**20th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

This upcoming season is one of preparation for the coming of the Messiah, who saves us all from those things that plague our fallen world.  He comes in the midst of our sadness, and in the midst of our brokenness.

This morning, we hear about how our Lord comes from the Gadarenes into Galilee, and is confronted by Jairus, who’s 12-year-old daughter is near death. On the path to Jairus’s house, our Lord is then confronted by a woman, who for the same amount of time that Jairus’s daughter had been alive, has been hemorrhaging blood.  This woman had spent all of her resources to try and fix her health problems, and was eventually left in social and financial decimation.  Her faith in the healing power of Christ was so powerful, that if she could **just touch** a tassel of his garment, **all** of her problems would melt away.  And as soon as she touched him, by the Grace of God, the power went out from Christ and into this woman’s body…and she stood up healed, and undone.

Christ continues to Jairus's house and is met by Jairus's friends who say “Send Jesus away…its too late.  Your daughter is already dead.”   
Can you imagine the grief of the father who went to seek help from the Messiah, only to return to the unbelievable agony of losing his young daughter?  What does our Lord do in the midst of this grief?  He comforts the family, and raises up their daughter…**destroying** the sting of death.

These three miracles, all happening one after another, are **a beautiful**picture of what Christ does for us.  When we are with Him…and put our trust completely in Him…NOTHING can touch us.  There are no demons who can draw near to us and plague our minds.  Sickness melts away in his presence…and death is transformed into eternal life.

In this fallen world, however, it is impossible not to interact with the sadness that comes from the demons, sickness, and death. How many terrorist attacks have many had to endure recently?

Families in Florida, Las Vegas, New York also another countries have been driven to the brink of despair, knowing that there will be an empty spot at the dinner table on Christmas Day, that was once filled by a loved one.  The thought is enough to bring every one of us to the brink of despair, with no hope or faith in anything in this life. This is exactly why, Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ, our vigilance, our focus, and our attendance to our spiritual lives is **so**important.  It is why I will be pushing our parish family to be **present** at the Christmas Services in a month and a half…**despite** it being on a Sunday evening and Monday morning.

It **is VITAL** that we spend our lives, especially now, **seeking the presence of Jesus in the world**…because we know and believe that His presence changes EVERYTHING.

Demons, death, sickness, natural disasters**...all** of them become paths to salvation in the presence of Christ.  When we learn to live **with** Him and **for** Him, we slowly begin to realize how Christ turns all of the evils of the world…into a help for us.

Recently on the one of an Orthodox Church website I saw a verse with that crown symbol that simply stated: “Keep calm…and Kyire Eleison” …Keep Calm, and Lord have Mercy.  And I bring up this verse, because it is exactly the attitude that we all must have in the midst of the difficulties that life throws at us. And in the midst of grief, if we have not learned to put our complete trust and life in God, **nothing** will be clear.  But if we train ourselves to keep calm…and say, “Lord have mercy”, we will be given the grace to go through life and take whatever comes…because we know that the presence of our Lord has **overcome** the world.

He did not come to save us from sickness and death…but rather **THROUGH** sickness and death…and this knowledge will give us the strength to face the trials of life with peace.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do not wait.  We cannot afford to get comfortable and lax in our relationship with Christ and the Church.  If you have yet to make a real commitment to a prayer rule…start developing that relationship and understanding of your purpose in life now. If you have been weak in your Church attendance, begin to make the services **unnegotiable** with the rest of your schedule.  If you have not partaken of Holy Confession or the Eucharist…set a time for yourself and make it a priority during this upcoming fasting season.

Embrace the Love, Light, and Peace that our Lord has come to give us **right now** …Amen Amen Amen