

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 5:1-11

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him (KJV)

In the present Gospel Peter observed the abundance of fish caught when they listened to Jesus to try again. Peter realized and confessed his own sinfulness. Peter and those with him had caught no fish prior to listening to Jesus.

Observers examining themselves and carefully listening to Jesus Christ will feel personal sinfulness as did Simon Peter. The loving Jesus Christ did not reject Peter in his sinfulness.

Jesus welcomed the confessed sinner Peter and transformed Peter into a fisher of men. Peter, James and John became Holy Apostles. The present Gospel offers hope and new beginnings in life.

The Lord Jesus Christ has the power to enlist sinners and transform them into followers of Christ. The Holy Apostle Paul was a known persecutor of Christ. Paul was transformed and became a most well-known Apostle. (Acts 9:1-15)

Attentive listeners and active participants in the Divine services of the Church have their lives changed and transformed by Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews states: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb.13:8)

The Church is where sinners can enter with their sinfulness and repent. The Church welcomes persons desiring the new life in Christ. Jesus Christ welcomes sinners wanting to put sinfulness behind and to follow Him.

Just as Peter, James and John began anew in Christ, individuals coming into the Church have the opportunity to begin anew and put sin behind. Beginning anew in Christ is encouraged throughout life.

Every person, even the well-motivated, commits sins and offenses against God. Beginning anew is possible as long as there is life in the body and the mind is well-functioning.

Peter, James and John are convincing and lasting witnesses to the value of beginning anew in Christ. Readers of the New Testament learn more about their lives in Christ as Holy Apostles.

The present Gospel is proclaimed in the Church to benefit attentive listeners each year. The Church offers the nourishment enabling transformation to occur within believers.

The Divine Liturgy and other Divine services of the Church offer opportunities for change to active participants. God wants believers to be more than lukewarm in faith. (Rev.3:16)

Persons taking the Divine services of the Church and the teachings of the Church to heart have their lives changed for the better. We know from the Gospel with God all things are possible. (Mk.10:27)

The Holy Mysteries and teachings of the Church create the conditions for transformation in Christ and for seeking eternal life. The Kingdom of God is celebrated in the Divine Liturgy and Holy Mysteries of the Church.

The Divine services offer enriching experiences that reach to the depths of the heart, mind and soul. A person entering into the services with an open heart, mind and soul comes to know the Living, Loving and Forgiving God.

When sinfulness is brought to the Church in an act of repentance, the sins are cleansed by the Forgiving and Loving Christ. Repentant believers become “new” in God’s Holy Church.

Believers partaking of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ solidify their unity with Christ. The Precious Body and Blood of Christ move through the receiving believer and unity with Christ takes place.

Each Divine Liturgy is a new experience. Each Divine Liturgy is a continuation of the Mystical Supper inaugurated by Christ with His Holy Apostles. The Divine Liturgy is experienced with depth of heart, mind and soul.

The Divine Liturgy enriches not only the active participants. The effects of the Divine Liturgy reach into the community. Believers changed in the Divine Liturgy have an impact of the people met in daily life.

Communities benefit from each celebration of the Divine Liturgy in a parish church. Communities are enriched and improved by the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

The Divine Liturgy is a defense against sin and corruption permeating the world. Hope, life and purity arise from the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Today’s Gospel for the Eighteenth Sunday offers new life, hope and purity.

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Hieromartyr Dionsius the Areopagite. October 3/16, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

