

## FINDING OUR WAY BACK TO GOD

God created each of us in His image and likeness. He gave us intelligence, a free will and an immortal soul, so that knowing God and becoming like Him, we would all perfect ourselves and inherit eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. We have all been endowed with the capacity to achieve this lofty goal.

Because of our free will, however, we also have the capacity to reject our Heavenly Father and His commandments. Many choose to embark upon a sinful path, straying from the road of righteousness. If we remain in this fallen state, the consequences to our soul are grave indeed, for, as St. Paul tells us, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

As we reflect upon the many times we have succumbed to temptation and have willfully gone against the teachings of Christ and His Church, it is natural for us to echo the words of the Apostles: "Who then can be saved?" (Mark 10:26) It is important for us to note, therefore, that our Lord is a forgiving God. His love for us is unconditional, and when we recognize the folly of our sinful ways and repent for all of our woeful deeds, He is there to greet us with outstretched arms!

Still, we must not lose sight of the fact that True and Complete Repentance involves more than merely saying "I'm sorry." Our feelings of contrition must be put into action. A repentant life is a Changed Life, and the sincerity of our desire to free ourselves from sin's bondage is the key to repairing our relationship with God.

## WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN

February 14, 2016.

**SAINTE PROPHET ELIJAH SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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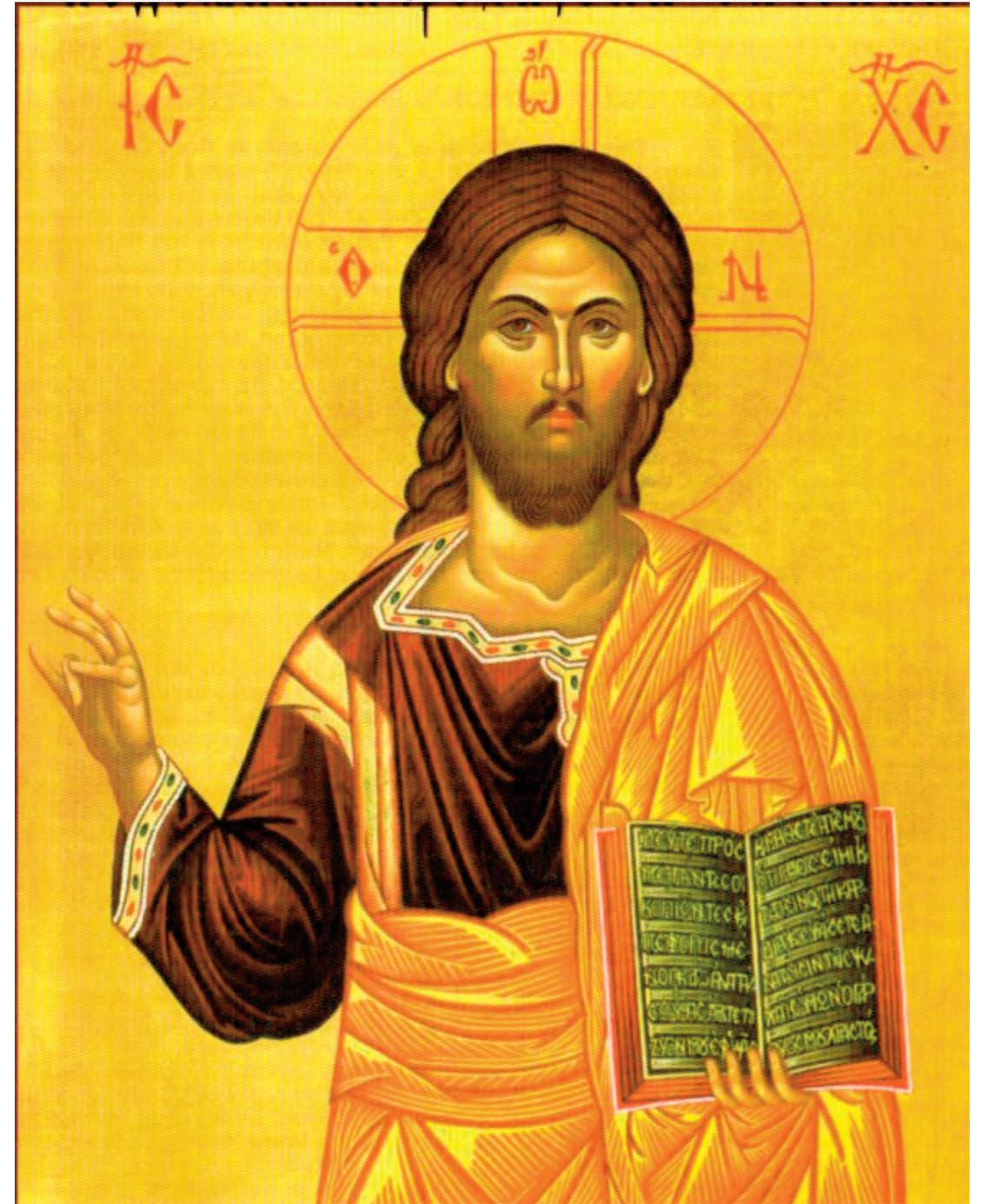
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37<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**TODAY'S READINGS: Epistle: 1.Tim. 4, 9-15; Gospel: Lk. 19, 1-10;**

