

**St Ignatios of Antioch
Melkite Greek Catholic Church
1003 Merry Street
Augusta, Georgia 30904
706 364-6219**



**26th Sunday after Pentecost
26 November 2023**

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The Rich Young Man (Lk 18:18-28)

ALL THREE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS – Matthew, Mark and Luke – all record Christ’s meeting with a rich young man who sought His guidance. The young man (Luke calls him a “ruler”) seeks to know what to do to have eternal life. Christ responds by telling him to keep the commandments. When pressed to be more specific, the Lord begins by listing the Ten Commandments. Then He quotes the Great Commandment from Leviticus, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

The young man says that he has kept all these commandments from his youth and presses the Lord to tell him what more he should do. The Lord Jesus then attempts to lead him from a stage of merely being obedient to God’s commandments, to one of being in a relationship of love with God.

Christ tells the young man what must happen *“If you want to be perfect”* (v. 21): he must give his wealth to the poor and follow Jesus as He went from place to place proclaiming the kingdom of God. The Lord offered this inquirer the chance to join the company of His disciples, to show that he preferred life with Christ to enjoying his possessions. The young man declined.

What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?

The Lord has held out this goal of “perfection” before, in the Sermon on the Mount. Being “perfect” seems an impossible task if we think it means absolute perfection without any fault or stain. In the Greek of the New Testament (and our Liturgy), however, to be “perfect” or to be “complete” might best be translated “to be all that we were meant to be:” living in the light of the Lord, walking in His way. Jesus pushed His hearers to go beyond the commandments to arrive at a more godly way of life.

The Lord then contrasted regard for God with attachment to one's belongings. They will ever be competing for a person's devotion; as Christ tells His listeners, *"Where your treasure is there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21).

The path to perfection, as Christ teaches, begins with making a choice between following Him and devoting oneself to enjoying the things of the world. As He said so clearly, *"No one can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24).

Do I Serve Mammon?

Most of us do not think that we are "serving mammon." We may even look down on the obviously greedy or on people driven by addictions. Yes, there are people who "serve" money, drugs or sex. They may be slaves to alcohol or tobacco. We don't believe that we are controlled like that.

We may not be overly driven to making inordinate amounts of money, but we should consider that dependency on mammon takes many forms. We should become more conscious of how many of this world's riches we feel that we "need," that we "can't do without," from our morning coffee to the latest smart phone. We don't physically need these things; it is our ego that requires them. Is this not another form of serving mammon?

To reflect on just how our ego may be tied to the things of this world, consider how difficult it is to fast for any length of time: how much we feel the loss of a favorite food and to what lengths we go to find a pleasing substitute... and how happy we are when the Fast is over.

In addition, "mammon" can also include the non-material wealth of this world: power, prestige or social position. How do we feel when another is promoted over us, receives a bigger bonus or a more lucrative assignment. Serving mammon takes many forms and they all interfere in some way with our relationship to God.

The Fathers on the Power of Mammon

When St John Chrysostom commented on this Gospel passage, he noted that being devoted to the things of this world did not make you free. "The rich man is a slave, being subject to loss, and in the power of everyone wishing to do him harm" (Homily 46 on Matthew). Serving mammon is a form of slavery.

In another place, Chrysostom said, "If you see someone greedy for many things, you should consider him the poorest of all, even if he has acquired everyone's money. Be accustomed to judge poverty and affluence by the disposition of the mind, not by the substance of his possessions. Serving mammon is a kind of poverty. As some people today phrase it, "What you own, owns you."

A century before and on another continent, St Cyprian of Carthage had said much the same thing. "The property of the wealthy holds them in chains... which shackle their courage and choke their faith and hamper their judgment and throttle their souls. They think of themselves as owners, whereas it is they rather who are owned: enslaved as they are to their own property, they are not the masters of their money, but its slaves."

Asceticism and the Pursuit of Perfection

The choice between serving God and mammon is at the heart of Christian asceticism, where making that choice is lived and experienced on a daily basis. It is most intensely observed by monastics, but also by Christians living in this world, married or single. A person living an ascetic life tries to distance himself or herself from

being tied to the passing pleasures of the world so as to be more open to following Christ and living the life of God.

People often consider life with God as something of the world to come. It is clear to most people, even in the wider society, that our earthly attachments have no place in heaven. A recent installment in Dan Piraro's widely syndicated cartoon strip, *Bizarro!* makes this point. Two long-time residents of heaven are observing two younger ones. "Most of the new arrivals seem incapable of conversation," the eldest notes. "They just stare at their hands in despair," trying to text, but there are no electronic devices in heaven!

Yes, there are no cigarettes, no movies, no alcohol in heaven. To be without them would surely frustrate someone who has made enjoying these things the focus of life. Thus some Christian thinkers have observed that to be in heaven without the object of one's passions would actually be to dwell in hell.

