

From the Divine Office for the Sunday of the Pharisee & the Publican

When the Pharisee went up to the temple in his vainglory and the Publican bowed in his repentance, they both stood before You, O Master! The one lost his reward through boasting, while the other won Your blessing through his sighs. Because I too am sighing in Your presence, strengthen me, Christ God, for You are the Lover of Mankind. (Vespers)

Every good deed can be made void through foolish pride, while every sin can be cleansed by humility. Let us then embrace humility in faith and completely turn away from the path of pride. (Orthros, Ode 1)

Let us hasten to follow the example of the Pharisee in his virtues and to imitate the Publican in his humility. Let us flee what is wrong in each of them: foolish pride and the defilement of transgressions. (Orthros, Ode 5)



**SUNDAY OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN
JANUARY 24, 2021**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to you Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 1, pg. 38)

After the stone was sealed by the Jews and the while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of life: "Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your kingdom! Glory to Your economy, O You who alone are the lover of mankind!"

Troparion of the Dormition (Tone 1, Pg 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercessions, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Pharisee and the Publican (Tone 3)

Let us shun the boastful words of the Pharisee, and learn from the Publican humility with sighing; let us cry out to our Savior: "Have mercy on us, You who alone are merciful!"

Kondakion of the Encounter (Tone 2)

O Christ our God who through Your birth have sanctified the virginal womb, and have blessed the arms of Simeon. You have come today to save us. When wars prevail keep Your people in peace and strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, for You alone are the Lover of Mankind.

He affirms the value of devotional practices, when kept in a suitable way. He condemns the Pharisees for their attitudes, not their actions. He tells His followers, "*The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.*

Therefore whatever they tell you to observe,

that observe and do, but do not do according to their works, ... all their works they do to be seen by men" (Mt 23:2, 5).

Our fasting should not be a matter of public display. "*Moreover, when you fast,*" the Lord says, "*do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly"* (Mt 6:16, 17).

In Mt 23, Christ specifies the place of devotional practices in a mature spiritual life. "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone"* (Mt 23:23). Devotional practices are commendable, but not as a replacement for mutual love.

During the coming Fast we may become so concerned with its devotional aspects, such as attending special services or avoiding meat and dairy products, that we become irritable with others and make void our striving to keep the Fast. The mature approach is that outlined by Christ in the verse above: observe the devotional practices, but do not ignore or abuse others in the process. As the Greek saying puts it, it is better to eat the fish than to eat the fisherman!

Isn't Fasting Obsolete?

In the first century AD, some Christians coming from a Jewish background were concerned with keeping the ritual precepts of the Old Testament in addition to accepting Jesus as the Messiah. In the traditional Jewish view, it was keeping the precepts of the Law which makes a person righteous before God. St Paul repeatedly insisted that this was no longer the case. It is putting our faith in Christ, not the devotions we observe, which justifies us. The Law of Moses, the Apostle taught, was "*a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ"* (Col 2:17).

For us, observing the precepts of the Fast are meant to lead us to Christ, not substitute for a relationship with Him. We cannot earn ourselves a place in heaven by fasting, or by any other practice we might undertake. We can fast and pray, however, to express our gratitude for the gifts of God who has united us to Himself in Christ. We fast, not to improve our standing with God, but to respond with gratitude to what He has done for us.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Fr. Jean Ghaby

+**Philip Jordan.** Requested by the Jordan Family

Jan 31 +Philip Jordan. Requested by Francis & Carol Boyda

Feb 7 +Patricia Cronican. Requested by Antonio & Karen Solitro and Michael & Virginia Mischitelli.

Feb 14 Nan Nejaimey (1yr.), Charles & Lena (Esper) Nejaimey, Thomas & Irene (Ryan) Kelly, Katherine (Nejaimey) Kleimer. Requested by James Nejaimey & family.

Liturgical Schedule

Tue, Feb 2, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Encounter w/Blessing of Candles

Sat, Feb 6, 10AM - Divine Liturgy for the Saturday of the Dead. Please send Fr. Bryan the names of anyone you would like to have remembered this day.

Great Lent begins Monday, February 15. We will pray Great Compline on Mondays, Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays, and the Akathist Hymn on Fridays. All services will be at 6PM, unless otherwise announced,.

Last Week's Collection

Regular	\$ 894
Stole	\$ 620
Candles	\$ 18
Total	\$1,531

Thanks to all who have continued to contribute to the church during the pandemic, whether in person or by mail. It costs approximately \$8,000 per month for us to cover our financial obligations. As I have stated before, your contributions have made it unnecessary to access our savings in order to pay bills. Please don't think of your contributions as "dues" but as giving back to God a gift of thanksgiving for everything He has given you!

