

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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**SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE — *Tone 1.***

**5 February 2012**

*Beginning of the Lenten Triodion. Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord. Holy Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily (251). Martyr Theodula of Anazarbus in Cilicia, and with her the Martyrs Helladius, Macarius, and Evagrius (ca. 304).*

## FIRST ANTIPHON

*My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made concerning the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. (R.):* Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

*Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever. (R.):*

*Glory... Now and ever... (R.):*

## SECOND ANTIPHON

*Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. Bend Thy bow, and prosper, and reign. (R.):* O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

*The scepter of Thy kingdom is a righteous scepter. (R.):*

*Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)*

## THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE MEETING (see below) with the following verses:

*Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*

*Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.*

*I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.*

## AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

*The Lord hath made known His salvation;  
He hath revealed His justice in the sight of the Gentiles.*

**Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ! O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: "Alleluia"!**

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 1): While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

TROPARION OF THE MEETING OF CHRIST (Tone 1): Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee arose the Sun of justice, Christ our God, illumining those who are in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous old man, carrying in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, Who granteth us Resurrection.

TROPARION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT (Tone 4, Russian): 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 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: Let us flee the Pharisee's conceited vaunting; let us learn the Publican's humility, and cry with groans unto the Savior: Thou Who alone art swiftly reconciled, be gracious unto us

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Pray and make your vows unto the Lord your God.  
In Judah is God known.*

*The Reading is from the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to Timothy  
(2 Tim 3:10-15)*

Timothy my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But you continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

We should keep in mind Saint Paul's clear statement: **all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.** In other words, Christianity is not for the lazy, not for weak souls, not for the cowards. Living as Christians, we are in the business of working out the dawn of the Kingdom of God in us; and as long as we are still in the interim period between the Resurrection of the Lord and His second coming, this new creation that dawns in us beginning with our baptism, remains *other than* and *opposed to* the fallen world in which we live. So, a Christian is a walking paradox: a fallen, frail, sinful human, yet one who already tastes of (and increasingly embodies) the new life of the Kingdom; a life that withers and will inevitably die, yet a life that already anticipates the resurrection.

From the very beginning, the Christian message has been mocked, attacked, suppressed. From the very beginning, it was clear that there is intense and hateful resistance against the Gospel, and that this resistance ultimately can be traced to the Adversary, Satan. "**Indeed,**" the Apostle confirms, "**all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**" For us today, however, it is less beneficial to focus on enemies and dangers "out there" lurking to oppress and persecute us for being

Christians. “All who desire to live a godly life” know well that the first and most dreadful battle is happening *within*.

Christianity is not for the lazy, not for weak souls, and not for cowards: let us redouble our efforts in fighting the good fight, the fight against the tyranny of our own sins and weaknesses and failings.

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke*

(Luke 18:10-14)

The Lord spoke this parable: "Two men went up into the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a Publican (a tax collector). The Pharisee stood and prayed thus within himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers—or even like this Publican. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' But the Publican, standing afar off, would not even lift up 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, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

It does not take a degree in Theology to know that it is much easier to spot the sins of people around us than it is to see our own sins! “The pot is calling the kettle black.” An Arabic proverb says, "The camel cannot see the crookedness of its own neck"; and in Romania, "the potsherd laughs at the cracked pot."

The Lord once put this very sharply: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” And now He offers the same teaching by means of a parable. Let's consider the characters in the story: God, the Pharisee, and the Publican. With the publican—that is, the tax collector—things are pretty clear. Any decent person despised tax-collectors, because they were not only merciless, but also corrupt and abusive. They extorted higher taxes than was actually demanded, they shamelessly demanded bribes, and generally satisfied their insatiable greed by any means available. As for the Pharisees—the specialist of the

Scriptures, the theologian, as it were—people would usually respect them as dedicated to God and concerned with leading a pure life. When these two people interact, everyone would expect that the Pharisee should chastise the tax-collector for his sinful lifestyle.

But the two appear in front of God, and so the truth of their heart is revealed and looks quite surprising. As the Lord says, **it is the tax-collector who returned home justified, not the theologian!** But why so? The fact is that we are not reading a parable about a “good tax-collector” and an “evil Pharisee.” Wasn’t the tax-collector sinful? Of course he was! And wasn’t the Pharisee fasting twice a week (a good example for us!) and giving 10% of his income (a good example for us!)? Of course he was!