But the differences between this age and the age to come are not really the point. Life with God, transformation into the image of God, begins now, with baptism. That life is meant to be experienced in ever deeper ways as we mature in the Christian life here, as well as in the life of the age to come. The Christian seeks to avoid anything which can captivate our minds and, at best, distract us from that relationship to God. Following Christ is meant to be the real source of our joy here on earth, as well as in the world to come. Serving Christ in worship and ministering to Him in the needy should be our joys, rather than obligations to be gotten through as quickly as possible. The Christian life, to paraphrase St Catherine of Siena, is meant to be "heaven all the way to heaven."

WE HAVE RECEIVED A VERY GENEROUS OFFER – during the season of the Christmas Fast (beginning 15 November) an anonymous parishioner has offered to match any donations we receive two to one. This is a wonderful opportunity to make your generosity to the parish count even more!

Sunday Collections

Attendance	Date	Collection
27	1 October 2023	60.00
39	8 October 2023	\$1,192.00
40	15 October 2023	\$451.00
38	22 October 2023	
37	29 October 2023	
37	5 November 2023	\$459.00
39	12 November 2023	\$375.00
35	19 November 2023	\$35.00

Divine Liturgy Intentions:

For the Living:

Bishop Francois, Fr. John Azar, Fr. James Graham, Fr. Michael Copenhagen, David Mangelsdorf, Brian Frank, Nookid Graham, Ali de la Vega, Dn. Kent & Diana Plowman, Mandie, Nick Baiad, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Alfonso de la Vega, Michael A Skrocki, Medical Personnel and First Responders

For the Dead:

Announcements

We are live-streaming on our Facebook page at the following days & times:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00AM, The Third Hour

Friday – 6:00 PM Weekday Vespers

Saturday – 6:00PM Great Vespers

Sunday – 9:00AM Orthros & 10:00AM Divine Liturgy

JOIN US IN PRAYING the 3rd Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8am. This is a short prayer service from our version of the Liturgy of the Hours. It lasts less than 20 minutes or so. Come join us!

PRAYER OPPORTUNITES AROUND TOWN –Most Holy Trinity parish will be hosting a Men's Holy Hour every Friday morning from 6-7am. There will also be a coffee hour and reflection time afterwards – Men from all parishes are invited to attend for whatever portion of the time they are available. For the Ladies – St. Joseph's will be hosting a Women's Holy Hour on the first Monday of each month at 7pm.

Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 1)



