

**THE ORDER FOR THE READER TYPIKA SERVICE**  
**WHEN WE ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND CHURCH**

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2021**

**SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE – Tone 4. Beginning of the Lenten Triodion.**

Saint Makarios of Glinsk Hermitage (19th c.). Ven. Timothy of Symbola in Bithynia (9th c.). St. Eustathius (Eustace), Archbishop of Antioch (377). St. George, Bishop of Amastris on the Black Sea (802-811). "KOZEL'SHCHANSKAYA" Icon of the Mother of God (1881).

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**\*THE SERVICE TAKES PLACE IN FRONT OF OUR ICON CORNER\***

EVERYONE: O, God cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me! (3x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

READER: Amen. O, Heavenly King, the Comforter the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things. Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life. Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Good One!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3 times)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

EVERYONE: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

EVERYONE: Amen. Followed by the Singing of the First Antiphon.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul! Blessed are Thou, O Lord! Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases. The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Blessed art Thou, O Lord!*

**THE LITTLE LITANY is not said in the absence of a Priest or Deacon.**

**The reader continues:**

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (3x)

**READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.**

**EVERYONE: Amen. Followed by the singing of the Second Antiphon.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

*Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have being. Put not your trust in princes, in sons of men in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs he returns to his earth, on that very day his plans perish. The Lord will reign forever; Your God, O Zion, to all generation.*

*Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God, Who for our salvation didst will to be incarnate of the holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, Who without change didst become man and wast crucified, Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit: O Christ our God, trampling down death by death, save us!*

**THE LITTLE LITANY is not said in the absence of a Priest or Deacon.**

**The reader continues:**

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (3x)

**READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.**

**EVERYONE: Amen. Followed by the singing of the Third Antiphon.**

*In Thy Kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.*

**Followed by the singing of the appointed Troparia for the day:**

**TROPAR FOR THE RESURRECTION, TONE 4**

When the women disciples of the Lord 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!”

### THE EPISTLE LESSON

**READER: The Prokeimenon is in the 4th Tone:**

**O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all.**

CHOIR: *O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all.*

**READER: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, Thou art very great!**

CHOIR: *O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all.*

**READER: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!**

CHOIR: *In wisdom hast Thou made them all.*

**READER: THE READING IS FROM THE SECOND EPISTLE OF THE HOLY APOSTLE PAUL TO TIMOTHY.**

**READER: 2 Timothy 3:10-15**

**My Son Timothy:**

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

**READER: And to your spirit: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

CHOIR: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**READER: Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of meekness, righteousness and truth**

CHOIR: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

READER: For Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity.

CHOIR: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia

### THE GOSPEL LESSON

READER: And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

EVERYONE: Lord have mercy (3x)

READER: Let us listen to the Holy Gospel. The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

EVERYONE: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

READER: *Luke 18:10-14*

**Let us Attend!**

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

EVERYONE: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

READER: Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.

Remember us, O Master, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.

Remember us, O Holy One, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.

THE LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION is not said  
in the absence of a Priest or Deacon. The reader continues:

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

EVERYONE: Amen.

READER: The Heavenly Choir sings Thy praises and cries out: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

*READER: Draw nigh unto Him, and be enlightened; and your faces shall not be put to shame.*

*READER: The Heavenly Choir sings Thy praises and cries out: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.*

*READER: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

*READER: The Choir of Holy Angels and Archangels, with all the Powers of Heaven, sings Thy praises and cries out: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.*

### **THE SYMBOL OF FAITH (THE NICENE CREED)**

**EVERYONE:** I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of light; true God of true God, begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He arose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets.

In One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION is not said in the absence of a Priest or Deacon. The reader continues:**

*READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)*

**READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.**

**EVERYONE:** Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**READER: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us and save us.**

**EVERYONE: Amen. (Followed by the singing of the appointed Kontakia)**

### **KONTAKION FOR THE RESURRECTION, TONE 4**

My Savior and Redeemer as God has raised up the earthborn from their graves and He has broken the gates of Hell, and, as Master, hath risen on the third day.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**KONTAKION LENTEN TRIODION, TONE 4**

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

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Steadfast Protectress Tone 6 (Hymn to the Theotokos)**

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator. Despise not the entreating cry of us sinners, but in Your Goodness come speedily to help us who call on You in faith! Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos!! For You always protect those who honor You!

