word: “Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour”.

What a reward for humility! This is what humility can do! May the Lord grant us this humility of the Centurion.





Email Update

Due to security changes to my frjoseph@me.com email account, I will no longer be able to check this account on my phone. **Please change my contact email to: frjosephmccartney@gmail.com.**

Thank You!

To all the ladies of the parish, Thank you so very much for taking the time to bake and set up the wonderful desserts for Baby Nelson's reception. I cannot tell you how very much it was appreciated during this very sad and difficult time

~ The Fontanez Family

The Placing of the Honorable Robe of the Most Holy Mother of God at Blachernae

The Placing of the Venerable Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae: During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Great (457-474), the brothers Galbuis and Candidus, associates of the emperor, set out from Constantinople to Palestine to venerate the holy places. In a small settlement near Nazareth they stayed in the home of a certain old Jewish woman. In her house they noticed a room where many lamps were lit, incense burned, and sick people were gathered. When they asked her what the room contained, the pious woman did not want to give an answer for a long time. After persistent requests, she said that she had a very precious sacred item: the Robe of the Mother of God, which performed many miracles and healings. Before Her Dormition the Most Holy Virgin bequeathed one of her garments to a pious Jewish maiden, an ancestor of the old woman, instructing her to leave it to another virgin after her death. Thus, the Robe of the Mother of God was preserved in this family from generation to generation.

The jewelled chest, containing the sacred Robe, was transferred to Constantinople. Saint Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople (August 31), and the emperor Leo, having learned of the sacred treasure, were convinced of the incorrupt state of the holy Robe, and they certified its authenticity. At Blachernae, near the seacoast, a new church in honor of the Mother of God was constructed. On June 2, 458 Saint Gennadius transferred the sacred Robe into the Blachernae church with appropriate solemnity, placing it within a new reliquary.

Afterwards, the maphorion (i.e., the outer robe) of the Mother of God, and part of Her belt were also put into the reliquary with Her Robe. This circumstance also influenced the Orthodox iconography of the Feast, in connecting the two events: the Placing of the Robe, and the Placing of the Belt of the Mother of God in Blachernae. The Russian pilgrim Stephen of Novgorod, visiting Constantinople in about the year 1350, testifies: "We arrived at Blachernae, where the Robe lies upon an altar in a sealed reliquary."

Several outstanding works of Byzantine Church hymnology and homiletics are connected with the miracle of the Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae. There are two homilies of Saint Photius, one of which he preached within days of the siege of Constantinople, and the other soon after the departure of the Russian forces. Also associated with the campaign of Askold against Constantinople is the composition of a remarkable "Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos," which certain Church histories ascribe also to holy Patriarch Photius. This Akathist forms an integral part of the services of Praise to the Most Holy Theotokos. It is not only Byzantine sources that relate the events of the year 860, but also Russian historical chronicles.