Af-ter the stone was sealed by the Jews, and while the



sol - diers were wat - ching Your spot - less bo - dy,



You rose, O Sa-vior on the third day, be-stow - ing



life to the world. There - fore, the hea-ven-ly po-wers



cried out to You O Gi - ver of Life: Glo-ry to Your



Re-sur-rec-tion O Christ, glo - ry to Your King - dom,



glo - ry to Your E-co - no - my O You who a-

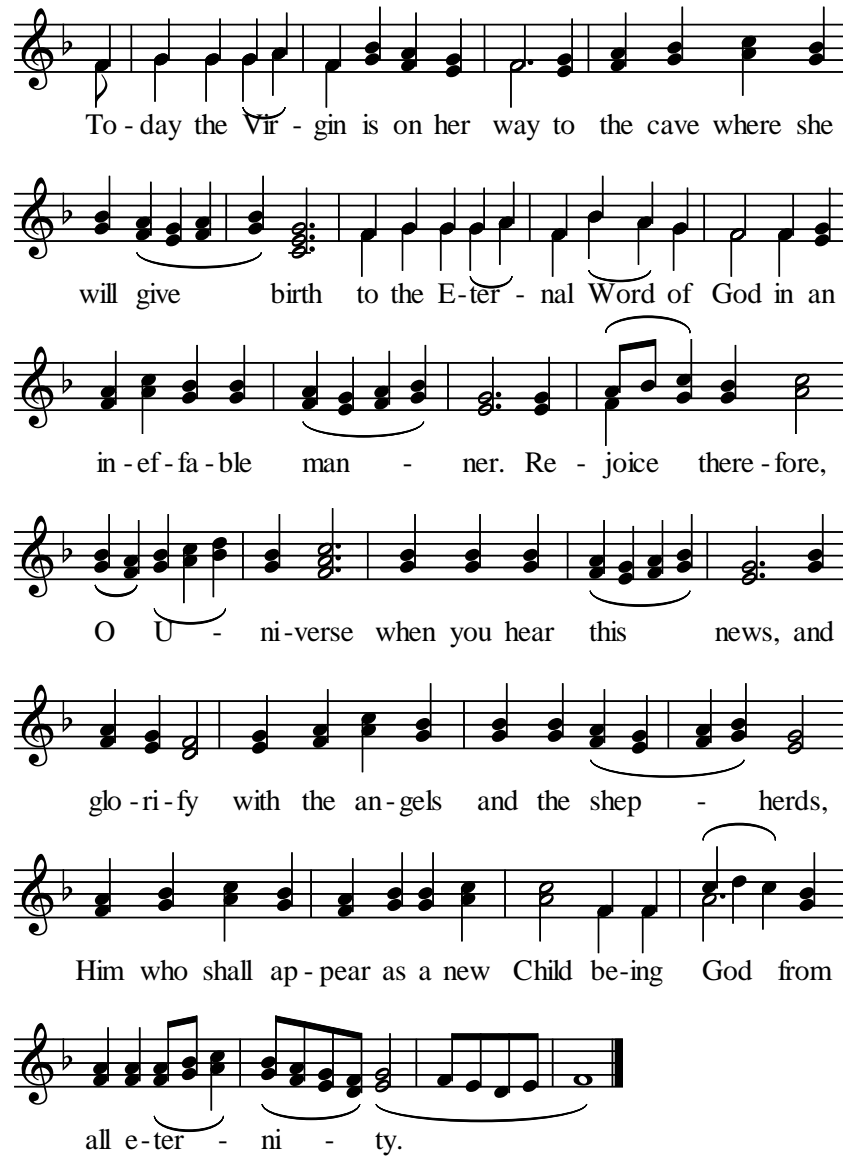


- lone are the Lo-ver of man-kind.

Pre-Christmas Kondakion

(Nov. 26 - Dec. 24)

(Tone 2)



To-day the Vir - gin is on her way to the cave where she
will give birth to the E - ter - nal Word of God in an
in - ef - fa - ble man - ner. Re - joice there - fore,
O U - ni - verse when you hear this news, and
glo - ri - fy with the an - gels and the shep - herds,
Him who shall ap - pear as a new Child be - ing God from
all e - ter - ni - ty.

Prokimenon

Reader: May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in you.

All: May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in you.

Reader: Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

All: May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in you.

Reader: May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

All: For we have hoped in you.

Readings for the Week:

Monday:	1 st Timothy 5:1-12	Mark 8:11-21
Tuesday:	1 st Timothy 5:11-21	Mark 8:22-26
Wednesday:	1 st Timothy 5:22-6:11	Mark 8:30-34
Thursday:	1 st Timothy 6:17-21	Mark 9:9-15
Friday:	2 nd Timothy 5:1-2, 8:18	Mark 9:32-40
Saturday:	Galatians 5:22-6:2	Luke 14:1-11

Saints of the Week:

Nov. 26: Holy Fathers Aypios the Stylite and Nikon
Nov. 27: Holy Martyr James the Persian
Nov. 28: Holy Martyrs Stephen the Latter and Irenarchus
Nov. 29: Holy Martyrs Paramon and Philumenes
Nov. 30: Holy and Illustrious Apostle Andrew the First-called
Dec. 1: Holy Prophet Nahum, Philaret the Merciful
Dec. 2: Holy Prophet Habakkuk
Dec. 3: Holy Prophet Zephaniah

Word Search

D	C	D	R	N	U	V	M	Q	D	L	I	H	C	A	N
D	M	P	S	Z	P	T	A	S	K	E	D	P	W	E	C
M	L	J	Y	T	L	U	C	I	F	F	I	D	V	O	D
V	R	L	U	I	L	A	N	R	E	T	E	A	M	F	E
I	E	F	H	Z	W	N	E	P	D	O	E	M	A	A	V
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Y	X	Z	H	S	W	I	T	N	E	S	S	G	N	M	W
H	E	F	I	L	Q	Y	R	E	T	L	U	D	A	W	S
G	G	C	C	L	W	J	V	R	E	T	S	A	M	E	X
H	W	S	T	E	A	L	O	R	M	S	G	B	C	U	C

Adultery

Asked

Child

Come

Commandments

Difficulty

Eternal

Father

Follow

Grieved

Heaven

Life

Man

Master

Mother

Rich

Steal

Treasure

Witness

Parish Information:

Rt. Rev. Michael Skrocki, JCD
Pastor

abounamike@aol.com

Knights of Columbus
JFK Council

1st Wednesday of the month, 7pm
Most Holy Trinity

4th Degree Assembly
2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm
St. Ignatios

Publicans Prayer Group
Postponed until Further Notice

New Parishioners:
Please register with Fr. Michael.

Mystery of Holy Confession
Please contact Fr. Michael to set up a convenient time.

Mystery of Christian Initiation
Expectant parents should notify Fr. Michael prior to the birth of the child. Adult converts should contact Fr. Michael so arrangements may be made for any necessary instruction and sacraments.

Mystery of Holy Crowning
Those planning to marry should notify the Fr. Michael
at least six months prior to the desired Wedding date.

Mystery of Holy Anointing
Please notify Fr. Michael when you or a family member is in need of anointing.

To report sexual abuse by clergy, parish personnel or volunteers of the Eparchy of Newton, please call the **Victim Assistance Coordinator** at 1-800-479-5910.