**READER: Lord have mercy (12x)**

**O All-Holy Trinity, Consubstantial Power, Undivided Kingdom, Origin of all Good: be graciously inclined unto me, a sinner. Make steadfast my heart and give it understanding, and take away from me every defilement. Enlighten my mind, that I may ever glorify, praise and worship Thee, and say: One is Holy, One is the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Blessed be the Name of the Lord, henceforth and forevermore. (3x)**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

**PSALM 34**

**READER: I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be continually in my mouth. In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my troubles. Draw nigh unto Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be put to shame. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The Angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear Him, and will deliver them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that hopes in Him. O fear the Lord, all you His saints; for there is no want for them that fear Him. The rich have become poor and have hungered; but they that seek the Lord shall lack no good thing. Come, O children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man that desires life, who loves to see days that are good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplication. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.**

**The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are broken in heart, and will save them that are humble in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, and out of them all shall the Lord deliver them. The Lord keeps all of their bones; not one of them shall be broken. The death of sinners is cruel, and they that hate the righteous shall do wrong. The Lord will redeem the soul of His servants, and none of them shall do wrong that hope in Him.**

READER: More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond than the Seraphim, without defilement, You gave birth to God the Word, True Theotokos, we magnify You.

CHOIR: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy. Lord, Bless!

READER: May He, Who rose from the dead,, Christ our True God, through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers, through the Prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, by the Power of the Precious and Life-Creating Cross, through the protection of the Bodiless Powers of Heaven, through the prayers of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, through the prayers of the holy glorious and all-laudable Apostles, through the Prayers of all the North American Saints, through the prayers of \_\_\_\_\_ the patron of this Holy Temple,, through the prayers of Saint Makarios of Glinsk Hermitage, Ven. Timothy of Symbola in Bithynia St. Eustathius (Eustace), Archbishop of Antioch, St. George, Bishop of Amastris on the Black Sea whom we commemorate today, of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, have mercy on us and save us.

*(The faithful now come up and venerate the Precious Cross and Icons in our Icon Corner.)*

READER: Through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

CHOIR: Amen. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.



**SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN and THE PHARISEE**  
{Beginning of the Lenten Triodion}

The Sunday after the Sunday of Zacchaeus is devoted to the Publican and the Pharisee. At Vespers the night before, the TRIODION (the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent) begins. Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who scrupulously observed the requirements of religion: he prayed, fasted, and contributed money to the Temple. These are very good things, and should be imitated by anyone who loves God. We who may not fulfill these requirements as well as the Pharisee did should not feel entitled to criticize him for being faithful. His sin was in looking down on the Publican and feeling justified because of his external religious observances. The second man was a Publican, a tax-collector who was despised by the people. He, however, displayed humility, and this humility justified him before God (Luke 18:14). The lesson to be learned is that we possess neither the Pharisee's religious piety, nor the Publican's repentance, through which we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, asking Him to be merciful to us, deliver us from sin, and to lead us on the path of salvation.

**The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee**  
**Luke 18:10-14**

**From the Explanation of the Gospel of St. Luke**  
**by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria**

**10-14. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus within himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house counted righteous rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

The Lord ceaselessly purges the passion of pride in many ways. This passion, more than any other, disturbs our thoughts, and for this reason the Lord always and everywhere teaches on this subject. Here He is purging the worst form of pride. For there are many offshoots of self-love. Presumption, arrogance, and vainglory all stem from this root. But the most destructive of all these kinds of self-love is pride, for pride is contempt of God. When a man ascribes his accomplishments to himself, and not to God, this is nothing less than denial of God and opposition to Him. Therefore, like enemy to enemy, the Lord opposes this passion which is opposed to Him, and through this parable He promises to heal it. He directs this parable towards those who trust in themselves and who do not attribute everything to God, and who, as a result, despise others. He shows that when righteousness – which is marvelous in every other respect and sets a man close to God – takes pride as its companion, it casts that man into the lowest depths and makes demonic what was God-like just a short time before.

