



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS!

February 5, 2012	Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	FAST FREE WEEK		
February 11	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
February 12	Sunday of the Prodigal Son	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Holy Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily (251). Saint Theodosius, Archbishop of Chernigov (1696). New Martyrs Matushka Agatha (1938), and with her Schemamonk Eugene (1939) and Righteous Paramon (1941), of Beloruss. Virgin-martyr Alexandra, Martyr Michael (1942). Martyr Theodoula of Anazarbus in Cilicia, and with her Martyrs Helladius, Macarius, Boethos, and Evagrius (304). Saint Polyuctus, Patriarch of Constantinople (970). New Martyr Anthony of Athens (1774). Saint Theodosius of Skopelos in Cilicia (ca. 421). Saint Avitus, Bishop of Vienne (525). Saint Indract and Saint Dominica of Glastonbury, Martyrs (c. 708-710). Saint Buo of Ireland, Missionary in Iceland (c. 900). Saint Fingen of Metz, Abbot (c. 1005). Saint Vodalus (Vodoaldus, Voel), Hermit (c. 725)

Please remember in your prayers: Leslie, Nettie, Maria, Michael, Mother Raphaela, John, Hilda, James, Ada, JoAnne, Priest Sergius, Louellen, Nancy, Rea, Archpriest Jason, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Jim, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Archpriest Vincent, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of mother Marie Culp were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Robert Culp.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Cathy Udics Baran, Greg Geeza and Christine Nass Philips were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Louis (Elias) Martin were offered at Liturgy and Litiya January 29 at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of newly-departed uncle Robert Pratt were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Robert Culp.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Howard Meyer were offered at Liturgy and Litiya January 29 at the request of nephew James Altena.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Chester Ptasznik were offered at Liturgy and Litiya January 29 at the request of Irene Ptasznik and Family.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Paul Shust were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Martha Shust.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Efrosina Krenichyn were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

For your spiritual edification

To prepare us for Great Lent, the Orthodox Church starts announcing its approach a full month before it actually begins. How difficult it is for a person to understand that besides devotion to life's other innumerable preoccupations, there is also care for the soul, for our inner world. If we were a bit more serious, we would see just how important, essential and fundamental care of the soul really is. We would then understand the slow and mysterious rhythm of church life. We know, of course, the meaning food has in our life. Some foods are good and nutritious, others are unhealthy; this one's too heavy, be careful of that one. We take great pains to ensure that the food we eat is good for us. And it is far more than pious rhetoric when we say that the soul also needs to be fed, that 'man shall not live by bread alone' (Mt 4:4). Each of us knows we need time for reading, for thinking, for conversation, for leisure. Yet even to these we give very little genuine care, attention, or even the most basic hygiene. We look for light reading, for banter but not conversation, for amusement but not nourishment. We don't understand that the soul gets constipated much more easily than our digestive system, and that the consequences of a constipated soul are much more harmful. So much time is devoted to externals, and so little to the inner life. But we are now approaching that time of year when the Church calls us to remember the existence of that inner person and to be horrified by our forgetfulness, by the meaningless nonsense in which we are immersed, by the waste of precious time given to us so sparingly, by the unkempt and petty confusion in which we live.

Lent is a time of repentance, and repentance is a re-examination, a re-appraisal, a deepening, a shaking upside down. Repentance is the sorrowful uncovering of one's neglected, forgotten, soiled 'inner' person. The first announcement of Lent, the first reminder, comes through a short gospel story about an entirely unremarkable man, 'small of stature,' whose occupation as a tax collector marked him, in that time and society, as greedy, cruel and dishonest.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Christ; he wanted this so much that his desire attracted the attention of Jesus. Desire is the beginning of everything. As the gospel says, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Mt 6:21). Everything in our life begins with desire, since what we desire is also what we love, what draws us

from within, what we surrender to. We know that Zacchaeus loved money, and by his own admission we know that to get it he had no scruples about defrauding others. Zacchaeus was rich and he loved riches, but within himself he discovered another desire, he wanted something else, and this desire became the pivotal moment of his life.

This gospel story poses a question to each of us: what do you love, what do you desire--not superficially, but deeply? There is no mysterious teacher walking through your town, down your street, surrounded by crowds of people. But is that really so? Isn't there some mysterious calling walking by your life every moment; and somewhere in the depths of your soul, don't you sometimes feel a longing for something other than what now fills your life from morning till night? Stop for a moment, pay attention, enter your heart, listen to your inner person, and you will find within yourself the very same strange and wonderful desire Zacchaeus encountered, which no human being can live without, yet which almost everyone fears and suppresses with the noise and vanity of everything external. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock,' the New Testament says (Rev 3:20). Do you hear this quiet knock? This is the first invitation of the Church, of the gospel, and of Christ: desire something other, take a deep breath of something other, remember something other. And the very moment we stop to listen to that call is as if a pure and joyful wind blows into the stale air of our joyless lives, and the slow return begins.

Desire. The soul taking a deep breath. Everything becomes – has already become – different, new, boundlessly meaningful. The little man, with his eyes to the ground focusing on earthly desires, now ceases to be little as his victory over himself begins. Here is the start, the first step from exterior to interior, toward that mysterious homeland which all human beings, unknown often to themselves, long for and desire."

[from, "Celebration of Faith" Sermons, Vol 2 "The Church Year" by Protospesbyter Alexander Schmemmann, 1994; available at: 800-204-book]

This 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)."

FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

February 10	Perohi filling making, 9 am
February 11	Pinching perohi, 9 am,
February 19	Meatfare Breakfast
February 24-26	Diocesan Altar Server's Retreat in Garrison, NY
February 26	Cheesefare Breakfast
March 9	Perohi filling making, 9 am
March 10	Pinching perohi, after Liturgy (10:30)
March 24	Great and Grand Pre-Pascha Church Cleaning 11 am
March 25	After Liturgy, Lenten breakfast
week of March 25	Bread baking – schedule to be determined
March 29	deliver baked goods for Bazaar by 6 pm
March 30	assemble cookie trays 10 am
March 31	Spring Bazaar