

## The Sunday of Orthodoxy

John 1:43-51

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man (KJV)

### The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Finding of the Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist

Mt 11:2-15

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (KJV)

The first week of Great Lent is complete. The journey to Holy Week and Pascha continues for believers. The focus on the condition and care of the soul are important in the Lenten journey.

Today the Church rejoices in the presence and restoration of icons in the Church. Believers rejoice that Jesus Christ took on human flesh. Believers benefit from the presence of icons depicting Jesus, the Mother of God and the Saints.

The Lenten journey is undertaken by believers in the Church. Participation is voluntary and expected. Each person chooses the degree to invest. Each person benefits proportionately to the investment.

The Church encourages increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving during the period of Great Lent. Lenten services focus on repentance and renewal in Jesus Christ. The church services address hunger existing in the believer's soul.

The daily services challenge the believer to honest self-examination. Each believer determines the degree he or she is interested in renewal in Christ. Wise believers welcome Great Lent and embrace prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Initially Great Lent may seem to be very long. The time will go fast. Each day is an opportunity to invest in the Kingdom of God. Each day is an opportunity to care for the soul.

The Church is celebrating the findings of the Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist today. Believers benefit from considering the special place St. John has in the life of Jesus Christ.

St. John's Gospel for the Sunday of Orthodoxy mentions Philip and Nathaniel. Philip and Nathaniel also both had direct experience with Jesus for believers to carefully consider.

Believers with eyes to see and ears to hear will recognize Jesus Christ's Divine presence in daily life. The world is renewed each Spring. Believers are renewed in the Lenten journey.

The journey to Holy Week and Pascha occurs each year and will continue until Jesus Christ's Great and Glorious Second Coming. Believers need the benefit of renewal in Christ throughout life.

Baptism is the important beginning for believers. The journey to God's Kingdom continues for the remaining days of life. Believers need not journey alone. Jesus, the Mother of God and the Saints are present to accompany believers.

Rejoice today! Rejoice over the presence of icons in the Church. Rejoice for the opportunity to repent. Rejoice for the love of Jesus Christ. Be grateful for the presence of the Mother of God and the Saints through the centuries.

Increased prayer and fasting help each believer to address the condition of his or her own soul. Holy Confession and Communion unite and reunite believers with Jesus Christ.

Almsgiving is a way to help the needy with whom Jesus Christ identifies. (Mt. 25:31-46) Joy increases in the Lenten journey as tarnish is removed from the soul and the brightness of Christ shines within repentant believers.

May the remaining days of Great Lent be beneficial for each believer. The Lord Jesus Christ welcomes each person drawing near in faith. Now is the time to repent and draw near to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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The Sunday of Orthodoxy. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Finding of the Honorable Head of St. John the Baptist. February 24/March 9, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.  
Father Rodney Torbic