The words of the Pharisee at first resemble the words of a grateful man. For he says, *God, I thank Thee*. But the words that follow are full of foolishness. He does not say, "that Thou hast made me to depart from extortion and iniquities," but instead, "*I thank Thee that I am not an extortioner or worker of iniquity.*" He attributes this accomplishment to himself, as something done by his own strength. How can a man who knows that what he has, he has received from God, compare other men to himself unfavorably and judge them? Certainly, if a man believed that he had received as a gift good things that in truth belong to God, he would not despise other men. He would instead consider himself just as naked as his fellow men in regards to virtue, except that by the mercy of God his nakedness has been

covered with a donated garment. The Pharisee is proud, ascribing his deeds to his own strength, and that is why he proceeds to condemn others. By saying that the Pharisee *stood*, the Lord indicates his haughtiness and lack of humility. In the same way that a humble-minded man is likewise humble in his demeanor, this Pharisee by his bearing displays his pride. Although it is also said of the publican that he stood, note what follows: he *would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven*, so that he was stooped in posture. But the eyes of the Pharisee, together with his heart, were lifted up to heaven in boastful exaltation. Nevertheless, the manner in which the Pharisee arranged the words of his prayer can still instruct us. First he says what he is not, and then he declares what he is. After stating, *God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are*, pointing to the failings of others, then he declares his good deeds, that he fasts twice a week and gives tithes of all that he possesses. The order of his prayer shows us that we must first refrain from wickedness, and then set our hand to virtue. One must not only turn away from evil, but also do good (Ps. 33:14). It is the same for a man who wants to draw pure water from a muddy spring: only after he has cleaned out the mud can he draw pure water.

Consider this as well: the Pharisee did not say, "I thank Thee that I am not an extortioner or an adulterer, as other men are." He could not endure even the association of his name with such vile terms, and so he uses them in the plural, casting these terms at other men, and avoiding the singular, which might associate him with sin. Having said, *I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are*, by contrast he points to himself, saying, *I fast twice in the Sabbath*, meaning, twice in the week, for the week was called "the Sabbath," deriving its name from the last day of the week, the day of rest. The day of rest was called *Sabbat*, and the week was called *Sabbata*, being the plural form of *Sabbat*. Whence it is that *mian Sabatton* is the first day of the week, which we call "the Lord's Day" (Sunday). Among the Hebrews *mian* means the same thing as first.

There is also a more profound explanation of this parable. Against the passion of adultery, the Pharisee boasted of his fasting, for lustful desires arise from eating and drinking to excess. By restraining his body through fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, as was the practice of the Pharisees, he kept himself far from such passions. He also resisted extortion and injustice by giving tithes of all his possessions. "I am so opposed to extortion and to wronging others," he says, "that I give alms of everything I have." Some believe that a simple and single tithe is prescribed by the law; but those who carefully examine the law will find three forms of tithing prescribed. You may learn this from Deuteronomy if you apply yourself diligently (Dt. 12:11,17).

So much for the Pharisee. Now we turn to the publican and observe that he is the Pharisee's exact opposite. He *stood afar off*, and kept himself at a great distance, not only in physical location, but in his demeanor, in his words, and by his compunction of heart. He was ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, for he considered his eyes unworthy of heavenly vision because they had desired to see and enjoy the good things of earth. And he *smote upon his breast*, striking his heart, as it were, because of its evil designs, and awakening it because it had been sleeping. The publican said no other words than, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. By doing this *he went down to his house counted righteous, rather than the other*. For every proud heart is unclean in the Lord's eyes, and *the Lord resisteth the proud but He giveth grace to the humble* (Prov. 3:34, I Pet. 5:5).

