

The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

Luke 14:16-24

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. (KJV)

The invitation to participate in the Great Supper exists at each Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated in parish churches each Sunday and feast days during the week. Attendance at the Divine Liturgy is completely voluntary.

Nourishment for soul comes from the contents of the Divine Liturgy. The Gospel and the Precious Body and Blood provide for complete unity with Jesus Christ.

Only a small number of Baptized believers attend all the Divine Liturgies during the year. Just as in the current Gospel, reasons are given not to attend the great supper.

The Lord desires for all persons to experience nourishment for the soul. The journey to the Lord's Kingdom can be long and arduous. The Divine Liturgy offers the nourishment and strength for the journey.

The Divine Liturgy offers wisdom for the heart, mind and soul. Unity with Jesus Christ is possible through the Divine Liturgy. Active participants in the Divine Liturgy have their lives renewed and strengthened.

The hunger in the soul is fully addressed with active participation in the Divine Liturgy. Earthly cares are set aside. Joy and thanksgiving abound in Jesus Christ. Believers enter and experience God's Kingdom during the Divine Liturgy.

Participating in the Divine Liturgy is an investment in God's Kingdom. Wise believers faithfully answer the invitation to be in the Divine Liturgy. When circumstances prevent attendance, absence from the Liturgy is keenly felt.

Earthly life requires choices at every moment. Choosing to say "yes" to the Lord God keeps the believer on the path to the Kingdom. Perils and temptations are everywhere to take the believer away from the Lord God.

Saying "no" to God's invitations puts the soul in peril. Saying "no" denies the soul of the needed nourishment and strength. Joy is absent in life without the Divine Liturgy.

Without the unity in Christ experienced in the Divine Liturgy, the Christian life fails to mature. God's Holy Church constantly offers the opportunity for believers to repent.

Believers go through stages in life from birth to departure from earthly life. The Divine Liturgy provides the roadway to the Kingdom of Heaven which begins at Holy Baptism.

The Holy Mysteries of the Church keep the believer focused and traveling on the narrow path to the Kingdom. The present Gospel serves for believers to personally examine their responses to the Lord and make any corrections required.

Saying "no" to the Lord is dangerous to the soul. Parents set examples for their sons and daughters by saying "yes" to Christ's invitations. Husbands and wives strengthen their marriage by saying "yes" to Christ's teachings and invitations.

Sons and daughters saying "yes" to Christ please their parents. Daily life improves when the family says "yes" to Christ on a collective basis. Parishes are stronger when the Divine Liturgy is well attended.

Communities are enriched when parish churches have well-attended Divine Liturgies. Neighborhoods improve when the parish church celebrates the Divine Liturgy.

Darkness in the world recedes with each celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Hope eradicates despair when the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. The Divine Liturgy is the best place to be during earthly life.

Thank God for the Divine Liturgy. Thank God for the martyrs, saints and faithful through the centuries celebrating the Divine Liturgy during periods of persecution and hardships.

The Divine Liturgy is not to be taken for granted. The Divine Liturgy is to be cherished and honored to the depths of the soul. The Lord God is alive in the Divine Liturgy.

Believers constantly learn and come to know God through the Divine Liturgy. Grateful believers give thanks to God for the Divine Liturgy.

Today is the day to thank God and be in the Divine Liturgy. Saying "yes" to God's invitations leads to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. Saying "no" results in a life without joy. Thank God for the freedom to choose and to say "yes".

The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. Venerable Daniel the Stylite. Serbian Mothers' Day. December 11/24, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic.