

Today's Bulletin is offered in memory of Cornelius Mamrosch by Martha Mamrosch and children.

IC RC NT RA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

February 24, 2013 The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee **Divine Liturgy 9:30 am**
Note: For the week from February 24 through March 3 there is a general dispensation from fasting.
March 2 Saturday Great Vespers 4:00 pm
March 3 Sunday of the Prodigal Son Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Venerable Erasmus of the Kiev Caves (1160). Uncovering of the relics (1486) of Saint Romanus, Prince of Uglich. Martyrs Montanus, Lucius, Julian, Victoricus, Flavian and their companions at Carthage (259). Saint Cummain Ailbe, Abbot of Iona (669). Saint Ethelbert, King and Confessor (616).

Please remember in your prayers: Michael, Stephanie, Priest Sergius, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, 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 Michael Brittain, Michael Soroka and Archpriest Jason Kappanadze were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Cornelius Mamrosch were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Martha Mamrosch and Children.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Matushka Mildred Soroka and Theodore Bacha were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Mary Mezick and John Hubiak were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

The Publican and the Pharisee. by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. 4 February 1990

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

How short, and how well known is today's parable, and yet, how intense its message, how challenging. Intense it is in its very words. Two men come into the church of God, into a sacred realm which in a world that is lost to God belongs to Him unreservedly, into His Divine Realm. And one of the men walks boldly into it, takes a stand before God. The other one comes, and doesn't even dare cross the threshold: he is a sinner, and the Realm is holy, like the space around the Burning Bush in the desert which Moses could not enter without having unshod his feet, otherwise than in adoration and the fear of God. And how different the words spoken! Apparently the Pharisee praises God, he gives Him glory - but for what? Because He has made a man like him, a man so holy, so worthy of Him, of God; a man who not only keeps all the commandments of the Law, but goes beyond of what God Himself has commanded and can expect of man. Indeed, he stands before God praising Him, that he, the Pharisee, is so wonderful that he is God's own glory, the shining, the revelation of God's Holiness. The Publican does not even dare enter into the holy Realm of God.

And the parable is clear: the man who came and stood brokenhearted, ashamed of himself, knowing that he is unworthy of entering this sacred space goes back home forgiven, loved, indeed: accompanied by God Himself Who came into the world to save sinners and Who stands by everyone who needs Him, who recognises his need for salvation,

The Pharisee goes home, but he goes home less forgiven; his relationship with God is not the same; he is at the center, God is peripheric to him; he is at the heart of things, God is subservient to him. It does not mean that what he did was worthless; it simply means that as far as he is concerned, it has born no fruit of holiness in himself. The deeds were good, but they were spoiled, poisoned by pride, by self-assertion; the beauty of what he did was totally marred because it was addressed neither to God nor to his neighbour; it was turned in on himself. And we are told that this pride has despoiled this man, has taken away from him the fruits of his good works, the fruit of his outward faithfulness to the law of God, that only humility could have given him and his action full meaning, that only humility could have made his actions into life, into the waters of life gushing into eternity. But then, the question stands before us: how can we learn anything about humility if that is the absolute condition to be not like the barren fig tree, but fruitful, to be rich harvest and from whom people can be fed? I do not think that we can move from pride, vanity into humility in a single unless something so tragic happens to us that we see ourselves we discover ourselves completely bereft of everything that supported our sinful, destructive, barren condition. But there is one thing which we can do: however much we think that we are possessed of gifts of all sorts of heart and mind, of body and soul, however fruitful our action may be, we can remember the words of Saint Paul: O, man! What have you got which was not given you?! And indeed, he echoes at this point what Christ said in the first Beatitude, the Beatitude that opens the door to all other Beatitudes, the Beatitude which is the beginning of understanding: Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are those who know, not only with their intellect - but at least with their intellect! - that they are nothing, and they

possess nothing which is not a gift of God. We were called into being out of naught, without our participation: our very existence is a gift! We were given life which we could not create, call out of ourselves. We have been given the knowledge of the existence of God, and indeed, a deeper, more intimate knowledge of God - all that is gift! And then, all that we are is a gift of God: our body, our heart, our mind, our soul - what power have we got over them when God does no longer sustain them? The greatest intelligence can of a sudden be swallowed into darkness by a stroke; there are moments when we are confronted with a need that requires all our sympathy, all our love - and we discover that our hearts are of stone and of ice... We want to do good - and we cannot; and Saint Paul knew it already when he said: The good which I love, I don't do, and the wrong which I hate I do continuously... And our body depends on so many things! And what of our relationships, of the friendship which is given us, the love which sustains us, the comradeship - everything that we are and which we possess is a gift: what is the next move: isn't it gratitude? Can't we turn to God not as a Pharisee, priding ourselves of what we are and forgetting that all that is HIS, but turning to God and saying: O, God! All that is a gift from You! all that beauty, intelligence, a sensitive heart, all the circumstances of life are a gift! Indeed, all those circumstances, even those which frighten us are a gift because God says to us: I trust you enough to send you into the darkness to bring light! I send you into corruption to be the salt that stops corruption! I send you where there is no hope to bring hope, where there is no joy to bring joy, no love to bring love... and one could go on, on, on, seeing that when we are sent into the darkness it is to be God's presence and God's life, and that means that He trusts us - He trusts us, He believes in us, He hopes for us everything: isn't that enough to be grateful? But gratitude is not just a cold word of thanks; gratitude means that we wish to make Him see that all that was not given in vain, that He did not become man, lived, died in vain; gratitude means a life that could give joy to God: this is a challenge of this particular parable. Yes, the ideal would be for us to be humble - but what is humility? Who of us knows, and if someone knows, who can communicate it to everyone who doesn't know? But gratitude we all know; we know small ways and small aspects of it! Let us reflect on it, and, let us in an act of gratitude recognise that we have no right to be in God's own realm - and He lets us in! We have no right to commune to Him either in prayer, or in sacrament - and He calls us to commune with Him! We have no right to be His children, to be brothers and sisters of Christ, to be the dwelling place of the Spirit - and He grants it all in an act of love!

Let each of us reflect and ask himself: in what way can he or she be so grateful in such a way that God could rejoice that He has not given in vain, been in vain, lived and died in vain, that we have received the message. And if we grow in a true depth of gratitude, at the depth of gratitude we will knock down, adore the Lord, and learn what humility is not abasement, but adoration, the awareness that He is all we possess, all that we are, and that we are open to Him like the earth, the rich earth is open to the plough, to the sowing, to the seed, to the sunshine, to the rain, to everything in order to bring fruit. Amen!

Saint Ethelbert, King and Confessor

The first of the Anglo-Saxons to receive the Christian faith was the premier king, or Bretwalda, of the Saxon confederation, respected not only as a grandson of Hengist but also as a great warrior. He married Bertha, a Christian Princess from Gaul, and agreed that she should continue to practise her religion and bring with her Luidhard, the Bishop of Senlis, as her chaplain. Ethelbert gave his Queen the ancient church of Saint Martin in Canterbury, built in Roman times, which he restored. It stood outside the city walls and there is a small postern gate still there, known as the Quenin Gate, through which she passed daily to hear mass. His marriage made Ethelbert well-disposed towards Augustine when he arrived with his monks in the Isle of Thanet, but he was cautious. He would not meet these strangers except in the open air in case they should work upon him some magical charm, and so it was that he received Augustine seated under an oak tree with Bertha by his side. He listened to the words of the Gospel translated to him by an interpreter, and when they were ended he said that he could not immediately abandon all that he held sacred, but the Christian missionaries were free to preach in his kingdom. He gave to them a piece of land between the walls and Saint Martin's, where the monks established their monastery, which became the great Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul. The 14th century gate-house, known as the Fyndon Gate, has a figure carved on one of the battlements of Saint Ethelbert looking over his city.

The king watched carefully the behaviour of these Christians and became convinced of the truth of what they preached, so on Whitsunday 597, with many of his nobles and subjects, he received baptism in the river Stour. Augustine went to France to be consecrated bishop, and on his return, Ethelbert presented him with his palace inside the walls, which was consecrated as the Cathedral Church of Christ. In fact this building was probably the basilica, or town hall, of the Roman town of Durovernum. The King retired to his palace at Reculver, another of the old Roman buildings, but continued to assist Augustine and his company by giving them land at Rochester, where another Cathedral was built, this time dedicated to Saint Andrew. He also influenced his nephew Sabert, King of the East Saxons, to embrace the faith and to give the land on which to build Saint Paul's Cathedral for London, which was probably an ancient Christian site on which the British had previously erected a church, then in ruins.

In his letter to Ethelbert, Saint Gregory bids him follow the example of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, in establishing the faith of Christ in his dominions. He ends with a blessing, "May grace from on high keep your excellency safe, my Lord Son". Saint Ethelbert was to reign another twenty years after his conversion, and it is recorded that during that time he was always fair, never using pressure on any to become a Christian and only having greater affection for those who did, not showing them added favours. He died in 616 and was buried in Saints Peter and Paul with his Queen, Bertha, and the good Bishop Luidhard. The great tower, which stood at the west end of the Abbey Church, was called Ethelbert's Tower, and remained standing after the dissolution, amidst the ruins of the monastery, until 1822 when most of it succumbed to a violent storm.