

FCRC HKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to God for all things!

January 25, 2015	33rd Sunday after Pentecost. Sunday of Zacchaeus	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
January 31	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
February 1	Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Saint Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople (389). Venerable Anatole I (Zertsalov, the "Elder") of Optina (1894). New Hieromartyr Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev, Proto-martyr of the communist yoke in Russia (1918). New Martyr Abbess Margaret (Gunaronulo) of Menzelino (1918). New Hieromartyr Peter Archbishop of Voronezh (1929). New Hieromartyr Basil Bishop of Priluksk. 1930). New Martyr Abbess Athanasia (Lepeshkin) of Zosima Hermitage (1931). Saint Stephen Priest, Martyr Boris (1938). Saint Moses, Archbishop of Novgorod (1362). Martyrs Felicity of Rome and seven sons: Januarius, Felix, Philip, Silvanus, Alexander, Vitalis, and Martial (164). Venerable Publius, Ascetic of Syria (380). Venerable Mares the Singer of Syria (430). Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos "Assuage My Sorrow" and "Unexpected Joy." New Martyr Auxentius of Constantinople (1720). Martyr Medula and her companions. Saint Castinus, Bishop of Byzantium (240). Venerable Demetrius Skevophylax ("Keeper of the Sacred Vessels") of Constantinople (8 c.). Venerable Monk Apollo of the Thebaid (4 c.). Saint Bretanion, Bishop of Tomis (380). Saint Gregory of Golutvin (15 c.). Saint. Dwyn, virgin of Llandwyn. Saint Eochod of Galloway (597).

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasys, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mothers Raphaela, Michaela, Catherine, Anna. Monk Victor, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Helen, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Diane, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Felicity Boncella were offered at Liturgy and Moleben on her saint's day at the request of Father John Udics.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Archimandrite Athanasys (Mastalski), Yuji Yuga, Robert Culp, Archpriest Andrew Nelko, Kevin Culp, Michael Baran Jr, and Metropolitan ANTONY were offered at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Chester Ptasznik, John and Apollonia, and Mark were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Irene Ptasznik.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Noel Yurch, Bishop JOSE [Cortes y Olmos], Archimandrite Jozef (Strok) and newly-departed Mary DeMeo were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Dorothy Cooley, Peter Mezick, Sarah Eskoff, Stella Eskoff, Chester Ptasznik and Tillie Leve were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

The Holy Martyr Felicity with her Seven Sons: Januarius, Felix, Philip, Sylvanus, Alexander, Vitalius and Marcial. Saint Felicity was born of a rich Roman family. Pagan priests made reports of denunciation against her for insulting the gods through spreading the Christian faith. Saint Felicity gave away all her possessions, and together with her sons openly confessed faith in Christ. They were all handed over to torture. Saint Felicity, seeing the suffering of her sons, besought God, that they would stand firm and enter the Heavenly Kingdom before her. All the sons died as martyrs before the eyes of their mother. After them, Saint Felicity herself underwent a martyr's death. The holy family suffered at Rome in about the year 164. Sainted Gregory Dialogos gave a laudatory sermon for the Martyr Felicity in a third talk, preached in a church named for her.

ANNUAL REPORT 2014. Please submit all committee reports contributing to the annual report immediately. Sending them by email is best. The Parish Meeting will be held February 8 and the report will go to print the week before. So consider the deadline to be next Sunday, February 1, 2015. (You KNEW it was coming...)

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh **Sunday of Zaccheus**

Last week we have entered into the several weeks on our way to the day of the Resurrection, when we are told to examine ourselves; then a time will come to think of nothing but the ways of God preparing us for salvation; and when we reach Holy Week, then we should have no thought, anything but the Lord Whose passion we will be contemplating before we enter together with Him into the glory and the joy of His Resurrection.

Last week we read the Gospel of the Blind man of Jericho; it challenges us directly; we all contend that we see; we all contend that we are not blind, and yet is not the way in which we see another form of blindness? Are we not blinded by the visible to the invisible, are we not blinded by prejudice against truth, are we not blinded by passion against reality? And so, each of us has got to ask himself whether what he sees is the reality of things, and if not, turn to God asking Him to give us an insight. And one of the things that blinds us most hopelessly is vanity that makes us accept for true all the lies we may hear or observe which boost our self-respect, which make us reject everything which is criticism or condemnation of us.

Today's Gospel is about vanity and about the way in which it can be overcome, indeed about the condition and the cost of it. Zacchaeus was a rich man, a man, known in his town, a man whom everyone would recognise; he was a man of unrighteous ways, and yet something stirred within him when he heard of Christ and he wanted to see Him. It probably was to a certain extent the desire to see the New Prophet of Israel, but this would not have been enough to prompt him to do what he did. In the crowd, because he was too small of stature, he climbs into a tree; sure, he was surrounded with laughter, with mockery and yet, he so wanted to see Christ, it mattered so much to him to see Him that he was prepared to be mocked, laughed at rather than let Him pass by. And in all this crowd through which Christ was passing Christ saw only one man: Zacchaeus, and He called him down, and He went to stay with him.

Vanity is that condition of our soul, that miserable condition of our soul, in which we are afraid of human judgment, in which we derive our sense of worth from the judgment of those who surround us, and indeed it is vanity, because the things for which we are praised are vain, empty, unworthy of the greatness of man. And also, for praise we do not turn to those people capable of a sound and at times severe judgment; we turn to the peoples who are ready to offer us the praises which we want. This makes these praises doubly vain, its substance is naught, and the people from whom we receive it are also empty, in our own eyes, until they speak of us good. St John Climacus says that vanity is the attitude of one who is afraid of men and is arrogant before the face of God, who thinks God's judgment matters little, provided that he has the approval of those who surround him.

Is that not a true description of the way in which we stand in life, in the way in which we are prepared to forget the judgment of God provided we feel supported by the judgment of men? And what is the way then? Zacchaeus shows us one way: care nothing about the judgment of men because the judgment of God, the presence of God, or perhaps the judgment of one who will not praise us but is a person of integrity and of truth matters more. Zacchaeus did not know Whom Christ was and that He was the Son of God become the Son of man, but he knew that Christ was a man of integrity and he wanted to see Him, to meet Him face to face.

But then there are also two other ways of shaking off the fear of man, this dependence upon human's judgment at the cost of our own wholeness. St John Climacus says to us that the way to get rid of vanity is humility; St Isaac of Syria strangely says the way is also pride, and both are true, only that the one will give us life and the other will give us death. If we choose the way of pride we will assert ourselves arrogantly, not only in the face of men, but also in the face of God; our own judgment shall be the only thing that shall count, and then we will find death at the end of the road. The way of humility is that of bowing before the judgment of God. If we are incapable of soaring Godwards, lie before Him like the parched earth is before the face of the sky, abandoned, helpless, thirsty, hungry, longing, desperate not to be able to achieve what we wish to achieve, this is the beginning of humility.

But even that may be too much for us, even that may be too difficult for us because we are not used to let go, to abandon ourselves, offer ourselves to an act of God. Then we can begin to overcome vanity by gratitude. Whenever we discover that there is in us a moment of vanity, let us ask ourselves: why? Very often, it is because we have, inadvertently quite often, said the right thing, or inadvertently done the right thing; we can then turn to God and thank Him that He gave us the opportunity, that He gave us eyes to see the need, ears to hear a cry, a mind to understand, a heart to respond, good will to bring us into motion and the means to do the right thing. Is not that reason enough for us to be grateful, do we not know, all of us, from experience that it is not the need that will call out of us always, inevitably the right response? How often there is a need and our heart is parched, and cold, and indifferent? How often someone cries for help and we understand nothing, how often our heart has been stirred and our mind began to understand, but we are not used to compel ourselves and our will wavers, and wavers too long, until it is too late. And we could go on describing our condition in many more details.

Let us learn first of all to be grateful that God gives us the possibility to do right instead of preening ourselves and be proud of the fact that for once we have done what should be natural to us always, and then gradually we may outgrow even that level and still remaining grateful, still remaining amazed at God's goodness we may then learn to be humble in a way in which no one knows, not declaring that we are unworthy, but in adoration of God's greatness, in veneration of other people, in the readiness to forget ourselves completely for the sake of God, for the sake of any person who meets us and challenges us to be compassionate, to be loving, to be understanding, and the blindness might fall of our eyes, vanity will leave us free at least for a moment and we will be able to face ourselves and to face God and others as the Publican did when he entered into the Temple, and did not dare into it because it was the place of holiness where God abides, the place where he thought only the worthy ones can come and we will be accepted by God because of this recognition of His holiness and the reverence, with which we will treat Him and our neighbour. Amen.

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