

Dearly beloved: Christ is in our midst!

Glory to God for all things! These are the dying words of Saint John Chrysostom as he died from exhaustion on his way to his exile. He offered up glory to God even as he died.

Giving glory to God is an honor for us to be able to give. Glorifying God should come naturally to us because God created us for Himself, to glorify Him, to live in communion with Him. For the two blind men Jesus healed, nothing could stop them giving praise to the one who healed them even though Jesus told them to keep quiet about it. The men did not call attention to themselves for their own recognition but they spread the name of Jesus throughout the region.

Because of this great miracle, receiving sight where there had been blindness, the men glorified God.

We are made by God to give Him glory. What we do when we gather in the temple is to glorify God by our worship. What we do right now is the most important thing we do today.

Yes, there may be many other things on our to-do list today but this, gathering together in the Holy Spirit to worship our heavenly Father and receive in return the Body and Blood of Christ, this is the summit of our life. From the Liturgy, the worship of God, flows our very life. Do we think about coming to Liturgy in such a way? Do we remember that Sunday is set aside by God as THE day to give Him glory for everything He has done, is doing, and will do for us? Our worship of God is not confined to Sundays but this is the minimum God asks of us: to keep holy His day.

When we make our schedules, we must keep this at the forefront of our priorities. When we travel, look for an Orthodox church in which to worship. If our work keeps us from Sunday service, come to worship God at Vespers on Saturday evening or during the week at the weekday Liturgy. We have opportunities to give glory to God, let's not let them pass us by.

It is something unique to us as humans, as intelligent creatures, that we can with our whole soul and with our whole mind say "Lord, have mercy!" The rest of the creation gives glory to God by fulfilling its God-given purpose: the sun to shine, the breezes to blow, the birds to sing. They do what accords with their nature. We humans have a choice, so to speak. We choose whether to worship God, though the only real choice is to worship God. We can make false, bad choices and choose not to worship, to find excuses for not coming to church, this person said this, this person did that. We are all sinners! That other sinners are worshipping with us is not an excuse. We must get over ourselves and realize that Liturgy is not about serving our needs, it is about serving God. From that, from giving glory to God, we set our lives aright, seeking first His kingdom and then we will find that everything else will be given unto us. If it be a cross that comes from God, He will provide the grace to carry it, lean upon Him, ask His help to bear it. If it be a joy that comes from God, share that joy as the blind men did today, not keeping it hidden but letting God's joy shine in us.

Today we honor the Seven Enlighteners of the Slavs: Saints Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, Clement and Nahum of Ochrid, Gorazd, Sabbas and Angelarius. These saints glorified God by translating the holy Scriptures and divine services into the language of the Slavic peoples. They gave the people the ability to know of Jesus Christ in words they could understand. And for their work these saints endured persecution and suffering from those who felt the worship of God could only be in Greek, Hebrew or Latin. We honor these saints who dedicated their lives to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, to ensuring that people could worship God with understanding. When we come together to worship God we continue what our Lord Jesus Christ gave us, what has been taught by the apostles and Saints Cyril and Methodius and their disciples and all the saints throughout the ages: entering into the communion of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit Whom we glorify with one mouth and one heart now, how it ever has been and so shall be unto ages of ages. Amen.