**TODAY WE CELEBRATE:**

**THE HOLY MARTYR TRYPHON**



Tryphon was born of poor parents in the village of Lampsacus in Phrygia. In his childhood he tended geese. From his childhood he also had great grace from God, such that he was able to cure illnesses that afflicted people and livestock and to expel evil spirits. The Roman Empire at that time was ruled by the Emperor Gordian. The emperor's daughter Gordiana went insane, and this caused the emperor great sorrow. All the physicians were unable to help Gordiana. An evil spirit spoke through Gordiana and said that no one except Tryphon could cast him out. After many who were named Tryphon in the empire were summoned, by divine providence young Tryphon was also summoned. He was brought to Rome, and he healed the emperor's daughter. The emperor lavished upon him many gifts, all of which Tryphon distributed to the poor upon his return. In his village this holy youth continued to tend geese and

to pray to God. When Decius, the persecutor of Christians, was crowned Emperor, St. Tryphon was tortured and cruelly tormented for Christ. He endured all tortures with great joy, saying: "Oh, if only I could be made worthy to die by fire and torture for the name of the Lord and God, Jesus Christ!" The tortures did him no harm, and finally the tormentors sentenced him to be beheaded. Before his death Tryphon prayed to God, and he gave up his soul to his Creator, in the year 250 A.D.

**REFLECTION**

The prayer of Saint Tryphon before his death: "O Lord, God of gods and King of kings, the Most-holy of all holies, I thank Thee that Thou hast made me worthy to complete my ascetic labors without faltering. And now I pray to Thee, that the hand of the invisible demon may not touch me; that the demon not drag me into the abyss of destruction. Rather, let Thy holy angels lead me into Thy beautiful dwelling place and make me an heir of Thy desired Kingdom. Receive my soul and hearken to the prayer of all those who will offer sacrifices to Thee in my remembrance. Gaze upon them from Thy holy dwelling place and grant them abundant and incorruptible gifts. For Thou art the only good and merciful Gift-giver unto the ages of ages. Amen."

Since Tryphon had suffered in Nicaea, and since many miracles had occurred over his lifeless body, the citizens of Nicaea wanted to bury Tryphon in their cemetery. But the saint appeared in a vision and expressed his desire to be translated to his village of Lampsacus--where he had once tended geese--and to be buried there.

**HOMILY  
on the Word of God which purifies as a fire**

*"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).*

By His Word the Lord created the world; by His Word He renewed the world; by His Word He forgave sins; by His Word He healed diseases; by His Word He drove out evil spirits; by His Word He calmed the storms and the winds. By His holy Word He cleanses men even now, so that they, having been cleansed, may bring forth abundant fruit. Vines, when they are pruned and cleansed, are strong. The Word of the Lord is powerful, for it comes forth

**What's over your head  
is under God's feet.**

from the Almighty. By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made (Psalm 33:6). The Word of the Lord is as bright as the sun; but, when necessary, it is as fiery as the sun and burns up everything that goes against the Lord. The Word of the Lord is as sweet as honey; but, when necessary, it is as bitter as medicine. The Word of the Lord is as welcome as a friend who knocks at the door when he is most needed; but, when necessary, the Word of the Lord is as a judge who finds us in sin and who judges us without allowing any excuse. The Word of the Lord is true, just, wise and merciful, which is why it is so all-powerful. No one and nothing, either in heaven or on earth, is able to oppose it. The human word is also powerful when it is true, just, wise and merciful. But just as illness is able to exhaust and so weaken a giant that he becomes more powerless than a child, so also falsehoods, injustice, insanity and lack of mercy so weaken the word of a man that it becomes nothing: a fox chattering against the moon. He who spares words forges them of pure silver. But whoever relentlessly squanders them mixes earth with the silver.

Thy word, O Lord, is life and truth. Cleanse us by Thine almighty Word, as Thou didst cleanse Thine apostles, that we may bear much fruit and be made worthy of Thy Kingdom. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Today, after Divine Liturgy, we will have PARASTOS  
for HELEN ZIVKOVIC

Tomorrow, February 15<sup>th</sup>, is the Feast of Presentation of the Lord  
DIVINE LITURGY WILL START AT 9:30AM.

KCC monthly meeting will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2016 following  
Divine Liturgy. Each sister is asked to bring an appetizer to the meeting.

**St. Elijah Choir's 14th Annual Bowling "Ball"**

Saturday, February 20, 2016 Baden Bowl 346 Ohio River Blvd. Baden, PA  
15005

**\$25.00 per person\* Fee includes: bowling, dinner, dance and PRIZES!**

**Bowling: 2:00 PM Dinner: Immediately following**

**bowling Dance:5 PM-9 PM**

**Entertainment by: Dan, Doki, and Pristi**



Not a bowler?? You can still join us at 5:00 p.m. for  
dinner and dancing at the:

St. Elijah Serbian Center -\$15

Registration forms are located next to the bulletin



**VISITS**

**February 10<sup>th</sup> - Friendship Ridge** - Sarah Jerich, Helen Belich, Ann Belich,  
Joe and Carol Kascur, Robin Lapceovich

**February 11<sup>th</sup> - Alegheny General** - Nick Bruich (Conf. & Comm.)

