

ICHC NTKRA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

February 17, 2013	Sunday of Zacchæus	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
February 23	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
February 24	Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro (306). Saint Hermogenes, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (1612). Saint Nicholas (Planas), Priest in Athens (1932). New Hieromartyrs Priests Michael, Paul (1938). Venerable Theodore the Silent of the Kiev Caves (13 c.). Saint Mariamne, sister of Apostle Philip (1 c.). Uncovering of the relics (867-869) of Martyr Menas the Melodius of Alexandria (ca. 313). Saint Finan, Bishop of Iona and Lindisfarne (661). Saint Auxibius, Bishop of Soli in Cyprus (102). New Martyr Theodore of Byzantium, at Mitylene (1795). Emperor Marcian (457) and Pulcheria, his wife (453). Venerable Theodosius the Bulgarian and his disciple Venerable Romanus, Monks, of Turnovo (1362). New Martyr Michael Mavroeidis of Adrianople (1490). Holy Hieromartyr Theodore of Adjara, who suffered under the Turks on Mount Athos (19 c.). Saint Barnabas, elder of the Gethsemane Skete of Saint Sergius Lavra (1906). Saint Fintan of Clonenagh, Abbot (603). Saint Fortchern. Bishop of Trim (6c.). Saint Guevrock, Abbot (6 c.). Saint Loman of Trim, Bishop of Trim (450).

Please remember in your prayers: Erin, Stephanie, Priest Sergius, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, Michael, Mother Raphaela, John, James, Nancy, Archpriest Jason, Archpriest John, Archpriest Vincent, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Faith Kushner Gilmartin, Protodeacon Keith Russin and James Slupatchuk were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of the servants of God John and Anne Garbera were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the Garbera Family.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of the servants of God Dr Georges Augustin Barrois and Protopresbyter John Meyendorff and Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Julia Bruska, Owen Dulak and Anna Kuzenech were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

Sermon on Zacchæus Sunday by Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann

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.

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchæus; 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, 'Zacchæus, 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. [Lk 19:1-10]

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."

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

What does this sermon of Father Alexander's say to us? Having heard or read it, what are we to do about it? He explained that we need to begin to prepare for Great Lent and ultimately for Pascha by considering what we eat and what we refrain from eating – for the benefit of our bodies and souls. We need to consider the physical food we eat as well as the thoughts we have and words we study.

Lent is a time of repentance – a time to regret having wasted so much time on frivolities and useless pursuits which felt great at the time, but which, with a little introspection, we can realize were really sinfully empty. The sermon above calls us to think about our inner selves, and to determine what it is we really desire. Zacchæus expressed his desire by climbing above the crowd, just to see Jesus who he admired. Perhaps he did it without thinking. Perhaps he had hoped for such a moment for months and years during his life. Who do you admire? Who is it you wish to see? Where is it that you, deep inside yourself, truly hope to go, where do you truly hope to live? What are you waiting for before you begin your annual Lenten journey?

If you truly wish to see Christ, to visit with Him in your home, and if you truly desire to live with Him in His Heavenly mansions, it is time to begin to pay attention to the lessons you will hear here every week until Pascha and after Pascha. With every lesson comes homework. Take these lessons home with you and do some work on them – a little work every week. And when the tests come in your life, you will know that you passed them with flying colors when God in Heaven opens His arms to you and welcomes you like the Prodigal Son.

THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR THEODORE TYRO (THE RECRUIT). The word tyro means recruit. Just as soon as Theodore had entered the army in the Marmarite regiment in the town of Amasea then the persecution of Christians began under the Emperors Maximian and Maximus. As Theodore did not try to conceal the fact that he also was a Christian, he was dragged to court and thrown into prison which was then locked and sealed because the nefarious judge wanted Theodore to die of starvation. The Lord Christ Himself appeared to Theodore in prison and encouraged His martyr, saying to him: "Fear not Theodore, I am with you; do not partake of earthly food and drink anymore, for you will be with Me in the other world in the heavens; eternal and permanent." At that moment there appeared a multitude of angels in the prison and the entire prison shown brightly and the guards, seeing angels dressed in white raiment, became very frightened. After that, Saint Theodore was taken out, tortured and condemned to death. Theodore was tossed into a fire and gave up his holy soul to God the Most High. He suffered in the year 306 A.D.

REFLECTION by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha

An artist is one who, from crude and shapeless stone, carves and shapes forms similar to living creatures. An artist is one who weaves a multi-colored blanket from the wool of sheep. An artist is one who builds a magnificent palace out of earthly bricks. But what kind of artist on earth can be compared to Christ the Artist, who from illiterate men creates wise men, who from fishermen creates apostles, who from cowards creates heroes, who from the immoral creates saints? But all must be given over to the hand of the artist, in order to be fashioned into that which the artist knows and is capable of doing. All things, in truth, must be given over to the hand of the great artificer – the great Maker. Even men must give themselves over to the hand of Christ, in order for Him to carve, to weave or to build that which only He knows and is capable of. Nineteen past centuries witness to us, that all of them who did not protest [against Him] but rather gave themselves over to Christ the Artist and from the boorish and the ignorant became angel-seeing children of God.