

Успіння Пресвятої Богородиці

Українська
Католицька Церква



Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God *Ukrainian Catholic Church*

Dormition District

Pastor: Rev. Fr. Peter Babej
Email: fr.babej@eeparchy.com
Telephone: To Be Determined
Emergencies: 780-993-8037
Website: dormition.eeparchy.com

Dormition Parish

15608-104 Ave. Edmonton, T5P-4G5
Telephone: T.B.D.
Website: dormition.eeparchy.com
Divine Liturgy: **Sundays, 10:00 am**

St. Nicholas Parish

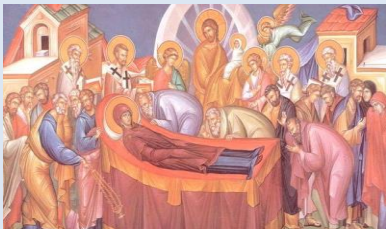
Carvel, Parkland County, AB

St. George Parish

Manly, Parkland County, AB

Holy Eucharist Parish

Cherhill, AB



Sunday, August 20th, 2023

12th Sunday After Pentecost

Tone 3. Post-feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God; the Holy Prophet Samuel (11th c. BC)

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DIVINE LITURGY

Troparia and Kontakia

Troparion, Tone 3: Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice,* for the Lord has done a mighty deed with His arm.* He trampled death by death. He became the first-born of the dead;* He saved us from the abyss of Hades* and granted great mercy to the world.

Troparion, Tone 1: In giving birth you retained your virginity,* in falling asleep you did not abandon the world, O Mother of God.* You passed into life, for you are the Mother of Life,* and by your prayers* you deliver our souls from death.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2: The tomb and death could not hold the Mother of God,* unceasing in her intercession and unfailing hope of patronage,* for, as the Mother of Life, she was transferred to life* by Him Who had dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

Prokeimenon, Tone 3

Sing to our God, sing; sing to our King, sing.

Verse: Clap your hands, all you nations; shout unto God with the voice of joy. (Psalm 46:7,2)

Epistle

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

A reading from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Brethren (brothers and sisters), I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received¹ and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believe in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received:² that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried,³ and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,⁴ and that He was seen by Cephas,⁵ then by the Twelve. After that

He was seen by over five hundred brethren⁶ at once, of whom the greater part, remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James,⁷ then by all the apostles.⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also,⁹ as by one born out of due time.

For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Апостол

1 Корінтян 15:1-11

До Корінтян перше послання святого апостола Павла читання.

Брати і сестри: Пригадую вам Євангеліє, яке я вам проповідував, яке ви й прийняли, в яким і

¹ **I declare to you the gospel... which also you received:** This refers to the transmission of Scripture and oral and liturgical tradition. A similar formula was used in rabbinical schools for the transfer of Jewish tradition from teacher to student from generation to generation.

² **For I delivered... which I also received:** How had Paul received his gospel? By direct experience with the Risen Lord, confirmed by his interactions with the original apostles and the whole Church. It is impossible to decipher what he learned where; in Paul's mind, his gospel forms a seamless whole. "To receive" designates the passing on of tradition.

³ **He was buried:** This important detail sets the Resurrection of Jesus over against His burial, indicating that his tomb was empty on Easter morning. The rising of Jesus from the grave is thus proclaimed as a physical and bodily event; it involved much more than the resuscitation of His corpse, but certainly nothing less than this. The Resurrection is a miracle of history that cannot be reduced to a metaphor for new life.

⁴ **The Scriptures:** Belief in a bodily resurrection can be traced back to the Old Testament. Several passages affirm that the Lord will raise the dead to live again (Isaiah 26:19; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Daniel 12:2; 2 Maccabees 7:9). Jesus was the first to benefit from these promises in advance of the messianic people united to Him.

⁵ **Appeared to Cephas:** Jesus appeared alive to Peter (Lk 24:34) and the rest of the apostles on Easter Sunday. Paul

catalogues a total of six appearances, most of which took place within the 40-day interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension. No mention is made to Christ's appearances to the holy women, possibly because a woman could not give admissible legal testimony in Jewish tradition.

⁶ **More than five hundred:** A public appearance of Jesus, possibly a reference to Jesus' appearance on a mountain in Galilee and the Great Commission (Mt 28:16-20). For Paul, such a large group of eyewitnesses adds to the credibility of the Resurrection, especially since some were still living and could verify the facts.