But one might wonder why it is that the Pharisee is condemned for speaking a few boastful words, while Job receives a crown for speaking many such words (Job 29). The answer is that the Pharisee stood and spoke these vain words under no compulsion, and he condemned others for no reason. But with Job, his friends pressed him and bore down upon him more fiercely than did his own calamities, telling him that he was suffering these things because of his sins. Job was compelled to enumerate his

good deeds, but he did so for the glory of God, and so that men would not be misled from the path of virtue. For if men came to hear that Job was suffering because what he had done was sinful, they would not act as Job had. As a result they would become haters of strangers instead of hospitable to strangers, merciless instead of merciful, and unrighteous instead of righteous; for such were the good deeds of Job. Therefore Job enumerated his virtues so that others would not be misled and harmed, and this was why he spoke as he did. Shall we not say that his words, which may seem boastful, in fact are radiant with humility? *Oh that I were as in months past, he said, wherein God preserved me!* (Job 29:2) Do you see that he attributes everything to God and does not judge others? Instead he is judged by his friends. But condemnation rightly falls upon the Pharisee, who attributed everything to himself and not to God, and judged others for no reason whatsoever. *For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled and condemned by God; and he that humbleth himself when he is condemned by others shall be exalted and counted righteous by God.* The Lord is saying, “You, O Christian, be the first to tell your sins, so that you may be counted righteous.”

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**A COMMENTARY ON THE SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN and THE PHARISEE**

{By: Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko (of Blessed Memory)}

The pre-Lenten season in the Orthodox Church begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. On this particular Sunday the liturgical book called the *Lenten Triodion* begins, and this liturgical book would be used in the Orthodox Church all the way through to the celebration of the Lord’s resurrection – the holy Pascha – and then from the holy Pascha – from Easter, the resurrection of Christ – to Pentecost another liturgical book is used.

Now the *Lenten Triodion* begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee; on this Sunday the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee is read at the Divine Liturgy and on this Sunday also, at the services of vespers and matins, hymns are sung during the services that relate to this Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. And this hymnology and these Scripture readings are intended to focus the believers’ minds on the approaching Lenten season that will prepare them for the celebration of the resurrection of Christ, so that the whole journey begins after the reading about the Canaanite woman and Zacchaeus that precedes this Sunday; it begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Also on this particular Sunday a penitential hymn is introduced at the Sunday matins service after the reading of the resurrection Gospel – because at every Sunday matins service in the Orthodox Church an account of the Lord’s resurrection from the dead is read, because Sunday is always a celebration of the Lord’s resurrection.

But on the Publican and the Pharisee Sunday, for the first time – and this is sung all the way up until Palm Sunday – you have these particular hymns which are sung at the service. They go like this: “Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-giver, for my spirit rises early to pray toward your holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled, but in your compassion, purify me by the loving-kindness of your mercy; lead me on the paths of salvation, O mother of God, for I have profaned my soul with shameful sins and have wasted my life in laziness, but by your intercessions deliver me from all impurity. When I think of the many evil things I have done, wretch that I am, I tremble at the fearful day of judgment, but trusting in your loving kindness like David, I cry out to you: have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy.”

And these hymns are sung together with Psalm 51, the penitential psalm of David, which is actually read at every single matins service, in every compline service, too, and the third hour service, too, at Orthodox services, Psalm 50 (51), the psalm of David repenting after his sin of murder and adultery when the prophet Nathan rebuked him; that psalm: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your

great mercy, according to the multitude of your tender mercy." is read daily in the Orthodox Church rule of prayer and it's read at three of the daily services: third hour, matins, and compline.

Now this Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee we have this parable being read. And I always recall when I was a parish priest how I would discuss this parable with children. Inevitably when you'd ask children about this parable, they would answer something like this: you'd say, "Children, what do you think is the meaning of this parable?" and almost inevitably the child would answer and say, "O Father, the Pharisee thought he was a good guy, but really he was bad, but he didn't know it, he thought was good, but the tax collector, the Publican, he thought he was bad, but really he was good, he didn't know he was good, but he thought he was bad."

And that is a kind of an interpretation that I noticed, that even many adults have when they hear this parable, they think that the Pharisee was really bad and the Publican was really good, and they didn't know it, but the Publican was humble and therefore God accepted him because he really was a good guy.

