

higher righteousness is impossible for us to fulfil on the basis of our own efforts. But, "What is impossible for man is possible for God."

Various interpretations have been suggested for the impossible image of a **camel** going through the **eye of the needle**: e.g., that the word was not camel, but "rope"; or that the eye of a needle was a city gate through which a camel might barely squeeze through if it were first unloaded of all its baggage, symbolizing wealth. Whatever the phrase refers to, it displays the impossibility of salvation for those who are attached to riches. This is clearly evidenced by the disciples' response, "**Who can be saved?**" Yet by God's grace, even what is impossible to man can come to pass.

All of us are called to a life of Christian perfection. Christian life involves a creative tension between what we now are and what we can be tomorrow. The road of Christian perfection is endless. What seems impossible to us is possible by the grace of God. Christians can follow the road to a more perfect obedience when They prayerfully (1) Seek a deeper communion with the Holy Spirit and (2) continue to grow in their love for Christ.

Upcoming Services

Wed. Jan. 18 Akathist (Prayer service) – Glory to God for all things 6 p.m.

Sat. Jan. 21 Reader's Vespers 4 p.m.

Sat. Jan. 22 Reader's Service (Typika) 9:30 a.m.

Parish News

Steering Committee Meeting – Sun. Jan. 22 after Typika service.

Parish Education Classes – Sun. Jan.15 & 29 after Typika service.

Craft and Hobby Fair – Sat. Feb. 4 from 10 – 4 p.m. Vendors, food and drink. See Mike and Michelle Dibaggio if you have any questions.

House Blessing – Fr. Vjekoslav will bless houses, January and February. There is a sign up sheet at the desk for those who want Fr. Vjekoslav to bless their house.

Our mission is to glorify God through worship, according to the Orthodox Christian faith, to love one another, and to serve those in need.

ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

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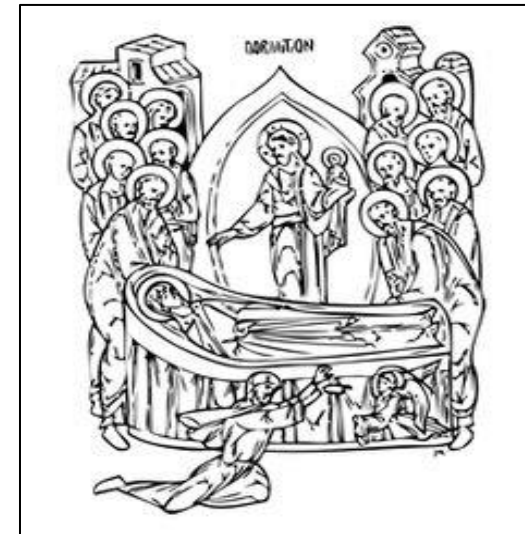
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*Orthodox Church in America (OCA)
Diocese of Eastern PA*

January 15, 2023

31st Sunday after Pentecost

**Ven. Paul of Thebes
Ven. John Calabytes (the Hut-Dweller)**



Welcome! Please join us for coffee and light refreshments after the service!

Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;/ the guards became as dead men./ Mary stood by Thy grave,/ seeking Thy most pure body./ Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it./ Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life./ O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead,// glory to Thee.

Tone 1 Troparion (Church)

In giving birth you preserved your virginity / in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos / You were translated to life, O Mother of Life // and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance!

V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!

1 Timothy 1:15-17 (Epistle)

Timothy my son: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Tone 6 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.

V. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust."

Luke 18:18-27 (Gospel)

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do

not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,/ raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,/ He bestowed resurrection on the human race.// He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Tone 2 Kontakion (Church)

Neither the tomb nor death could hold the Theotokos / who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions / For being the Mother of Life // she was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

The Question about Eternal Life

The Gospel reading for today tells about the rich man (ruler) who asks Jesus: "**What can I do to inherit eternal life?**" This man does not come to test Jesus, but to seek advice from one he considers no more than a **Good Teacher**. Jesus' response does not deny that He is God but is designed to lead the rich man to this knowledge. Jesus tells him if he wants to enter into eternal life, know and obey God's commandments. However, formal observance of the commandments does not make one righteous before God. This man had an earnest desire for eternal life and sensed that he still lacked something; thus, he continues to press Jesus for the answer.

To be perfect, one must willingly sacrifice all and follow Jesus. Nothing is gained unless this sacrifice is given freely. The specifics of how one follows Jesus will be different for each person. Because wealth had such a grip on this rich man, his only hope was to sell and give away all his possessions. However, Jesus' challenge seemed impossible to him and he turned away saddened. St. John Chrysostom tells us that giving away possessions is the least of Jesus' instructions here; following Him in all things is a far greater and more difficult calling.

Do we not also want to turn away when we realize how demanding Jesus' teachings are? Do we not silently think to ourselves: "Who, then can be saved? Indeed Jesus'