

Homily for the Third Pre-Lenten Sunday  
The Sunday of The Last Judgment  
Sunday March 6, 2016

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Glory Be To Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

After all these years of being your priest, you probably already know this, but I'll say it anyway I have a terrible sense of direction. Left to my own devices, I get lost easily. No matter how much I would study a map, and even bring it with me in the car, I would invariably get lost.

You can't imagine how my life changed for the better when I finally got I believe the Iphone 4 which had a built in gps system. I love it! Not only does it tell me where I am supposed to go, but when I falter and lose my attention, it promptly alerts me of my mistake and helps me to get back on track towards my final destination. More sophisticated GPS, especially those used by Truck drivers can factor in routing around road hazards, making multiple stops, finding rest stops and hotels and what ever one might need to find on a trip, even alerting you about traffic tie ups.

Now you are probably wondering why on this Third Sunday of the Pre-Lenten Season, I am talking about my lack of a sense of direction and my admiration of GPS technology. What does this have to do with today's scripture readings. On the surface, I would have to admit nothing at all. However as you can imagine, on a spiritual level, it is right on target. Now what do I mean about this.

The Church is a lot like a GPS System in that it serves as a guide or a compass. If you don't already know, the gps in one's phone or independent device works by picking up the signals of a minimum of three satellites orbiting in the atmosphere. The Gps tracks and measures distances from signals bouncing back and forth from the satellites. So the satellite that orbit in the heavens above are the guidance system that makes our gps devices work.

The Church, which is the dwelling place of God, a Trinity of persons, provides us on the spiritual level, a point of reference, an anchoring point, to keep us on track, on our journey to the Kingdom of Heaven.

For these past two weeks we have been on a short, preparatory journey that will bring us to the starting point of our Great Lenten Marathon Journey to Holy Pascha, to Easter Sunday. Over the past two Sundays and today, we have been introduced to and synched with three different orientational Satelights if you will allow me to use this terminology. On the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican, we learned about the power of humble prayer in the person of the publican, so our first orientation point, which will guide us and keep us on target during our Lenten Journey is Prayer. Last Sunday, through the example of the Prodigal Son, we learned about the power of fasting – remember it was when the prodigal, wasteful son had spent all of his money, and was totally hungry, that he came to his senses, that he was put in the proper frame of mind to swallow his pride and return to his Father, as a humble servant. So fasting is our second orientation point. And finally today, on this the Sunday of The Final Judgment, we are reminded that in order to enter into the Joy of The Lord at the time of the Final Judgment, our lives will be examined to see if we put flesh on our faith, if we lived what we say we believe – did we out of love help others, without discrimination of who they were,

if they were in the words of the Gospel reading, the least of the brethren. So today we are introduced to the third and final orientation satelight anchor, of Almsgiving.

So you see, what a helpful Church we have, what a concerned Mother She is – and how she is ready, and willing to safely guide us into the heavenly kingdom. So you see if , you are directionally challenged in the spiritual life, like I am in this earthly life driving a car, if you feel rudderless and listless and don't know how to get out of the rut, don't worry the Church is here to help. Like I have to open my GPS app and enter the destination when I begin my Automobile journey, all you have to do is open up your mind and heart, and be like Zacchaeus, willing to make an honest effort to move in the Direction of Our Lord and the Kingdom. Once you set your mind to this, then all you have to do is listen to the directions the Church is giving you, Pray a little harder and humbly, increase your fasting regiment, so you are in a better frame of mind to come to your spiritual senses, and demonstrate your desire to love God and his creation more by quietly and without fanfare doing acts of love for your family and for anyone God places in your path. You can't fail if you lock in all three of these directional satelights, prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The good thing with the Church, like my gps, when you vere off course, the Church will help you to recalculate and will help you to change directions and get back on track. This is why we have the special Lenten services, which feed our souls and keep our minds focused on our journey, and in their quiet way, let us know, even when we are not aware of it ourselves we have lost our way.

This is why, the older and more forgetful or distracted that I become, the more I appreciate how our Orthodox Faith, is so very practical and therapeutic. She has a rich storehouse of treasures and spiritual medicine to help us make it through the struggles of daily

life. She never leaves us alone. She does give us freedom. Much like my GPS, I can ignore its directions and go my own way, to my own peril. It won't physically stop the car. It will let me make the wrong turn, but will constantly try in every way possible to get me to change course it will not stop until I am back on course. The same is true with the Church, the same is true with Great Lent.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Let this year be the year that we truly enter into a Lenten frame of mind and follow the guidelines of the Church the tried and true, unchanging, solid anchors, upon which we can find stability in a chaotic world, and the proper vantage point to re-orient our lives in such a way that at the end of all times, our Lord will be pleased and will say to you and I well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord, for I was hungry and you fed me, Sick and in prison and you visited me, naked and you clothed me...

May our lives be put back into order and given a better sense of direction This Lenten Season so that we may experience the most awesome Pascha ever, both this year and in the never-ending day of the Kingdom. Amen!

Christ is in our Midst! He is and ever shall be!