But that is not the parable at all; the parable is that this figure symbolizing the Pharisee had done all the external rules of uprightness according to the Law properly: he fasted twice a week, he gave tithes of what he possessed, and that he really kept all the rules. And this was true; he really did keep all the rules: he did it externally correctly. The tax collector, on the other hand, had broken all the rules. In fact, the tax collectors, as we all know, were kind of the paradigmatic sinners at the time of Jesus; they were Jews who betrayed their own people, who worked for the Romans, who extorted money from the people, who collected more money for taxes than they needed to collect, who gave that money to the Roman occupiers and kept the rest for themselves and basically were considered to be very sinful people.

So this tax collector really was a sinner. He did not keep the laws, he did not fast twice a week, he did not give tithes; on the contrary, he stole money. Nevertheless when he came into the temple, he didn't dare stand up in front, like the Pharisee did; he didn't dare thank God that he was not like other people, at least that that moment he knew who he was and what he was because he had had a real encounter with God and in that encounter with God he knew his sin and he said, "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Now Jesus says that when both these men left the temple, it was the Publican who was justified; it was the Publican who was heard and not the Pharisee. And then the interpretation is that if we keep all the rules and boast about it and think that in those rules is our merit, is our religious life, is our standing before God, then we are greatly deluded and we even, if we dare to boast of these things, we are even more deluded.

Now the Pharisee's problem, so to speak, was he had not really had an encounter with the living God, he had never met the righteous, holy, glorious God, who is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and mercy. He really thought that by these external regulations and keeping them properly that he was justified before God, but the Lord Jesus said that he was not. And that Publican, who really was a sinner, it seems clear, had an encounter with the living God. He knew that he was a sinner, and whenever we encounter God we know that we are sinners; whenever we encounter God we know that, however well we keep rules and regulations, that that is not the heart of the matter.

Now the Orthodox Church tradition following the Bible would be very very firm and strong and affirming that the rules have to be kept. Yes, the rules have to be kept: we should fast; we should say prayers three times a day, seven times a day; we should tithe, we should more than tithe; we should give what we can to the poor and the needy; and we should keep vigils and we should watch and we should do the Church services and we should keep doing prostrations and we should be careful of our diet; we should read the Bible – all of these things are essential, they are absolutely essential. They are

what prove that we have faith, and they are the ways that we open ourselves to the grace of God and encounter with God. However, as all of the holy Church Fathers and saints teach, these are means to an end; they are not an end in themselves. They are means to an end. Now if we neglect these means, our life really will be sinful, but if we deify these means, idealize these means, think that in these particular actions is lying our whole righteousness, then we are very far from God; we are actually deluded. In fact, some of the Church Fathers would say we are even idolaters because we are worshiping the laws and not the Law giver.

Now no one would justify the behavior of the tax collector; the tax collector has to repent, and it's very interesting that in this parable we don't know whether he repents or not. We know that Zacchaeus the tax collector did repent when Jesus came to his house, but we don't know about this publican. Jesus doesn't say. He simply said he prayed, "Be merciful to me," [and] left the temple. Maybe he kept on sinning; how do we know? But in any case at that moment before God, bowing down to the earth in the back of the building, his prayer was heard because his prayer was true. But the Pharisee's prayer was not even a prayer; it was just a rehearsal of his own righteousness before his own mind.

So as the hymns of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee say – they say we do not even have the righteousness of the Pharisee and yet we tend still to boast how great we are. And we do sin like the publican, like the tax collector. And especially if we're Christians we are told, not only not to steal, we are told to share our goods, and if we don't share our good then we are crooks, we are stealers ourselves according to the sermon on the mountain, so there is a sense in which we have sinned more than the publican, or more gravely at least, being Christians, but do not have that same compunction, that same sense of contrition before God.

