

21st Week After Pentecost – Friday

TODAY'S READINGS, FOLLOWED BY A FEW SMALL PASTORAL AND PERSONAL THOUGHTS.

Colossians 2:1-7 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

The reading for The Feast of the Circumcision follows. This is not part of today's selection and is skipped in the regular readings after Pentecost (see notes below), but included here, because it is so good.

Col 2:8-12 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Luke 9:12-18 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. 13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. 14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets. 18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

General Notes on Gospel and Epistle Readings:

The daily readings are arranged in such a way that as much as possible of the Gospels, Acts and Epistles (not including Revelation) are read throughout the entire church year, with as little repetition as possible

Today, we are continuing Colossians in order from beginning to end, and one would think that the next entry to be read after this one would be Colossians 2:8-12, however this section is omitted, since it is read at another time in the church year (on the feast of the Circumcision, Jan 1/14). Any time a selection is reserved for another time in the church year (such as all Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year, or various feast of the Lord, Theotokos, or saints), that selection is skipped in the weekly readings.

The weekend (Saturday and Sunday) has different readings from the Epistles and Gospels that do not follow the order of the weekday readings. Perhaps this is because the most instructive readings are reserved for this time. For example, even though during the weekdays of the 21st week after Pentecost, we are reading selections from Colossians, on the 21st Saturday we read from 2 Corinthians 3:12-18, and then on the 21st Sunday, from Galatians 2:16-20

Have you ever wondered when a week starts? The LAST day of the week is Sunday. Monday starts a new week. After this Sunday, the 21st after Pentecost, we begin the 22nd week after Pentecost.

General Notes on the Gospel

This is the only miracle recorded by all four evangelists (Mat 14:15-21, Mark 6:44-34, Luke 8:12-18, John 6:5-13). All of these versions involve five loaves and two fish.

The Evangelist Mark also records another miracle, involving seven loaves, and “few small fishes” (Mark 8:2-9)

This miracle is remembered whenever we celebrate “Litia”, in which five loaves, wheat, wine and oil are blessed. This service occurs on certain feast days in between Vespers and Matins at the All Night Vigil service. The Old believers celebrate Litia at all Saturday night vigils.

Colossians 2:1-2 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; ² That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

Such a beautiful turn of phrase: “*being knit together in love*”! How close this knitting must bring the faithful to one another!

When the soldiers were dividing the garments of Christ, they cast lots for His coat, because it was one piece “woven from the top throughout” (John 19:24). This coat represents the seamless body of Christ, the church, which is one, and not divided into parts. If we actually live according to this prayer of the Apostle, our being knit together to each other emulates the body of Christ. All things all held together, energized, and understood by love.

Note here how “*being knit together in love*” leads us “all riches of the full assurance of understanding”. In other words, we can know NOTHING without love.

It would be good for us to consider what “type” of love the Apostle speaks of. “Love” has become a cheap word today. Each thread in a seamless garment is equal. None is more important than the other, since if a thread is damaged, eventually neighboring threads will become damaged, and the entire garment will fall into disarray. What a high calling it is to consider everyone to be equal to ourselves! To live in such a way that we are “*knit together in love*” is to perfectly fulfill the “Golden Rule”¹ and to

¹Luke 6: 31 “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise”

perfectly obey the Greatest Commandment, and the second commandment which is like it².

Colossians 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

This admonition is very similar to the hymn “*As many have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia*”, taken from Galatians: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal 3:27) This hymn is sung at all baptisms, on Theophany and at other times.

To receive Christ is to be baptized into Him, and if we “put Him on” we shall surely walk in Him. This means, plainly, that we are to emulate Christ, and live as He lived. The Christian life is to acquire this way of living by degrees.

Everything is about morality. *We were baptized in order to become perfectly moral* (the bible calls such a one “pure in heart”³). In receiving Christ, we obtained the *ability* to become moral. If we dare to call ourselves Christian, we must therefore change our way of living in *everything*, so that we walk in Christ. The only way to know “mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ”, is to walk in Christ. We will then learn by experience “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, which are hidden in Christ (Cf. Colossians 2:2-3)

Bibliography

Sermons of St John Chrysostom on Colossians. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf113.html>). These are accessible to almost anyone. They are a bit difficult to read, but well worth it. I will post a link to the Russian text when given it.

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel according to St Luke, by Blessed Theophylact, published by Chrysostom Press - <http://www.chrysostompress.org/>. ALL FOUR BOOKS ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Priest Seraphim Oct 25/Nov 7 2008.

[St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, McKinney, Texas](http://www.stnicholasorthodoxchurch.com/)

http://www.orthodox.net/scripture/21st-week-after-pentecost_friday_colossians2;1-7+luke9;12-18.rtf

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² Mat 22:36-39 “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

³ Mat 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God