Note that, in the parable, God remains silent. It would seem that He is not particularly attentive to the virtues of the Pharisee and the vices of the tax-collector. Indeed, according to Scripture, **“The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam 16:7).** And it is there, in the heart, that the truth is revealed! The tax-collector, despite his many sins, finds salvation because his heart breaks with humility and repentance; the Pharisee, however, with all his fasting and tithing according to the Law, condemns himself by despising and condemning his brother.

We are reading this parable because we are slowly preparing to enter the period of Lent. May this divine Gospel lesson find not only eyes to see and ears to hear, but also hearts to receive it!

### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

**LIVING:** Ignatius and Amy (wedding), Karen (Joanna’s mother), Abie and Chris, Victoria (Frank’s mother), Diane, Sula, Bill, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Lorine, Jonathan and Joanna.

**DEPARTED:** Joseph (Rose’s father), Fred (Dollie’s uncle), Bob (Diane’s father), George (Botsis), Michael, priest James, Gabriel, Eduard, Lance, Nancy.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today: stump the priest!** Any questions, any topics, from children or adults.
- **“One parish, one book.”** We already listen to the same Gospel proclaimed and preached on Sundays; why not take an additional step and read one book together *as a parish*? Since we are preparing to enter Lent, let’s learn together from Fr. Alexander Schmemmann’s beautiful book *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha*. Excerpts will be provided along with the bulletin every Sunday. The book can be purchased easily from amazon.com or from the Antiochian Village; most of its content is also available on google books.
- **Sunday, February 19: No Divine Liturgy at St. Anthony’s!** We will gather for a pan-Orthodox service at 10 AM at St Andrew’s Church (OCA). The service will be followed by a Meatfare Luncheon at the Ukrainian Hall. For tickets for the luncheon please see Georgia.
- **3/17-18 Pastoral Visit by His Grace, Bishop Thomas.** Our bishop will be with us on Saturday and Sunday, March 17th and 18th. Please try to attend Vespers that Saturday, and Matins and Liturgy the next morning. The bishop will meet with the parish council on Saturday evening, and with the entire congregation on Sunday after Liturgy.
- **House blessings.** Please place your name on the sign-up sheet available in the church hall. Offerings at the blessing of your home will help offset the cost of the Antiochian Village Camp.

**Vespers** and confession on Saturdays, 6:30 PM;  
**Matins** on Sundays 9:15 AM.

**ONE PARISH, ONE BOOK**  
From Alexander Schmemmann, *Great Lent*

**HUMILITY**  
(The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee)

On the eve of the "*Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee*", on Saturday at Vespers, the liturgical book of the Lenten season—the *Triodion*—makes its first appearance and texts from it are added to the usual hymns and prayers of the weekly resurrection service. They develop the next major aspect of repentance: *humility*.

The Gospel lesson (Lk. 18:10-4) pictures a man who is always pleased with himself and who thinks that he complies with all the requirements of religion. He is self-assured and proud of himself. In reality, however, he has falsified the meaning of religion. He has reduced it to external observations and he measures his piety by the amount of money he contributes to the temple. As for the Publican, he humbles himself and his humility justifies him before God. If there is a moral quality almost completely disregarded and even denied today, it is indeed humility. The culture in which we live constantly instills in us the sense of pride, of self-glorification, and of self-righteousness. It is built on the assumption that man can achieve anything by himself and it even pictures God as the one who all the time "gives credit" for man's achievements and good deeds. Humility-- be it individual or corporate, ethnic or national-- is viewed as a sign of weakness, as something unbecoming a real man. Even our churches-- are they not imbued with that same spirit as the Pharisee? Do we not want our every contribution, every "good deed," all that we do "for the Church" to be acknowledged, praised, publicized?

The Lenten season begins then by a quest, a prayer for humility which is the beginning of true repentance. For repentance, above everything else, is *a return to the genuine order of things*, the restoration of the right vision. It is, therefore, rooted in humility, and humility-- the divine and beautiful humility-- is its fruit and end. "Let us avoid the high-flown speech of the Pharisee," says the *Kontakion* of this day, "and *learn the majesty* of the Publican's humble words..." We are at the gates of repentance and at the most solemn moment of the Sunday vigil; After the Resurrection and the



appearance of Christ have been announced—"having beheld the Resurrection ..."—we sing for the first time the *troparia* which will accompany us throughout the entire Lent:

*Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life, for my spirit rises early to pray towards thy holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled. But in Thy compassion, purify me by the loving kindness of Thy 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 Thy living kindness, like David I cry to Thee: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.*