And here we know that we cannot pray prayers of contrition; we cannot sing hymns like: "Open to me the doors of repentance. I bear the temple of my body all defiled. I've wasted my life in laziness." We can't know these kind of things unless we have had an encounter with the living God, though if we have had an encounter with the living God then we will always repent of our sins. We'll know that we're creatures; we'll know that even if we have kept all the rules we are still unworthy servants, and we will know that the rules do not save us. Only God can save us by his grace by faith; yet if we are believers then we will keep the rules, but we will not deify the rules; we will not idealize the rules; we won't worship the rules or the laws in the place of the one who gives us these rules and these laws. There is a popular book in Russian Orthodoxy. It was published in 1867 in Russia. It was by a saint named Ignatius Brianchaninov; he was a bishop, and he wrote this book for his fellow monks and nuns because he was terribly worried that the monastic people of his time were deifying and idealizing all the rules, but were not keeping the commandments of the Gospel and were not really living a deep authentic spiritual life, they were just going according to external practices. He said that they were idealizing dried bread and beans and formal readings of prayers and liturgical rituals and so on, and he said the following.

He said, "If we think about the parable of the sower we will understand everything." He said, "In the parable of the sower, God is giving us his words as seeds, and only he can give them; we have no right, no demand, no deserving that we would have these words; God gives them by sheer grace, just as a gift." And then he also said, "God gives the growth to these seeds in us. He makes them grow up bearing "the fruit worthy of repentance," to use John the Baptist's expression, "the fruit of the holy spirit" as St. Paul said: "love and peace and joy and patience and kindness and goodness and gentleness and self-control."

So God gives the seeds, and God makes the seeds grow and this St. Ignatius, this bishop, even said, "And the Holy Spirit is like the water that waters these seeds and makes them grow. The Holy Spirit is the power of this growth, and the Holy Spirit is also a gift; it's also a grace. We can't force it; we can't

demand the Holy Spirit. God gives it, so God gives his word and his spirit to us.” But then St. Ignatius said, “We have to receive it; we have to accept it.”

And then he said, “In the parable of the sower we are the earth.” In fact, it’s interesting that the name for man is “earth-man,” *Adamach*. Adam in the Bible means “earth-creature,” “clay-creature.” St. Paul even said we have our treasure as clay pots, earthen vessels, dirt, mud, clay. You know that’s what we are, but we have to prepare that earth. And so in the parable of the sower, St. Ignatius says, “Where the earth is hard and rocky you’ve got to get rid of the rocks; where there’s weeds and thorns, you’ve got to get rid of them; where the soil is shallow you’ve got to deepen it, you’ve got to cultivate it, you’ve got to put in fertilizer, you’ve got to make it ready to receive the words of God,” and he said, “That is what ascetic practices are, that is what the rules of the law are: fasting, saying prayers, going to church, keeping vigils, doing prostrations, tithing with our money. That is nothing but cultivating the soil.” And then he went on to say: if a farmer would try to plant a field and just take the seeds and just throw them all over the place without preparing the soil, nothing would grow. Some would be on rocks, some would be in weeds, some would be in thorns, some would be in shallow earth, but nothing would grow. On the other hand, if a farmer just kept cultivating the soil: digging it deepening it, getting rid of the rocks, getting rid of the weeds, getting rid of the thorns, manuring it, making it really fertile, but never put any seeds in it, that man would be insane, too, because nothing would grow.”

So he says, “We must cultivate the earth, and that’s what ascetical practices are, that’s what the rules are. But we must also receive the seeds, we must receive the word of God and the Holy Spirit by grace, otherwise there is nothing.” And so St. Ignatius said, “If a person puts all their righteousness in these external actions – like it seems that the Pharisee did – and thinks that they’re really the spiritual life, well, they are just in the hands of devil.” He said, “On the other hand if people never practice the rules, don’t keep the rules, don’t keep the commandments, don’t read the Bible, don’t say their prayers, don’t go to the Church, don’t share their goods, then they are just given over to the crudest sins and passions: gluttony, *pornea*, sexual unchastity, greed, anger.”