⁷ **James:** Known as "James the Lord's brother" (Gal 1:19), a kinsman of Jesus and the first appointed bishop of Jerusalem. Only here is it stated in Scripture that Christ appeared to him personally.

⁸ **Apostles:** Probably refers to a wider circle of disciples than the "Twelve," as is sometimes the case in the New Testament.

⁹ **He was seen by me also:** Paul both saw the risen Christ and received a missionary mandate from Him. His encounter with the resurrected Jesus in visible glory was unique compared with the other apostles, who saw Jesus alive before His Ascension into heaven. Paul felt undeserving of an apostolic mission in light of his former hostility to the Church.

стоїте. Ним ви також спасаетесь, коли тримаєте його таким, як я вам проповідував; інакше ви увірували надармо. Я бо передав вам найперше те, що й сам прийняв був: що Христос умер за наші гріхи, згідно з Писанням, що був похований, що воскрес третього дня за Писанням; що з'явився Кифі, потім дванадцятьом; опісля ж більш як п'ятистам братів разом, більшість яких живе й досі, а деякі померли; потім з'явився Якову, згодом усім апостолам; а наостанку всіх, немов якому недоноскові, з'явивсь і мені; бо я найменший з апостолів, я не достойний зватись апостолом, бо переслідував Церкву Божу. Благодаттю Божою я є тим, чим я є, і благодать його в мені не була марна; бож я працював більше всіх них, та не я, але благодать Божа, що зо мною. Чи то я, отже, чи то вони, так ми проповідуємо, і так ви увірували.

Alleluia, Tone 3

Verse: In You, O Lord, have I hoped that I may not be put to shame for ever. *Verse:* Be a protector unto me, O God, and a house of refuge to save me. *Verse:* Rise up, O Lord, to the place of Your rest, You and the ark of Your holiness.

Gospel

Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, a young man¹⁰ came to Jesus and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing

shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So, He said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘Honour your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”

The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect,¹¹ go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel¹² to go through the eye of a needle¹³ than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

When the disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

¹⁰ **A young man:** This man does not come to test Jesus, but to seek advice from one he considers no more than a good Teacher. Christ's response does not deny that He is God but is designed to lead the rich man to this knowledge.

¹¹ **To be perfect:** One must willingly sacrifice all and follow Christ. Nothing is gained unless this sacrifice is given freely. The specifics of how one follows Christ will be different for each person. Because wealth had such a grip on this rich man, his only hope was to sell and give away all his possessions. St. John Chrysostom tells us that giving away possessions is the least of Christ's instructions here; following Him in all things is a far greater and more difficult calling.

¹² **Easier for a camel:** A parable of impossibility. Jesus thus warns that extreme difficulties face the rich and threaten

their entrance into the kingdom. Only with God's help can the wealthy detach themselves from the love of money and material possessions. The young man's refusal to embrace poverty proves Jesus' point.

¹³**Eye of a needle:** Various interpretations have been suggested for the impossible image of a camel going through the eye of a needle: 1) the word was not *camel* but “rope”; or 2) the *eye of the needle* was a city gate through which a camel might barely squeeze if it were first unloaded of all its baggage, symbolizing wealth. Even the Talmud uses the expression “for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle.” Whatever the phrase refers to, it displays the impossibility of salvation for those who are attached to riches. This is clearly evidence by the disciples' response, “Who then can be saved?” Yet by God's grace, even what is impossible to man can come to pass.

В той час один юнак приступив до Ісуса і сказав: Учителю добрий! Що доброго маю чинити, щоб мати життя вічне? Ісус сказав до нього: Чому називаєш мене добрим? Ніхто не добрий, тільки один Бог. Як хочеш увійти в життя, додержуй заповідей. - Яких? - питає його. Ісус же до нього: Не вбивай, не чини перелюбу, не кради, не свідкуй криво, поважай батька-матір і люби ближнього твого, як себе самого. Каже юнак до нього: Все це я зберіг із малку. Чого мені ще бракує? - Якщо хочеш бути досконалий, сказав Ісус до нього, піди, продай, що маєш, дай бідним, і будеш мати скарб на небі; потім приходи і йди за мною. Почувши це слово, юнак відійшов смутний, мав бо велике майно. Тоді Ісус сказав до своїх учнів: Істинно кажу вам: Трудно багатому увійти в Царство Небесне. Іще кажу вам: Легше верблюдові пройти через вушко в голці, ніж багатому увійти в Царство Боже. Почувши це, учні здивувались вельми і сказали: Хто ж тоді може бути спасений? Ісус глянув на них пильно і мовив: У людей це неможливо. Богові - все можливо.

