

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Galatians 2: 16-20

Brethren: Knowing that a man is not justified by legal observance but by faith in Jesus Christ, we too have believed in him in order to be justified by faith in Christ, not by observance of the law; for by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we are shown to be sinners, does that mean that Christ is encouraging sin? Unthinkable! If, however, I were to build up the very things I had demolished, I should then indeed be a transgressor. It was through the law that I died to the law, to live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me. I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Hebrews 11: 9-10, 17-23, and 32-40

Brethren: By faith Abraham sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose designer and maker is God.

•By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac; he who had received the promises was ready to sacrifice his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your descendants be called." He reasoned that God was able to raise from the dead, and so he received Isaac back as a symbol. By faith Isaac invoked for Jacob and Esau blessings that were still to be.

By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped God, leaning on the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, near the end of his life, spoke of the Exodus of the Israelites, and gave instructions about his burial. By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after his birth, thereby disregarding the king's edict, because they saw that he was a beautiful child.

•What more shall I recount? I have no time to tell of Gideon (GI-dee-un) , Barak (Bar-ock), Samson (Sam-son) , Jephthah (Jef-thah) , of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, did what was just, obtained the promises; they broke the jaws of lions, put out raging fires, escaped the devouring sword; though weak they were made powerful, became strong in battle, and turned back foreign invaders. Women received back their dead through resurrection. Others were tortured and would not receive deliverance, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Still others endured mockery, scourging, even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, sawed in two, put to death at sword's point; they went about garbed in the skins of sheep or goats, needy, afflicted, tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered about in deserts and on mountains, they dwelt in caves and in holes of the earth. Yet despite the fact that all of these were approved because of their faith, they did not obtain what had been promised. God had made a better plan, a plan which included us. Without us, they were not to be made perfect.

Priest: Wisdom!

Isaiah

Priest: Premudrost'!

Reader: A reading from the book of N.

Reader: *(imja)* čtenije.

Priest: Let us be attentive!

Priest: Voňmim!

Reader: *(gives the reading)*

Reader: *(gives the reading)*

See, my servant shall prosper,
he shall be raised high and greatly exalted.
Even as many were amazed at him—
so marred was his look beyond that of man,
and his appearance beyond that of mortals—
So shall he startle many nations,
because of him kings shall stand speechless;
For those who have not been told shall see,
those who have not heard shall ponder it.
Who would believe what we have heard?
To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
He grew up like a sapling before him,
like a shoot from the parched earth;
There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him,
nor appearance that would attract us to him.
He was spurned and avoided by men,
a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity,
One of those from whom men hide their faces,
spurned, and we held him in no esteem.
Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,
our suffering that he endured,
While we thought of him as stricken,
as one smitten by God and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our offenses,
crushed for our sins,
Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,
by his stripes we were healed.
We had all gone astray like sheep,
each following his own way;

But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.
Though he was harshly treated,
 he submitted and opened not his mouth;
Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers,
 he was silent and opened not his mouth.
Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,
 and who would have thought any more of his destiny?
When he was cut off from the land of the living,
 and smitten for the sin of his people,
 A grave was assigned him among the wicked
 and a burial place with evildoers,
 Though he had done no wrong
 nor spoken any falsehood.
But the Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.
If he gives his life as an offering for sin,
 he shall see his descendants in a long life,
 and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him.
Because of his affliction
 he shall see the light in fullness of days;
Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many,
 and their guilt he shall bear.
Therefore I will give him his portion among the great,
 and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,
 Because he surrendered himself to death
 and was counted among the wicked;
And he shall take away the sins of many,
 and win pardon for their offenses.
Raise a glad cry, you barren one who did not bear,
 break forth in jubilant song, you who were not in labor,
 For more numerous are the children of the deserted wife
 than the children of her who has a husband,
 says the Lord.

[End of the reading]

FRIDAY OF GREAT AND HOLY WEEK
For the Solemn Vespers:

1st READING: *Exodus 33: 11-23*

2nd READING: *Job 42: 12-17*

3rd READING: *Isaiah 52: 13 thru 54: 1*

Thus says the Lord: See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him—so marred was his look beyond that of man, and his appearance beyond that of mortals—so shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,

and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. But the Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.

Raise a glad cry, you barren one who did not bear, break forth in jubilant song, you who were not in labor, for more numerous are the children of the deserted wife than the children of her who has a husband, says the Lord.

FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT

For the Sixth Hour:

Isaiah 45: 11-17

For the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts:

1st READING: *Genesis 22: 1-18*

At that time God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, "Abraham!" "Ready!" he replied. Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey, took with him his son Isaac, and two of his servants as well, and with the wood that he had cut for the holocaust, set out for the place of which God had told him.

On the third day Abraham got sight of the place from afar. Then he said to his servants: "Both of you stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over yonder. We will worship and then come back to you." Thereupon Abraham took the wood for the holocaust and laid it on his son Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two walked on together, Isaac spoke to his father Abraham: "Father!" he said. "Yes, son," he replied. Isaac continued, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the holocaust?" "Son," Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust." Then the two continued going forward.

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he tied up his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the Lord's messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son. Abraham named the site Yahweh-yireh; hence people now say, "On the mountain the Lord will see."

Again the Lord's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you acted as you did

in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing—all this because you obeyed my command."