



The Publican and The Pharisee

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 4

When the women disciples learned from the angel, the joyous message of Thy Resurrection. They cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the Apostles: death is overthrown, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

Kontakion of Pharisee and Publican, Tone 4

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee and learn humility from the Publican's tears. Let us cry to our Savior: Have mercy on us, O only-merciful One.

The Lenten Fast

The Lenten season is inaugurated in the Church with the words of the prophet Joel (Joel 2:15-17). The message is proclaimed in the midst of the congregation: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God; and cry to the Lord".

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

***The 36th Sunday after Pentecost,
February 21st , Tone 4, Lu.18:10-14***

This Sunday, in the liturgical calendar, is called the "Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican". The Church, in order to exhort us to true repentance, sets before us the scene of two men who go to the Temple to pray, and of whom one is justified on account of his humility and his sincere contrition.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Lu. 18:10-14) that is read at the Liturgy is, if one may dare to say so, the most dangerous of all the parables. For we are so accustomed to condemn Phariseeism that here we seem to say: "At least, despite all my sins, I am no Pharisee. I am no hypocrite". We forget that the prayer of the Pharisee is not wholly bad. The Pharisee states that he fasts, that he gives tithes, that he is free of the grosser sins; and that is all true. Moreover, the Pharisee does not take the credit for his good actions; he recognizes that they come from God, and he gives thanks to God. There are two ways in which the prayer of the Pharisee errs: it lacks repentance and humility. He does not seem aware of the shortcomings — perhaps, excusable ones— of which he, like all men, is guilty; and, what is more, he compares himself to the publican with a certain pride, a certain disdain...

Let us now look more closely at the publican. He does not dare to lift up his eyes; he smites his breast; he implores God to have mercy on him, for he realizes that he is a sinner...Is the publican justified simply because he confesses his sin and stands humbly before God? In his case, there is something more. The heart of the publican's prayer is an appeal, filled with trust, to the goodness and tenderness of God. "God be merciful to me a sinner", he says. These first words, "God be merciful" echo the opening words of Ps. 51, which is essentially the psalm of penitence: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions". The fact that Jesus chooses to place these words in the mouth of the publican and so to make them the model of our prayers of repentance, throws a great light on the soul of the Savior, and on what He intends. What Jesus asks of a penitent sinner (and so, of each one of us), is above all this abandon, this absolute trust in the tender mercy and the favor of God.

Announcements and Activities

Divine Liturgy for the Finding of the Head of the Baptist— Wednesday, at 8:30AM

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

Back Indoors— up to 55 persons, masked and socially distanced. First-come, first-served. We will open the doors and employ the portico if numbers are too great.

Parish Council— met last week. We adopted a deficit budget treasurer's report for January. We discussed a rather bold plan for reducing the mortgage and are preparing to present it to you, the parish for consideration. More later.

Spring Fundraiser— want to give you early notice of the upcoming fundraiser. As you know our fundraisers are a critical part of our budget. So, "all hands on deck". Please mark your calendars for Saturday, March 6th. We'll keep you posted about what we need as we get closer.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—battling cancer. **Natalia**—Olga's friend. Sunday's brother, **Joe**, ill. **Chance**— Kerri's nephew **Emory**—a young relative of Kirk and Kathy. **Linda**, Mary S.'s daughter. **Sarah**—the sister of John Deak who is battling cancer. **Theresa**, cancer, and husband **Ron**, the daughter-in-law and son of Linda D. Samir's friend, **Johnny**, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight. **Anna J.**, who is battling health issues related to her bone marrow transplant and battle with Lyme Disease. **Hanna**—a friend of April's who has a brain injury. **Darko** — who had surgery for cancer and has to undergo chemo. **Reposed Michael**, Brian R.'s cousin. **Barbara Ranjo**, cancer surgery and recovering. **David**, newly reposed. **Tony**, health and an upcoming surgery. **John**, health. **Dana and Era**, two young women who are battling health issues. **Carol**, **Mike Miller's friend**. **Julie**, a friend of Katherine M. **Michaela and family**— Heather's friend battling cancer. **George**— Sunday's husband who has been battling health issues. Mara's dad, **Ratp** who recently had surgery. **Fr. Paul Lazor**, sometime dean of St. Vladimir Seminary reposed.. **Vera**— Newly-Reposed. **Linda D.** post surgery pain. **Nicole**, **Aiden and Kate**. **Zoya**, who lives in Russia and is suffering from the covid virus. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **Reposed Mel R.** faithful member and husband of Marianne. **Jerry**— the husband of Elise, Katie and Anna R. Who passed last Thursday. **Metropolitan Theodosius** newly reposed. **Reposed Darrel**, Kyle's father. **Diane F.** recovering from Surgery. **Erika and Family**. **And, finally**, all those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic (which has been growing in numbers across the country and in the world), wildfires, hurricanes, and civil unrest. **Jerry**— Reposed. **Don**, **Judy**, **Paul**, **Thomas**, **Marcella** Reposed, friends of **Karen and Scott T.**; **Donald**, reposed, a relative of Stephen and Luci F. **Archpriest Paul**— battling kidney problems. **Nicholas**—Reposed, a person known by Heather.

From the Lives of the Saints... SAINT ZACHARIAS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

During the reign of the Greek Emperor Heraclius, the Persian King Chozroes attacked Jerusalem, in the year 614 A.D. Chozroes pillaged the city, removed the Honorable Cross to Persia and took an enormous number of Christians into bondage. Among them was Patriarch Zacharias. The Jews assisted Chozroes in committing evil against the Christians. Among other acts of wickedness by the Jews, this one is mentioned: the Jews purchased from Chozroes ninety-thousand Christians as their slaves and slew them all. The aged Patriarch Zacharias remained in bondage for fourteen years. So many miracles occurred in Persia as a result of the Honorable Cross, that even the Persians said: "The Christian God has come to Persia." Later, Heraclius forced the Persian emperor to return the Honorable Cross to Jerusalem, along with the patriarch and the remaining captives. Emperor Heraclius himself bore the Cross on his shoulders into the Holy City. St. Zacharias spent his remaining days in peace and took up his habitation with the Lord in the year 631 A.D. He was succeeded on the throne by Patriarch Modestus, and after him by St. Sophronius (March 11).

THE VENERABLE TIMOTHY

Timothy was a recluse in a place called Symbola on the Asiatic side of Mount Olympus. In his youth Timothy entered a monastery and was tonsured a monk. Until old age he spent his earthly life in fasting, prayer, vigils and ceaseless labor. He remained pure and chaste throughout his entire life. To the pure and chaste, God gives authority over evil spirits, and He gave this to Timothy. Through his labors for the salvation of his soul, St. Timothy succeeded in building within himself a wonderful abode for the Holy Spirit. This holy man reposed in the year 795 A.D.

SAINT EUSTATHIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH

Eustathius was a great zealot and defender of Orthodoxy. As such, he was especially prominent at the First Ecumenical Council [Nicaea, 325 A.D.], where he intellectually and systematically refuted the teaching of Arius. With the other Holy Fathers, Eustathius rightly confessed that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, is equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit according to Divine Essence. Following the death of Emperor Constantine, the Arians again gained the ascendancy and began to bitterly persecute Orthodoxy. St. Eustathius was ousted from his throne and exiled, first to Thrace and later to Macedonia. Eustathius suffered much and long, until at last he gave up his holy soul to God in the year 345 A.D.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)