Remember the Melkite Church in Your Will: Give a lasting gift for future generations of Melkites and help to ensure that our beautiful Melkite heritage continues to grow and flourish for your children's children. Simply add the following statement to your last will and testament: *I hereby bequeath to the Melkite Eparchy of Newton the following sum: \$_____.* Contact Bishop NICHOLAS personally to inform him of your generous bequest: 3 VFW Parkway, West Roxbury, MA 02132.

Fr. Bryan & Khourieh June will be away next Sunday. Fr. Philip Raczka, Protosyncellus of the Eparchy and Rector of Annunciation Cathedral will celebrate the Divine Liturgy for us.

Mystery of Icons

Introduction into the Theology and Spirituality of the Icon in the Byzantine Tradition

(February 22 - March 6, 3:00 - 4:45 PM EST)

A short, but intensive course on the history, theology and spirituality of icons. We will trace the development of Eastern Christian iconographic tradition through its main stages, look at its most remarkable phenomena, and try to understand theological and spiritual appeal of icons through the ages.

To learn more about this Free Course, hosted by the ECF Office of Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic and how to join it either live or watch its recordings please visit:

https://sites.google.com/view/mysteryoficons-coursesite/home?fbclid=IwAR36zRYuBhrxnykpgxOquTCKCV9QaZLYOI5r9pqB_tfRvOxHQIW9EUWaqLw



When Good Actions Are Made Void

THIS WEEKEND OUR CHURCH opens the pages of the Triodion, the book containing the texts for all the services leading up to Pascha. This Lenten journey may be viewed on two levels, chronologically and spiritually. Both are important as we look ahead to our celebration of Pascha.

Chronologically, the period of the Triodion consists in three distinct sections: the pre-Lenten period, the Great Fast itself, and the Great and Holy Week. The first, the pre-Lenten period, progressively leads us to the coming Great Fast. It begins with two Sundays which introduce us to thoughts of *repentance*. Next we have a weekend of observances reminding us of our *mortality*: the Saturday of the Dead and the Sunday of the final Judgment. Finally, in Meat-fare Week, we are eased into the Fast by beginning to *abstain* from meat. The last pre-Lenten observance takes place on Cheese-Fare Sunday with the ceremony of *forgiveness*, in which we ritually ask the entire community to forgive us our offences so that we may begin the Great Fast with pure hearts.

The Publican and the Pharisee

On this first Sunday of the Triodion's pre-Lenten period, we are presented with the Lord's parable of the Publican or tax collector and the Pharisee in Lk 18:9-14. As we begin our Lenten journey, we are reminded how the prayer of the Pharisee did not reach God while the Publican's prayer was heard. The Pharisee's devotions were "correct," but, the Lord teaches, it is not enough to say the right words when the heart is not correct as well.

The basic attitude of the heart for which the Pharisee is faulted is *pride*: "*I fast twice a week,*" he boasts; "*I give tithes of all that I possess*" (Lk 18:12)... and that makes me better than that tax collector. The Pharisee is right in one sense: it is good to fast and to give tithes, but his good deeds are made void through his pride.

Reflecting on this parable in its hymnody, our Church describes the Pharisee's prayer as "ungrateful." He says, "I thank you, God," but thankfulness to God is not revealed in his underlying attitude. His inner spirit is not focused on God's gifts, but on his own perceived accomplishments. He does the right thing, but for the wrong reason.

A consequence of the Pharisee's self-centered parody of religion is the judgmental way he regards his fellow man: "*I am not like other men*" (v.11): my devotions make me superior, more worthy in the sight of God. Christ takes the opposite view: "*I tell you, this man [the publican] 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*" (v.14)..

Keeping a Proper Perspective

The Scriptures often return to the place of formal religious practices in our spiritual life. Some people – we might call them iconoclasts – reject such practices outright as hypocrisy. The Lord is not one of them.

Prokimenon

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

Verse: God is renowned in Judah; in Israel, great is His name.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them;

People: Let all round about bring gifts to the awesome God.

Epistle: 2Tim 3:10-15

Alleluia Verses

Come, let rejoice in the Lord! Let us joyfully sing to God our Savior!

Verse: Let us greet His presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Gospel: Lk 18:10-14

Special Petitions for the Ecumenic Prayer (Inserted after the third petition)

- For all your people who have proven positive with the coronavirus, that they may be restored to full health and offer you their praise and thanksgiving, we pray to you, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all your people in Lebanon who were hurt during the disastrous explosion, that they may be restored to full health, and for those who died that they may be granted rest among the Saints, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.