



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

26 January 2020

TONE 7, Eothinon 10—Sunday of Zacchaeus. Martyrs Ananias—Presbyter, Peter, and seven soldiers, in Phœnicia (284-305). St. Simeon “the Ancient” of Mt. Sinai (ca. 390). Ven. Xenophon, his wife, Mary, and their two sons, Arcadius and John, of Constantinople (5th-6th c.). St. Joseph, Bishop of Thessalonica, brother of St. Theodore of Studion (830).

FIRST ANTIPHON

It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! To proclaim in the morning Thy mercy, and Thy truth by night! (R:) Upright is the Lord our God, there is no unrighteousness in Him (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (R:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and has girt Himself! (R:) Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant to Thee, “Alleluia”! For He has established the world which shall not be shaken! (R:) Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days! (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ!
Save us, O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, as we sing to Thee: Alleluia!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT: Like the zealous Elijah thou didst become, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. A dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer. O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 3): On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *The Lord will give strength to His people.
Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God; ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.*

From Saint Paul's First Epistle to Timothy

(1 Tim 4:9-15) **My child Timothy, this saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: To this end we toil and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the savior of all, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Until I arrive, attend to the reading, exhortation, and teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have received through the prophetic word with the laying on of hands of the priests. Meditate on these things, give yourself wholly to them, so that your progress may be evident to everyone.**

If today we read from a private letter sent by Saint Paul to his disciple Timothy, it is because somehow these lines are also applicable to us. But how? Unlike St. Timothy, who is counted among the Seventy apostles, none of us is an apostle, and we have not learned to be Christians at the feet of Saint Paul. How, then, does this concern us?

The Church yesterday, today, and tomorrow confesses that **we have set our hope on the living God** and that we should not **neglect the gift we have received** from God. These sayings, as Saint Paul writes, **are trustworthy and deserve full acceptance**. Let us then meditate on them as they are words for us, today.

To this end we toil and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God. Our Christian life is (or should be) a constant striving to co-operate with God, to blend the movement of our being—our energies—with God's divine presence, or grace, or energies. We "toil and struggle" to make room for God's liturgy in us, so that the Holy Spirit who always heals that which is infirm and completes that which is lacking, gradually reshape us in the image and likeness of Christ. The saying is trustworthy: our hope is not some imaginary friend, or some lofty *concept of God*—rather, **we have set our hope on *the living God***.

Second, **do not neglect the gift you have received**. Perhaps we should capitalize it: the Gift. What we have received from the living God in Baptism is the seed of Christ's resurrection, a sort of leavening agent designed to grow in us and transform us. Just as dry yeast is activated by warm water, so also does the gift received at Baptism become active and effective when we expose ourselves, in prayer, in Scripture reading, in Liturgy, in works of charity, in service to one another, to the quickening work of the Holy Spirit.

This word is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: we have set our hope on the living God. Let us not neglect the gift we have received.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Holy Gospel according to Luke

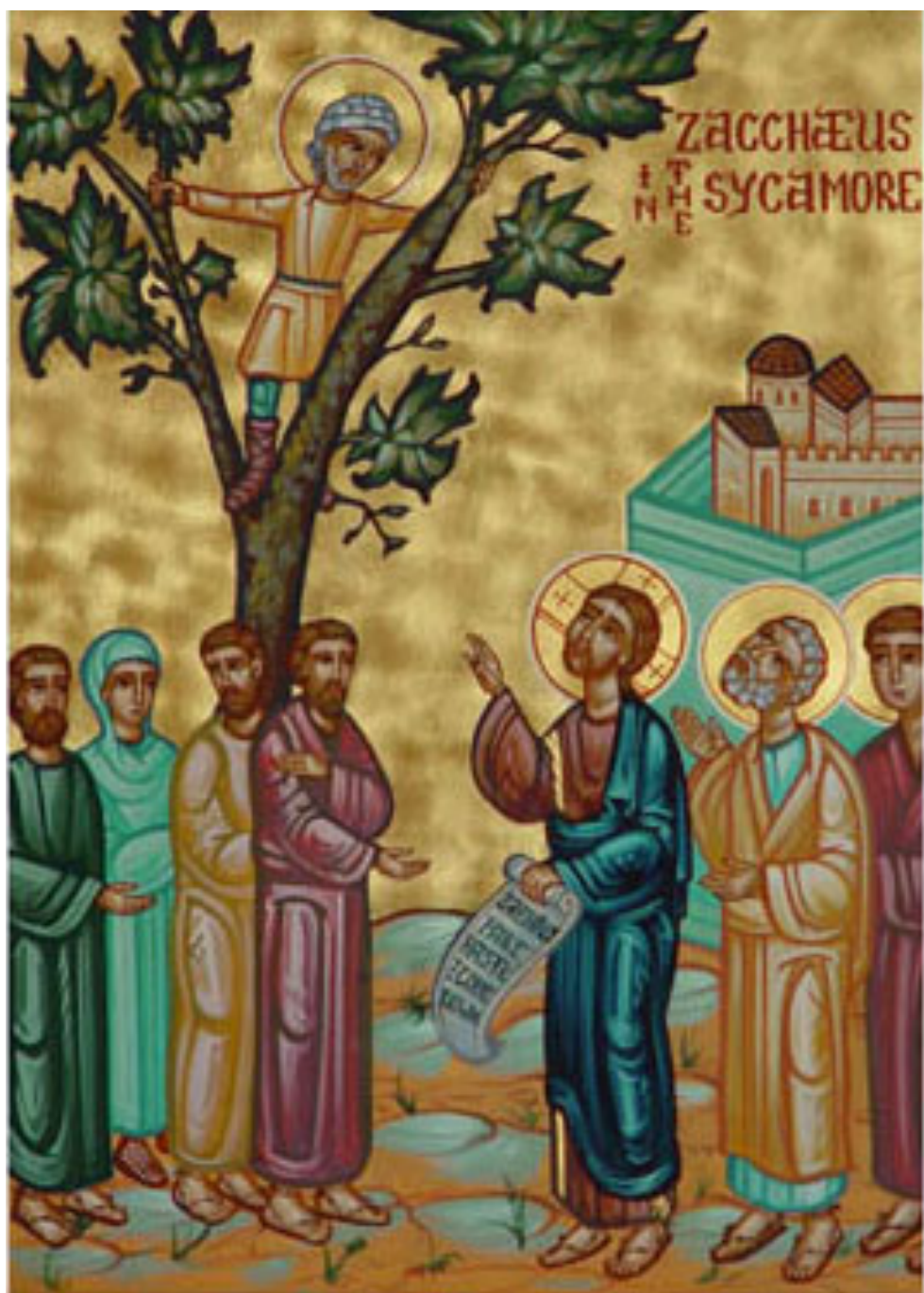
(Luke 19:1-10) At that time, He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