Hymn to the Mother of God

Verse: Seeing the pure one's falling asleep, angels marvelled in wonder how the Virgin could ascend from earth to heaven.

And the Irmos: O pure Virgin, in you are conquered the bounds of nature,* for childbirth remains virginal and death is betrothed to life.* Virgin after childbearing and alive after death, O Mother of God,* never cease to save your inheritance.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens;* praise Him in the highest (Psalm 148:1).* I will take the chalice of salvation;* and I will call upon the name of the Lord (Psalm 115:13).* Alleluia, alleluia,* alleluia.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

BULLETIN BY EMAIL – if you wish to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, please let us know by calling the parish office or send your request to fr.babej@eeparchy.com.

Dormition Parish

HAPPY BIRTHDAY & BEST WISHES – to Kyle Wirachowsky, Svetlana Wirachowsky, Mark Dashkewytch, Gregory Orysiuk, all who have celebrated birthdays or anniversaries this past week or will celebrate this upcoming week. May God bless you with health, happiness and peace! Mnohaya Lita!!!

MANY HAPPY YEARS – Congratulations and best wishes to the Semchyshyn family, on the occasion of the baptism and Christian Initiation of Jasmine Semchyshyn last Sunday. May God bless and grant many happy years!

MANY HAPPY YEARS – Congratulations and best wishes to Harman Virk, who was initiated into the Church through Baptism, Chrismation, and the Most Holy Eucharist, on Wednesday, August 17th. May God bless and grant many happy years!

CONFESSIONS – for the month of August, before the Divine Liturgy on Sundays (9:00 – 9:50 am). Beginning in September, Confession times will be as follows: Saturdays at 8:00 am, and at 8:00 pm (after Vespers); Sundays at 9:15 am (before Divine Liturgy). Also, by request or appointment.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – will take place this Wednesday, August 23, 6:30 pm. Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 5:30 pm.

PHOTOCOPY MACHINE – our old machine is obsolete and no longer serviceable. The cost to replace it with a new or used machine is approximately \$2,500 dollars. Any donations to offset the purchase cost would be greatly appreciated!

FRI. SEPT 1: BEGINNING OF NEW LITURGICAL YEAR – Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 7:00 am and 7:00 pm.

FRI. SEPT 8: FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS (MAJOR FEAST). Great Vespers and Lytia will be celebrated on Thursday, September 7, at 7 pm. On the day of the feast, Friday, September 8th, Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 7:00 am and 7:00 pm.

WEEKDAY DIVINE LITURGIES – beginning in September, Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 5:30 pm on Wednesdays; 7:00 am on Thursdays and Fridays, and Saturdays at 9:00 am.

GREAT VESPERS – beginning September 9th, Vespers will be celebrated on Saturdays at 7 pm.

SEPT 10: PARISH FEAST DAY (PRAZNYK) – will be celebrated on Sunday, September 10, with Festal Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am. Feast Day Dinner will take place immediately after the Liturgy, in the Parish Hall. Further information – in next Sunday's bulletin.

CATECHESIS FOR CHILDREN – The Program will begin on Sunday, September 17. Registration forms are available for pick-up today.

COFFEE SOCIAL – will resume on Sunday, September 17th, 2023.

PREPARATION FOR SOLEMN CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION – The Program will begin on Saturday, January 13, 2024, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. The program will continue every Saturday, to March 23, inclusive. Registration forms will be available on-line and for pick-up.

ADULT CATECHUMENATE – This is the program of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church for the initiation of adults into the Catholic Church, specifically, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. If anyone is interested in becoming Catholic through Baptism and/or Chrismation, please contact Fr. Peter Babej at 780-993-8037 or fr.babej@eeparchy.com.

