

## The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 22:1-14

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

(KJV)

## Sunday after the Exaltation of the Precious Life-giving Cross

Mark 8:34-9:1

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power. Go (KJV)

God's Holy Church is celebrating the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Life-giving Cross. This celebration will continue until Friday. The Cross deserves to be in the forefront of each believer's heart, mind and soul.

Jesus' love for each person of each century was demonstrated and validated when He voluntarily went to the Cross. Jesus defeated death and rose from the Tomb. His Resurrection is the enduring hope for all circumstances in life.

Each person is expected to follow Jesus Christ in picking up his or her personal cross in life. Each person is to responsibly meet the difficulties in life with help and strength from Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ died voluntarily on the Cross. He defeated death. He gave believers reason to place their hope and trust in Him. Jesus Christ points the way to the Kingdom and eternal life.

Each person is invited to the feast at each Divine Liturgy. At the Divine Liturgy, believers unite with and experience Jesus Christ by partaking of His Precious Body and Blood.

Many individuals decline the invitation to participate in the feast at each Divine Liturgy. Excuses are often rendered as to why church is not attended. Reasons are fabricated to not participate in Communion.

Jesus' love and patience are immeasurable and enduring. Jesus continues to invite individuals in each century. Jesus Christ continues to be alive in God's Holy Church.

Jesus welcomes individuals seeking to repent of their sins. Believers that once opposed the Church are welcome to repent and return. The Church is not only for people facing an emergency in their personal circumstances.

The Church is for life, all of life, from conception to eternal life. Life's meaning is defined and understood within Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the way to the Divine Kingdom and eternal life.

The passing centuries has not resulted in the cancelling of the invitation to draw near to Jesus Christ. Jesus' arms are outstretched to welcome each person courageous enough to answer "yes" to the invitation to draw near.

The hunger in the soul is authentically nourished in Christ. The Gospel and the Precious Body and Blood of Christ nourish the heart, mind and soul. The Church offers each person all that is needed in life.

Efforts to feed the soul on other than Jesus Christ leads to dissatisfaction. Worldly efforts to feed the soul are artificial substitutes. They are inadequate and are soon exposed.

In Christ believers find certainty and peace. In Christ believers experience love and hope. In Christ believers realize they are at home. The Church welcomes each life from conception. The Church celebrates and honors the life in Christ forever.

Be thankful today for Christ's invitation to draw near and participate in the feast offered at each Divine Liturgy. Thank God for always having a standing invitation to draw near.

Show gratitude by saying "yes" to Christ at every moment of life. Say 'no' to the perils to the soul. Embrace Jesus Christ with all the strength of the heart, mind and soul.

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-The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Exaltation of the Precious Life-giving Cross. Holy Great martyr Euphemia. Venerable Hermit Dorotheus. St. Cyprian of Kiev. September 16/29, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic