

10th Sunday after Pentecost

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

This Sunday's Gospel tells us about God's healing grace, the weakness of the demon-possessed boy, the weakness of the apostles' faith, and the zeal of a loving father's prayer. The event took place immediately after the disciples and Jesus descended from the mountain on which Jesus was transfigured before them. Just as Moses once saw the weakness of the faith of those to whom he entrusted the ministry, after his descent from Sinai (cf. Exod. 24:14; 32: 1-8, 21-25, 35), so Jesus faced the weakness of the faith of his disciples who could not, at the request of a father, heal his demon-possessed son.

When Jesus was just beginning to preach in Galilee, He sent His disciples on a special mission. "And preach as you go saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without pay, give without pay" (Matt. 10:7-8). If in the beginning their ministry was successful, now they stood helpless and confused before the Lord.

This story warns modern followers of Christ against the illusion of self-sufficiency and self-confidence. The Apostle James said, "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). Describing his ministry, the Apostle Paul stated similarly, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

The Lord did not leave the bewildered disciples, but offered them a solution to the problem - grow in faith, prayer, and fasting. Jesus reveals to his disciples that the key to success is trust in Him. Not our efforts, knowledge, connections, or opportunities - but our trust in Him. If the disciples trust God, they will be able to fulfill all that He needs of them, and thus their trust will grow as a flowering tree grows from a small mustard seed. Then no difficulty, however incredible, great, or threatening, may stand in their way ("moving mountains" is a Hebrew symbolic expression used to describe the solution of an incredibly difficult matter). In the end, as Thomas Wright points out in his commentary on this passage, it is not, of course, a matter of the "size" of faith, but of the God to whom it is addressed. If you want to see the moon, it doesn't matter what size your window is. You won't see anything even from the biggest window if it goes the wrong way, but the smallest spark on the right side is enough to see the sky. And for this faith to be converted to the true God, it takes a lot of prayer and fasting to get rid of misconceptions about Him and to be able to accept the grace of the One who, according to the final words of today's reading, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day..." (Matt. 17:22).

Look at the life of Anthony the Great, at the beginning of his spiritual life to become a righteous man, he went through a difficult path of spiritual struggle with various demonic temptations, and prayed a lot on the way to holiness.

One day the demons severely beat the saint, who fainted. When he regained consciousness, Anthony saw Jesus in prayer and said, "Why, Lord, did you leave me alone and not help me in this difficult struggle when my soul was in danger?" To this Jesus replied, "I was with you all the time and saw that you had enough strength in this struggle, so I did not help you. If I joined this struggle and defeated the evil spirits, the reward would belong to Me. I wanted you to fight alone and earn a reward for this fight."

As the Gospel and the life of Anthony testify to us, in the struggle of life we are not alone, but Christ is always with us. It allows this struggle into our lives, because it nurtures faith, hope, humility, and obedience in a person.

Dear believers! Following the example of the father of a sick son, let us strengthen each other's faith with kind words and prayer. In the difficult moments of life, let us turn them on the way to Christ to hear his voice, which constantly speaks to us, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM MARYLAND IF



**YOU THINK OLD NEWSPAPERS
MAKE A GOOD TABLECLOTH**

**The Patronage of the Mother of God
Crab Feast is Back!!**

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Divine Liturgy at 5:00 P.M.

Crab Feast Immediately Following

**50/50
Raffle!!**

**Baba's
Auction!**

Price: \$30 all you can eat and drink

Children 12 and under eat free

Please bring a side dish or a dessert

RSVP by September 12th to Dann Karlson at: ds.karlson@gmail.com

Name _____

Number Adults & Children over 12 _____ x \$30.00 = \$ _____

Number of Children under 12 _____

(Make checks payable to Patronage Byzantine Catholic Church)

NEW EVENT: We are looking for donations of new items for **"Baba's Auction!"** Some ideas can be gift cards, a handmade craft, toys, pet items, household items, gardening supplies, plants, crafting supplies, etc. – be creative! Please bring your donation(s) when you come to the Crab Feast. Tables will be set up to display your item(s). Tickets, for the auction, will be available at the Crab Feast. If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Kotula at: d.kotula@comcast.net.