SEPT 17: BLESSING OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND CATECHISTS – will take place on Sunday, September 17th, at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

SEPT 21: BIBLE STUDY – Will take place on Thursdays, beginning September 21, at 7:00 pm (one hour). The first book of study is GENESIS. The text and commentary that we will use as a

group is *The Book of Genesis (Ignatius Catholic Bible Series)*, by Curtis Mitch and Scott Hahn. This resource can be ordered on line from Ignatius Press (ignatius.com) or through Amazon. To register, please contact Fr. Peter Babej at fr.babej@eeparchy.com.

District Parishes

SEPT 17: CARVEL & MANLY: DIVINE LITURGY – at St. Nicholas Parish in Carvel or St. George Parish in Manly will be celebrated on the third Sunday of the month, beginning Sunday, September 17th. The liturgy time is still to be confirmed.

SEPT 17: BLESSING OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND CATECHISTS – will take place on Sunday, September 17th, at the end of the Divine Liturgy celebrated at St. Nicholas Parish in Carvel.

CHERRILL: DIVINE LITURGY – the annual Divine Liturgy and blessing of graves at the cemetery has been scheduled for Sunday, May 26, 2024. The liturgy time is still to be determined.

DISTRICT MEETING – the next district meeting of parish executives is tentatively scheduled for Monday, September 25, 7:00 PM.

Eparchy of Edmonton

LAY LEADERSHIP AND DIACONAL FORMATION – Interested in learning more about God, your faith, and the Church? The Eparchy of Edmonton is pleased to announce Year I (of a two-year program) of our Lay Leadership and Diaconate Formation Program in collaboration with Newman Theological College starting September 18, 2023. The Lay Leadership and Diaconal Formation Program is intended to provide opportunities for individuals to be formed for ministry in their parish and learn about their faith. Each course consists of 10 online sessions, spanning 5 weeks, requiring some 4 hours of work per week (2 hours per lesson). No exams. Cost of registration per course \$90.00 plus the cost of books. Sign up for an online course (or two or three) or even work towards a Certificate in Eastern Christian

Traditions at Newman Theological College. For more information or to register, call the Pastoral Centre at 780-424-5496, or visit Newman.edu/CCS, eeparchy.com/?s=Lay+Leadership OR contact Andrea Leader of Bernie Mandrusiak at: andrea.leader@eeparchy.com or bernadette.mandrusiak@eeparchy.com

СЛУЖБА БОЖА В БУДНІ – починаючи у вересні, Служба Божа відправиться о год. 7:00 ранку у четвер, п'ятницю, та о год. 9:00 ранку в суботу.

ВЕЛИКА ВЕЧІРНЯ – починаючи 9-го вересня, Велика Вечірня (дво-мовно) відправиться що-суботи, о год. 7:00 вечора.

ПАРАФІЯЛЬНИЙ ПРАЗНИК – відбудеться в неділю, 10-го вересня. Свята Літургія о год. 10:00 ранку, Спільний Обід – після Служби Божої, о год. 11:30 ранку, в парафіяльній залі.

КАТЕХИЗАЦІЯ ДЛЯ ДІТЕЙ – Програма почнеться в неділю, 17-го вересня, перед Службою Божою. Реєстраційні форми – у притворі до храму.

КАВА ТА СПІЛКУВАННЯ – після Служби Божої, в парафіяльній залі, що неділі, починаючи в неділю, 17-го вересня.

ПІДГОТОВКА ДО ПЕРШОЇ СВ. СПОВІДІ – почнеться в суботу, 14-го січня, від 1:00 до 3:00 год. п.п. Відтак, що суботи до 23 березня. Дальші інформації будуть подані у віснику або на нашому вебсайті.

КАТЕХУМЕНАТ УГКЦ – Це є програма УГКЦ для підготовки дорослих кандидатів до тайн Хрещення, Миропомазання та Євхаристії. Якщо хтось не хрещений і бажає стати членом Української Греко-Католицької Церкви, просимо звернутися до о. Петра на телефон 780-993-8037, або через електронну пошту, fr.babej@eeparchy.com.

БЛАГОСЛОВЕННЯ СТУДЕНТІВ ТА ВЧИТЕЛІВ – відбудеться в неділю, 17-го вересня, при кінці Святої Літургії.

