

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE — *Tone 5.*

24 February 2013

Beginning of the Lenten Triodion. First (4th c.) and Second (452) finding of the head of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John.

FIRST ANTIPHON

*It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! **R.:** 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 and 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 hath girt Himself! **(R.:**) O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!*

*For He 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 and Word of God ...)

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 5): Let us believers praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation; for He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh, to suffer death, and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

TROPARION OF THE FINDING OF ST JOHN'S HEAD (Tone 4): The head of the Forerunner rose from the earth as a star, brilliant with rays of healing and immortality. It gathers the choirs of angels in heaven, and assembles the human race on earth to sing with one voice the glory of Christ our God.

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 (*To the special melody “On this day Thou hast appeared”*): 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

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Seba, Richard (Johns), Bill, Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot, Richard (Michaels), Sam, Karen (Joanna's mother), Victoria (Frank's mother), Diane, Sula, Dollie, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Benjamin, John, Hilda (Chris Abraham's mother).

DEPARTED: Nicolae, Edmund (Ed's uncle), Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Ed (Joanna's grandfather), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob (Diane's father), Michael, Gabriel, Eugenia (Cristina's godmother).

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 weak souls, not for the lazy, 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:** memorial service for Silviu Serbanescu's father, Nicolae.
- **Next Sunday 3/2: stump the priest!** Any questions, any topics, from children or adults.
- **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.
- **Sunday, March 10: No Divine Liturgy at St. Anthony's!** We will gather for a pan-Orthodox service at 10 AM at St Andrew's Church (OCA), followed by a catered Pre-Lenten Luncheon at St. Andrew's Church Hall. For tickets for the luncheon please see Georgia.

Sunday, March 17, Cheese Fare Sunday:

General Parish Meeting, followed by Vespers of Forgiveness.

Once note aside, due to some changes from the Archdiocese to our constitution, only one person will be elected to the 2013 Parish Council. Nominations from the floor will be taken so please be prepared to have prayerfully considered a worthy person to be nominated, including yourself.

- **5/1 (Holy Wednesday evening): Pastoral Visit by His Grace, Bishop Thomas.** Our bishop will be with us, and will celebrate the service of Holy Unction. Please plan to be in church before 6pm, to receive him properly. After the service, His Grace will eat supper with us—please bring a Lenten dish to share.

From Alexander Schmemmann, *Great Lent*

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee: HUMILITY

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 Christ's Resurrection and appearance 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