This Sunday's Gospel reminds us of the confession of faith we make every Liturgy, before receiving Holy Communion: **the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost.** The Evangelist tells of someone who was truly "lost" to God: a certain Zacchaeus, who had become filthy rich by abusing his tax-collector job. Not only was he a collaborator of those who oppressed and abused his compatriots (he was collecting taxes for the Roman occupants of Judaea); like most tax-collectors of his day, he was making himself rich in the process, extorting higher taxes than was actually demanded, taking bribes, and, generally, satisfying his insatiable greed by any means available.

Any decent person would despise tax-collectors. In fact, "tax-collector" had become an insult used to suggest the worst kind of character. As for this particular tax-collector, after years and years of abuses, Zacchaeus had come to be hated by everyone. This is why the crowd is absolutely stunned and outraged when the Lord chooses to single out *this man*, seek him out, speak to him, and even invite himself under his roof! Saint Luke tells us how the crowd reacted: **they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."**

The people were right: Zacchaeus was a sinner, an evil person, a filthy, despicable kind of sinner. Yet, the Lord who knows the heart of man, must have seen something there. For us, who are ready to judge by appearance, it is surprising to read that this terrible sinner was nevertheless happy to receive Christ under his roof—"he received him *joyfully*"—and to change his life radically. In short, Zacchaeus repents, turns around, cuts himself off from evil, attempts to make up for his past misdeeds, and entrusts his past, present, and future to the mercy of God.

Who is our teacher this Sunday? Is it the crowd, is it the apostles? Neither. *It is Zacchaeus!* Like him, we must start with acknowledging our being "lost"—the first among sinners, as we confess at Liturgy—and accept "joyfully" the visitation of God. (Incidentally, a prayer of the service of house blessing states explicitly that we ask the Lord to enter our home, *just as He accepted to enter under the roof of Zacchaeus!*). If we follow the model of this tax-collector who repents, we will also share with him the joy of hearing from the Lord: **"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**



HOUSE BLESSINGS:

Father Bogdan is available to come on Saturday or Sunday afternoon/ evening.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Don (Dollie's brother); Ann (Wilson), recovering after surgery; Nyal, Jean's son-in-law (motorcycle accident); Joseph Totin; Ion, Marius & Katherine (Stan); Serbanescu and Becker families; Gabriel; Karen (Jane Best's daughter); Charitini; Stella & Dimitrios; Christine (Abraham); Dollie; Venetia; Maura; Ann; Ed, Peter, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; Kent, Bob, David (relatives of Jean); Stelian; Diane; Maura (Andronic); Susannah; Ed Sr (Totin).

DEPARTED: Frank (Seba's brother); Kurt (Melinda's father); Jackie (Rose Totin's mother); Maria (Stella Lyras' sister); Sula; Kurt (Diane's son); Viorica; Norma; Miltiades; Tim (Becker); Silviu; Ross (Chrissi's friend); Richard Johns; Viorica; Bishop Antoun; Vito (DiPento); Jim and Marion (Raimondi); Stephanie (Yazge); Job; George (Georgiades); Abie (Abraham); Bill (Thomas); Marta.