So he said, “The narrow path, the royal path, is, yes, to be like that Pharisee and to keep those rules, but to keep those rules with an encounter with the living God, so that those rules open us to the grace of God in humility and gratitude and not thanking God [we] were not like other people, but thanking God that he has been gracious to us. And then, when we keep those rules, then the strange thing is, no matter how righteous we are, externally, we will still pray the Publican’s prayer. We will stay pray, “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

So the pre-Lenten season begins when we meditate [on] this parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. So as the hymns of the Church say, “Let us flee from the boastfulness and the pridefulness of the Pharisee who just kept the rules externally, and let’s learn from the Publican’s tears.” And even the Holy Fathers say, “Without tears, no one can be saved.” But what’s so interesting is that the more righteous, the more holy, the more full of grace, the more the fruit of the Holy Spirit is in a person, the more they repent, the more they weep, and the more they pray the Publican’s prayer: “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

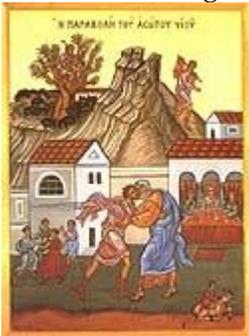
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### The Pre-Lenten Sundays



The following Sunday is that of the Publican and the Pharisee. The focus here is on the two men who went to the Temple to pray – one a pharisee who was a very decent and righteous man of religion, the other a publican who was a truly sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people. The first, although genuinely righteous, boasted before God and was condemned, according to Christ. The second, although genuinely sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God (Lk 18.9). The meditation here is that we have neither the religious piety of the pharisee nor the repentance of the publican by which alone we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, and to beg for mercy.



The next Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Hearing the parable of Christ about God's loving forgiveness, we are called to "come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the movement of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that the Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Lk 15.11-24).



The next Sunday is called Meatfare Sunday since it is officially the last day before Easter for eating meat. It commemorates Christ's parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25.31-46). We are reminded this day that it is not enough for us to see Jesus, to see ourselves as we are, and to come home to God as his prodigal sons. We must also be his sons by following Christ, his only-begotten divine Son, and by seeing Christ in every man and by serving Christ through them. Our salvation and final judgment will

depend upon our deeds, not merely on our intentions or even on the mercies of God devoid of our own personal cooperation and obedience.

*... for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and in prison and you visited Me. For truly I say to you, if you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me (Mt 25).*

We are saved not merely by prayer and fasting, not by “religious exercises” alone. We are saved by serving Christ through his people, the goal toward which all piety and prayer is ultimately directed.



Finally, on the eve of Great Lent, the day called Cheesefare Sunday and Forgiveness Sunday, we sing of Adam’s exile from paradise. We identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this day the Lord’s teaching about fasting and forgiveness, and we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive us.

*If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses (Mt 6.14–18).*

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2021

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 21st</b>	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>FEBRUARY 28th</b>	 <b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>MARCH 7th</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 <b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 14th</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 21st</b>	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 28th</b>	 <b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 4th</b>	 <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 11th</b>	 <b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 18th</b>	 <b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 25th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>APRIL 30th</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>MAY 2nd</b> NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> <b>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

**Orthodox Christian Stewardship** is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. **Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges** accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God by teaching and giving examples of a virtuous life to all (St. John Chrysostom). A primary goal of Stewardship is to strengthen our understanding of the teachings and dogmas of The Orthodox Faith through supporting the work of The Church. This can be found in The Divine Services as reiterated by St. John of San Francisco: "The Divine Services in their composition contain all the fullness of the dogmatic teaching of the Church and set forth the path of salvation." Fulfilling our responsibility of continual learning begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. Through being Stewards of the Gospel and of The Orthodox Church, Education calls on the faithful to cheerfully receive instruction given to the Church by Our Lord, Holy Scripture, The Divine Services, and The Holy Fathers of the Church. Through Orthodox Christian Stewardship, The Church promotes spiritual growth and strengthened faith and calls on all of us to bring the faith and love of Our Lord to every aspect of our lives as gifts from Him through our time, talents, and treasures. During this year, let us come together as a Diocesan Family and recommit ourselves to both spiritual growth of our Life in Christ as well as through Orthodox Christian Stewardship by attending the Divine Services, attending the many opportunities of Education for both Adults and Children through Parish Education, gatherings, and fellowship and by supporting our Parishes and Diocese in the many endeavors through which, by the Grace of God, we will bring the light and love of Our Lord to all!

***LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14***

***YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37***

***YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39***

***LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44***

***LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4***

***LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8***