БІБЛІЙНА НАУКА – почнеться в четвер, 21-го вересня, о год. 7:00 вечора. Програма відбуватиметься що четверга, в англійській мові. Почнемо науку з книгою Буття. Щоб зареєструватися або в справі інформації, просимо звернутися до о. Петра на тел. 780-993-8037 або fr.babej@eeparchy.com.

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ОГОЛОШЕННЯ

ВІСНИК ЕЛЕКТРОННОЮ ПОШТОЮ – якщо хтось бажає отримати парафіяльний вісник електронною поштою просимо звернутися до о. Петра на адресу fr.babej@eeparchy.com.

МНОГАЯ ЛІТА! – Складаємо найщиріші побажання Кайл Вірачовському, Світлані Вірачовській, Маркові Дашкевич, Григорію Орисюк, та всім, хто святкує свої уродини або річницю свого Подружжя. Нехай Господь Бог благословить щастям та здоров'ям, на многи і благі літа!

СВЯТА СПОВІДЬ – В неділю, перед Службою Божою, від год. 9:00 до 9:50 ранку. Від вересня: в неділю, перед Службою Божою; в суботу, о год. 8:00 ранку та о год. 8:00 вечора.

СХОДИНИ ПАРАФІЯЛЬНОЇ РАДИ – відбудуться в середу, 23-го серпня, о год. 6:30 вечора, в парафіяльній залі. Служба Божа відправиться в храмі о год. 5:30 п.п.

ФОТОКОПІЯЛЬНИЙ АПАРАТ – потребуємо новий апарат для парафіяльної канцелярії. Кошт: приблизно \$2,500 доларів. Щиро дякуємо за всі пожертви в цьому наміренні.

1 ВЕРЕСНЯ: НОВИЙ ЛІТУРГІЧНИЙ РІК – в цю першу п'ятницю місяця, 1-го вересня, Служба Божа відправиться о год. 7:00 ранку та о год. 7:00 вечора.

8 ВЕРЕСНЯ: РІЗДВО ПРЕСВЯТОЇ БОГОРОДИЦІ. Вечірня з Литією відправиться в четвер, 7-го вересня, о год. 7:00 вечора. В день свята, в п'ятницю, 8-го вересня, Служба Божа відправиться о год. 7:00 ранку, та о год. 7:00 вечора.

Jesus and the Rich Young Man

Fr. Phillip LeMasters

We all need a good wake-up call from time to time. It is easy to shut our eyes to the truth and to become blind to what is actually going on in our lives. On the question of where we stand in relation to God, it sometimes takes a real shock to wake us up. And once our eyes are opened a bit to truths we do not particularly like, we have to be careful not to run away in shame and despair.

The rich young ruler in today's gospel text had apparently fallen into the illusion that he had perfectly obeyed God's requirements. He must have had a very superficial understanding of them, of course, to say that he had already mastered them. We know from Christ's interpretation of the commandments in the Sermon on the Mount that they call us to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. And who can claim to have achieved that? The Lord shocked this fellow out of his illusions of holiness by giving him a commandment that he would find impossibly hard to obey. "Sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." The Savior gave him this test because the man loved his wealth so much. He went away in sorrow because his eyes had been opened to how he was devoted more to himself and his money than to God and his neighbors. The Lord did not condemn him, but told the surprised disciples that "with God all things are possible," even the salvation of someone so strongly tempted to the idolatry of wealth.

St. Paul had something in common with the superficial righteousness of the rich young ruler, for he had been a Pharisee who had persecuted the Church. He had been an expert in the kind of self-righteous, hypocritical legalism that Christ so clearly rejected. The Lord opened his eyes to the truth by blinding him on the road to Damascus, and He then empowered Paul for a ministry no one could have anticipated for a former Pharisee as the apostle to the Gentiles. The Lord had made Paul an apostle by miraculously appearing to him, even though Paul knew that he in no way deserved such

a high honor. Indeed, he referred to himself as the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). But instead of being paralyzed by shame, Paul accepted that "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain." He knew that whatever he accomplished was not somehow his own achievement, but the grace of God working through him.

St. Paul recognized that the grace he had received was not something he had earned or deserved in any way. Grace is a divine energy of our Lord; it is His healing mercy that we receive through faith, repentance, and love. To receive grace is to share in His life as much as is possible for human beings. When we think of our salvation in those terms, the focus moves from what we can accomplish by our own power and toward what our Lord is doing through us. Of course, we must cooperate with His gracious presence in our lives, but we must never fall into the fantasy of thinking that the healing of our souls is simply or even primarily about what we can accomplish by trying really hard according to our own designs.

