

The Sunday after Theophany
Matthew 4:12-17

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (KJV)

The Gospel of St. Matthew has been proclaimed and preserved in the Church for centuries. The importance of St. Matthew's Gospel in the Church is worthy of each believer's attention and consideration.

Personal life is enriched when the Gospel is read as a regular part of daily life. Reading the Gospel on a regular basis nourishes the heart, mind and soul. The Gospel offers sound direction for daily living.

Today it is worthy to acknowledge that St. John the Baptist was in prison. If we go back through the centuries, we note that many saints and good people were in prison in addition to those who were clearly criminals.

St. Matthew's Gospel describing the Great and Last Judgment describes the importance of visiting the imprisoned. Jesus Christ is identified with the imprisoned according to St. Matthew's Gospel. (Mt. 25:31-46)

Today's Gospel references the Holy Prophet Isaiah. The Creed embraced by believers at Baptism and recited at each Divine Liturgy expresses belief the Holy Spirit spoke through the Prophets.

St. Luke's Gospel (16:19-31) verifies the value of being attentive to Moses and the Prophets. St. Luke's Gospel was clear if the rich man's brothers were not mindful of Moses and the Prophets they will not benefit from one rising from the dead.

Beginning today and during the remaining time of earthly life, believers will decide how they will spend the time of life. The time of life comes only once and is not repeated.

Each moment is an opportunity to invest in the Kingdom of God. The Holy Gospel instructs believers how to invest in and travel the path to the Kingdom. Today's Gospel talks about the Light of Christ.

The Light of Christ illumines the path to the Kingdom. Each person determines the degree they will embrace and follow Jesus Christ to the Kingdom. Learning about Christ and following Jesus Christ is completely voluntary.

The Church offers unlimited opportunities for each moment of each day to learn, follow and grow in Jesus Christ. Deliberate effort is required to seriously follow Jesus Christ on the narrow path to the Kingdom.

Serious effort is involved in any undertaking that is worthwhile. Following Jesus Christ in a serious way is compatible with the good in daily life. Jesus Christ is the Personification of Good.

When a person does good and pursues good with Christ in mind, the person embraces Jesus Christ. Believers can learn to live on a daily basis in Christ by being attentive to the teachings and life of the Church.

Jesus Christ' Baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist is a major feast in the Church. Major feasts are instructional and transformational. Believers' lives are transformed through their active and attentive participation in the feasts.

The Divine Liturgy is a part of all major feasts. Believers experience and are united with Jesus Christ in the Divine Liturgy. The Light of Christ overcomes darkness. The Light of Christ triumphs over the darkness of death.

The Light of Christ illumines hearts, minds and souls. Jesus Christ wipes out the sins of believers choosing to repent. The current Gospel references Jesus' call for repentance because the Kingdom is at hand.

Each person chooses the goals of life. Believers embrace God's Kingdom as the goal at Baptism. God's Kingdom is to be pursued daily from the time of Baptism until departure from this life.

Remaining conscious of the goal of the Kingdom each day keeps the narrow path to the Kingdom in mind. Repentance is required when a person departs from the narrow path. Jesus is present to offer forgiveness when repentance occurs.

The joy of the Feast of Theophany resounds in the Church today. Serbian Orthodox Christians are indebted to St. Sava today and every day for being inspirational in their lives through the centuries.

St. Sava is an enduring example of faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The Church of St. Sava has endured endless persecution to the present day. St. Sava's Church has triumphed due to the Light of Christ.

Today be mindful and rejoice at Jesus Christ's Baptism in the Jordan. Thank God for St. Sava being the formidable example in Jesus Christ benefittig believers throughout the world.

The Sunday after Theophany. Holy Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus. Apodasis of Theophany. January 13/26, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

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