

The Sunday of the Last Judgment

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (KJV)

For many years the present Gospel was my favorite. The imprisoned did not always receive much attention. Other than the Gospel being read, parishes for years did not give much attention to prisoners,

For nearly three decades I was dealing with incarcerated individuals. It was and always is comforting to know the Lord Jesus Christ is identified with the imprisoned.

Orthodox parishes in America are now giving greater attention to the imprisoned. More parishes are reaching out to the jails and prisoners located near them. Prison ministry programs are getting attention in seminaries.

The way the imprisoned are treated affects how they behave while incarcerated and when and if released. Each human being including the imprisoned is created in the image and likeness of God. (Gen.1:27, Gen.5:1)

The imprisoned have families. Prisoners' families are affected by their incarceration. Families of the imprisoned are affected by how they are treated in parishes.

Correctional officers in jails and prisons do important work. Jail and prison work is very stressful. The Church offers nourishment and hope to counter the daily stress for staff working with the incarcerated.

Crime victims benefit from the healing that is possible in parish churches. Being a crime victim is traumatic and has lasting effects. The parish church can go a long way in healing victims.

Today's Gospel is about basic Christian love. The way each person is treated is a treatment of Jesus Christ. Prisoners, their families, crime victims and correctional staff benefit from God's Holy Church

We all experience poverty in the way we lead our Christian lives. We are all prisoners of sin more often than we realize. Our souls seriously hunger for the nourishment found in Jesus Christ.

We are exposed to the corrosive elements of the world. We benefit from the protective garments available in the Church. We all thirst for the Living Water coming from the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns at the Great and Glorious Second Coming, we all will stand before Him. We will answer for our relationships with each person in each day of our lives.

Our thoughts and our actions are known to the Lord God. Our thoughts and our actions manifest themselves in our daily relationships. Jesus Christ will weigh how we have related with Him in each person we meet.

Today's Gospel requires serious attention. Being a Christian involves the great responsibility of living in ways pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. We take on the responsibility to follow Jesus Christ at Baptism.

Believers are to be fully attentive and considerate in their personal daily relationships. Personal attitudes, thoughts and actions factor into the Great and Last Judgment. Jesus Christ will weigh and evaluate them.

Repentance is possible and beneficial throughout life. God is good and merciful when the believer seeks to repent and repudiate ill thoughts or errors in relationships. The time to repent is before the Last Judgment.

God's forgiveness is a model for personal forgiveness. The heart, mind and soul filled with Jesus Christ manifests Christ's love and love for Christ in each person.

Great Lent is on the horizon. The time is at hand to ready the self for the life-renewing journey. Prepare to enter Great Lent with joy. Seek God's Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life each day.

May the personal relationships of earthly life be consistent with the Christ's teachings in the Gospel. May the standards embraced in our hearts, minds and souls be those of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Meat-fare Sunday, The Sunday of the Last Judgment. Holy Hieromartyr Harlambos.
February 10/23, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania Father Rodney Torbic