St. Paul learned that decisively when the Lord appeared to him in blinding light on the road to Damascus. How could he have taken credit for such a miracle? And Paul must have wondered often how he had been blessed to move from being a persecutor of the Church to one of its greatest leaders. In today's epistle lesson, he reminds us to have the humility to accept the reality of our lives as he did. "But by the grace of God I am what I am" writes Paul. He knew that his life in Christ was not a reward for perfect behavior, but a sign of the Lord's great mercy even for the chief of sinners. Perhaps that is why, unlike the rich young ruler, Paul did not go away in sorrow when he recognized the weakness and brokenness of his soul. Instead, he used this awareness to open himself in humility to the Lord Who died and rose again in order to save people who could not save themselves.

If we pay attention at all to the prayers, services, teachings, and readings of the Church, we will know that we are nowhere near mastering what God requires of us. Our vocation to holiness is

infinite, for we are called to become radiant with the transforming energies of our Lord, shining like an iron left in the fire of the divine glory. And since the fullness of that transformation means being perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, this is obviously not a goal that we can ever say that we have met. Whenever we need a guard against self-righteousness, we do not have to look very hard in order to find it.

Many of us, however, do not struggle so much with self-righteousness as with despair. When we hear such high descriptions of a holy life or learn about the good example of the Saints, we may be overcome with shame at the brokenness of our lives and with a sense of hopelessness that we could ever become pleasing to God. We may become just like the rich young ruler who could not accept the severe tension between Christ's command and his own desires and habits.

To do so reflects a subtle form of pride, for shame is essentially the hurt pride of not being able to get over ourselves. It is a form of distorted self-love that cannot humbly accept that we all stand in constant need of the Lord's mercy as the chief of sinners. It is a refusal to forgive ourselves for not being perfect on our own terms. It is the obsession of judging ourselves by our own standards. And since the focus remains squarely upon us and not on Christ, it is not surprising that this kind of shame leads to despair. As long as we are paralyzed by self-love, we will never open ourselves to the healing mercies of our Lord. And there is no way that we can conquer the power of sin and death in our lives by our own ability.

St. Paul shows us a far better way to respond to our deep regret about our sins and personal brokenness. If anyone had reason to despair of finding healing in Christ, it would have been this former Pharisee and persecutor of the Church. But instead of judging himself by his own standards, Paul used the awareness of his grave sins to open himself to receive the unfathomable mercy of the Lord, which extended even to the likes of him. He gave up self-righteous illusions about making himself worthy and instead relied on the mercy of the One at work through him.

“With God, all things are possible,” even for someone like St. Paul to become radiant with holiness by grace. The same is true for the rich young rulers of the world, for those who have had their illusions of perfection shattered, and for those who cannot imagine how God's mercy could ever extend to them. To become like Paul, we must crucify our shame and despair, confessing with that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). That is really the only way to get over ourselves and in humility to become participants in His great victory over sin and death. If we choose obsession with our own failures instead of humble faith in the Lord's mercy, we turn away from the healing of our souls that the Savior extends to those who come to Him with faith, repentance, and love. How tragic it would be for us to reject Him out of the wounded pride that is our shame. How truly blessed it is to say with Paul that “by the grace of God I am what I am,” even as we trust in the divine mercy that we definitely do not deserve. That is the only way not to walk away in sorrow when we see the truth of where we stand before the Lord.

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THIS WEEK

SUNDAY, AUG. 20: 12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; Holy Prophet Samuel.

10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy (Bilingual); for all parishioners; for the health and intentions of the Hrubizna family.

Mon. Aug. 21: Apostle Thaddeus; Woman-Martyr Bassa
No Divine Services.

Tues. Aug. 22: Martyrs Agathonicus, Severian, & Others
No Divine Services.

Wed. Aug. 23: Martyr Lupus; Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons
5:30 PM – Divine Liturgy.
6:30 PM – Parish Council Meeting (Parish Hall).

Thurs. Aug. 24: Hieromartyr Eutyches
No Divine Services.

Fri. Aug. 25: Apostle Titus
No Divine Services.

Sat. Aug. 26: Martyrs Adrian and Natalia
No Divine Services.