

## The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Mt.21:33-42

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? (KJV)

Sunday before the Exaltation of the Precious Cross

John 3:13-17

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (KJV)

Yesterday God's Holy Church celebrated the Nativity of the Mother of God. This celebration of Mary's Nativity continues in the Church until Wednesday. Believers benefit by reflecting deeply on the birth of the Mother of God.

The birth of the Mother of God set in motion the events leading to the birth of the Christ Child. Believers enrich their lives when considering how highly honored the Mother of God is to be chosen from all women of all centuries.

The Virgin Mary was honored to give birth to the Christ-Child. She has a lasting presence in God's Holy Church. The Mother of God is ever accessible to believers in prayer. Miracles continue to be attributed to her.

There is a place for the Mother of God in the hearts and minds of all believers. Being conscious of the Mother of God enables believers to focus on her purity and the importance of purity in daily life.

The Mother of God is a fervent intercessor before the Lord for believers turning to her in prayer. Wise believers cherish their relationship with the Mother of God and keep her firmly in mind.

Today also is the Sunday before the Elevation of the Precious Life-giving Cross. The Feast of the Elevation of the Precious Life-giving Cross will be celebrated this coming Friday.

The Lord Jesus Christ's love for each person of each century was verified and validated when He voluntarily ascended the Cross. St. John's Gospel for today states believers in Jesus Christ experience eternal life.

God's Kingdom and eternal life are goals for believers established at Holy Baptism. Every thought and action in daily life are to be measured, weighed and considered as they apply to the goals of seeking the Kingdom and eternal life.

The world is filled with peril and confusion. Distortions, lies and violence abound. The threat of war exists in several areas. Jesus Christ provides vision, certainty and direction in the midst of today's uncertain world.

Jesus Christ offers hope. He offers eternal life. Believers are challenged to be resolute in focusing on Christ and following the narrow path to the Kingdom. Firmness of mind and intentions are necessary to navigate life's daily perils.

The Church brings the Gospel to believers throughout the year. The Gospel nourishes and strengthens believers in the journey from the baptismal font to the Kingdom of God. Each person chooses the degree to take the Gospel to heart.

The length of life's journey is uncertain. Jesus Christ provides certainty throughout life for the focused heart, mind and soul. Jesus Christ defeated death. Jesus Christ is the Light in the darkest moments of life.

Mary, the Mother of God, had the immeasurable joy to be the Birth-giver of the Christ-Child. She experienced the pain of seeing Jesus on the Cross, She was blessed to know the joy of Jesus' defeat of death and His Resurrection.

The Divine Liturgy today is a celebration of Jesus' Resurrection. Each Divine Liturgy is a time of great hope and joy. The Divine Liturgy is a certain preparation as the Church moves toward Jesus Christ's Second Coming.

Believers remaining vigilant and focused experience Christ's reassuring presence in the journey to the Kingdom. Jesus Christ's presence is manifested for believers with eyes to see.

The Cross is the sign of ultimate victory over death. The Cross revealed Jesus' power over death. Jesus' victory over death gives believers indomitable reason to cling to Jesus Christ and follow Him throughout life.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God whose Nativity is being celebrated at this time, may we focus on the power of the Life-giving Cross and Christ's Victory over death all the days of our lives.

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The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Mother of God. Sunday before the Elevation of the Precious Cross. Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna. Holy Martyr Severian. September 9/22. 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic