

HOMILY FOR THE SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS 2014

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

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

We are moving closer to the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. In fact we are only ten days away! At this time the Church has stepped up its efforts to prepare us. If we were following the Church's fasting guidelines strictly, we would find that the fast is now prescribed to be as rigorous as that of Great Lent, with no meat, dairy, or fish to be eaten. And finally we are seeing some hints in our Liturgical services that the Nativity is drawing closer. If we celebrated the services of Matins, we would have seen that beginning on St. Nicholas Day, the Christmas Canon, Christ is Born Glorify Him is sung in part. And today, the Church calls to mind the Forefathers, of Christ, the righteous ones of the Old testament which came before Christ. Those who lived at a time when they so desperately were awaiting the messiah, the Saviour to come into the world. The Church gives us their example to inspire us - for these people, with great effort and spiritual labor lived righteous and holy lives in an era that was even more difficult than it is today. No matter how difficult we find life today, it pales in comparison to what life was like before the coming of Jesus Christ into the World.

We are given their example to inspire us to not give up on our struggles, to not give up on our efforts to prepare spiritually for Christmas, even if we are feeling very discouraged and weary from physical illness and other anxieties. The Church is reminding us today, to hang on just a little bit more, we will very soon, once again, hear the good tidings of Great Joy from the Angels that the Saviour is born. We will go back in time through our participation in the Divine services, to the cavern where the Christ Child was born and like the Magi, we will once again be filled with wonder, our hearts will be filled with joy, and we will have that extra strength and Grace to live the remaining days of our life that God has given us.

I found this morning's Gospel reading, the parable of the Great Supper, especially meaningful this year. This parable is always read on this second Sunday before Christmas, to remind us about what is coming Soon. The Kingdom of Heaven will be experienced on Earth at the birth of the Saviour. The Kingdom of Heaven which is wonderful, joy filled and beyond description. It is the mission of the Church, it is the mission of our parish, to always remember what it is we are striving for, why we do what we do each and every week. Why we offer our stewardship of time talent and treasures to the Church, so that we can show the world the beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is why we have spared no expense to beautify this Church. This is why we keep our Church spotless. This is

why we make sure our priests are vested in beautiful vestments. We do so, to help our friends and our neighbors and all we come in contact to see a different reality than our ordinary, and sometimes dreary world. Today the Church reminds us who are faithful members of the Church of our responsibility to allow the light of Christ to Shine through us.

This past Wednesday, I am pleased to say, that our Parish with the help of many other faith communities in town, were able to show our friends and neighbors in town, who are struggling financially, physically, emotionally and even spiritually, the glory of the Kingdom of God. Quite literally, thanks to all of your efforts, and I say all of you because each of you did something to make it happen, we provided a Great Supper - a Christmas Supper. This supper was amazing. We bought the best ham and turkey we could find, the most delicious vegetables and stuffing and all of the fixings. And desserts galore, as far as you could see. Some of our guests themselves brought more food and goodies to share. Even our town Social worker and her family came to help. The tables were beautifully decorated, and each patron received a greeting card with a substantial gift card. There was plenty of food, no one went hungry, physically, or spiritually. It was an absolute blessing to see the tears running down the faces of people, amazed by what they received. Two different couples approached me and said they prayed before they came, how

they would be able to put gas in their cars to make to important appointments this coming week. And when they came, the prayers were answered. The Atmosphere was festive, and while there were those who came to the Dinner with heavy broken hearts and many troubles, I know they left feeling a little better, a little more hopeful.

I am proud of our parish and how we have grown together these past two decades. While our numbers may be down, our impact on the lives of our own parishioners and our local community is increasing. And this is because as our Lord came into this world and took on human flesh, we have taken mighty steps to put flesh on the bones of our faith, and make it real. Our parish budget reflects this... we have given substantially to this community supper program. However, we have received, I believe far much more back in return.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, Let us in the short time left before the Nativity of Our Lord, prepare our hearts and souls to receive the new born Christ Child. Let us not be afraid to come to Holy Confession, and bare our souls to the Lord, so that we can be filled with the light which will radiate from the crib of the Christ Child. May continue to witness to the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven, with all that we do and say in life, bearing testimony to Christ, the Lord and master of our

Lives. May we through our fasting and prayers, be ready to receive the King of

All who will once again come into this world invisibly escorted by angelic hosts .

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!