***2 7 16***

***THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK***

***“Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”***

 On this after-feast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple, we hear St. Paul’s exhortation. Beloved, his words have a very important meaning for us in this day and age. When St. Anthony was once asked what we must do to obtain salvation, he answered: “Remember who you are, and Remember God.” One of the most difficult things for us, who live in this age of unbelievable distractions, is to remember God. People are so separated from spiritual things in their daily life, that it is very easy to forget the one thing that is really important-of utmost importance- and that is the health of their souls. They become so entrenched in the details of their material existence that they ignore “the one thing needful.” Without the spiritual life human beings become two-dimensional, will not find true joy, and will never be able to truly love. They will live a mechanical existence, which may be “successful” and yet it will be lifeless and have no beauty.

 Certainly, any of us who attend Church understand how important the Spiritual life is, and that is why we are making the effort. I encourage each of us to increase and grow in this spiritual life by living each day, as a faithful member of the Church. We must “aquire” the Holy Spirit if we are to live in this way. That is, we must pursue Holiness by trusting and looking to God each moment of our lives. It is by progressing in Holiness, that we will obtain healthy souls. The good news is, beloved, if we start out on this journey and get moving, our Lord will make holiness ours. It is an exciting and joyful journey-we simply have to start out on this journey. Our God will give us much more than we ask for. Our Lord Jesus, Himself, said ***"Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?1Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 1If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Mat 7:9-11 NKJ).***

 So beloved, we must ask him- that is we must pray. Each day let each one of us develop a rule of prayer so that we can remember God. In the morning, first thing, and just before we go to bed, let us quiet our minds and our hearts from all of the distractions that will come or have come during the day. We should then go before an Icon of our Lord and say our prayers. It does not have to be long but it needs to come from love. Look at the icon and remember how much God loves us, and then love and thankfulness will well up deep inside of us. Even if it seems mechanical at first, God who sees our intentions, will begin to warm our prayers-as we seek to please Him, and as we commit ourselves to prayer. Remember, love is a commitment more than an emotion. Then, as we begin or end our day, let us remember who we are-that we belong to Christ. Let us praise Him and ask forgiveness-Lord, Have mercy! Now, today, in our thoughts and in our actions, let us remember Him. Let us not put off this journey even one more minute- but let us begin today. For ***“Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”***