



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



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CHURCH BULLETIN

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The 32nd Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading Luke 19: 1-10

At that time, Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." So

he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore four-fold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Apostle Reading 1 Timothy 4: 9-15

Brethren, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in

faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

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Synaxarion Sunday January 31, 2021:
Holy Unmercenaries and Martyrs Cyrus and John.
Tuesday February 2: Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Today Salvation Has Come to This House

This week's Gospel reading is the story of the conversion of Zacchæus, the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10). This encounter takes place in Jericho, following on the healing of the Blind Man (Luke 18:35-43) which occurred just on the outskirts of the city as Jesus was making his way into Jericho. Although the Evangelist Luke doesn't say so explicitly, it would be fair to assume that Zacchæus had heard of the miracle and was curious, like so many others, to see this Jesus.



St. Luke tells us a few things about Zacchæus. He's a chief tax collector and he's rich (v. 2). From what we know about how tax collectors operated in those days, we might infer that at least some of his wealth was ill-gotten gain. He also tells us that he is short (v. 3). As Jesus is walking into Jericho, crowd begins to form and people are struggling to get a glimpse of him. Because of the crowd it is difficult for Zacchæus to see Jesus as he passes, so he climbs a sycamore tree. Sycamore trees have short, fat trunks and branches that spread broad and wide, making it relatively easy for someone to climb up and gain an advantage of a few feet. Nonetheless, it must have been something to see — a prominent official climbing a tree, like a child.

When Jesus gets to where Zacchæus is he says to him: "Zacchæus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today" (v. 5). Zacchæus is overwhelmed. He hurries down and welcomes him with joy. People in the crowd began to grumble complaining that Jesus was going to Zacchæus' house, the house of a sinner, but Zacchæus isn't cowered. He turns to Jesus and says, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much" (v. 8).

St. John Chrysostom draws our attention to the way in which Zacchæus expresses his repentance. Chrysostom says that it isn't enough to simply restore what was stolen, but reparations are a necessary part of making amends. In this case Zacchæus says that he will pay back four times as much. Chrysostom uses this example to challenge us. He asks, if when we bring our sins before

God asking for forgiveness, do we follow the example of Zacchæus? Do we offer to repay our debt four times as much?

Chrysostom presents another interesting analogy. He observes that when someone hosts an important guest the first impulse is to clean and redecorate and fill their houses with fine and even luxuriant furnishings. Zacchæus, Chrysostom says, "decorates" his house with this profound act of repentance.

When we bless a new home, the service prescribed uses this very same Gospel reading, illustrating

what it means to ask Christ to come into our house. The prayer says: "O Lord, who condescended to enter under the roof of Zacchæus, bringing salvation to him and his whole house ... keep safe from harm those who dwell here ..."

In a prayer written by St. John Chrysostom read when preparing for Holy Communion we say, "O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy that you should come under the roof of the house of my soul, for all is desolate and fallen in ruins ..." In these moving words, that bring to mind the faith of the Centurion (Matthew 8:8), we can also find the image of Zacchæus, and his act of repentance. We are offered his example for us to model and follow. Some early Fathers speculated from the way in which Jesus said this, that Zacchæus might have been a Gentile. Others say that the Lord is clarifying what makes each of us a true son or daughter of Abraham: faith in the Living God. Whichever is the actual case, it is love of God and our repentance that makes us true children of Abraham.

Zacchæus followed Jesus until the day he died. He was ordained Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine by the Apostle Peter. Later, during one of the persecutions of the late first century, he suffered martyrdom. The story of Zacchæus' great act of repentance comes alive for us each time we read it in Holy Scriptures, and especially when we put his example into practice in our own lives.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

Sermon on the Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs

The Feast of the Three Holy Fathers, Great Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom is an annual commemoration of our Holy Orthodox Church on which we honour the unwavering faith and spiritual brilliance of three Saints who offered the entirety of their lives and abilities in the service



of God and humankind. As selfless archbishops and pastors they led the faithful in worship and ministry. As loving teachers they offered guidance in the path of holiness. As divinely-inspired theologians they used their intellectual skills to confront error and defend truth. As holy men they lived in a manner that showed to all the grace and blessings of communion with God.

The life and work of the Three Hierarchs emphasized the essential relationship of each and every person to God through faith in Christ. They affirmed that this relationship was nurtured unto salvation and eternal life within the community of believers, the Church. The Church was first and foremost a spiritual home where the needs and yearnings of the soul could be met. It was also a place of renewal, where the people of God received a new covenant through the offering and victory of Christ. In addition, the Three Hierarchs each taught that life experienced in the Church was a means of completion, leading the faithful toward the perfection of their faith, and the fulfillment of all things in the heavenly kingdom of God.

First, the Three Hierarchs acknowledge the spiritual nature of the Church, often calling her the “Church of God” or the “Church of Christ” and seeing the Church as a spiritual society consisting of spiritual beings. (Gregory Nanzianzen, Basil the Great). The origin of the Church is divine and heavenly, reflecting the wisdom and design of God. Further, the Church is united to God through Christ, who became incarnate to renew, sanctify, and perfect the people of God within a fallen world. It is also within the Church that the heavenly and earthly are united. The gathering of the faithful in worship and for the work of ministry is joined in a spiritual manner with

the “myriads of angels and thousands of martyrs, and the legions of apostles and the assemblies of the just and the various groups of all those who have pleased God.”(John Chrysostom).

Together we offer worship, intercession, and ministry; and together we await the coming of the New Jerusalem when this unity will be complete.

Second, the Holy Three Hierarchs taught that the Church is a place of healing and renewal. “For the Church is a spiritual bath, which wipes away not filth of body, but stains of soul by its many methods of repentance,” preached Saint Chrysostom. Through the Holy Sacraments and the grace of God, and through teaching and pastoral guidance, the soul could be cured of the sickness of sin, healed of the effects of unholy passions and desires, and restored to the image and likeness of God. Further, these holy fathers taught that this spiritual healing and transformation was made possible in the Church through Jesus Christ. Just as Christ has joined the divine and human through His Incarnation; so also does the Church, the Body of Christ, now join humankind to the healing power and presence of God.

Third, these great teachers and theologians directed the faithful to the Church as the means of preparation for completion and perfection in the Kingdom of God. Through life and growth in the earthly Church the faithful receive a foretaste of the Kingdom of God to come. There, the will of God is completely and perfectly fulfilled. Here, the earthly Church directs our hearts and minds to the “image of Jerusalem above” in preparation for that day when all things will be made new.

Finally, we recognize this long association of Greek Letters with the Three Hierarchs which, highlight’s the emphasis these holy fathers gave to learning, intellectual ability and discipline, and to their use of the Greek language and thought for the message and mission of the Church and the Gospel of Christ. Combining their love of language and knowledge with faithful and sacrificial service to others and the Church, they provided an example of the beautiful ministry the Church must offer

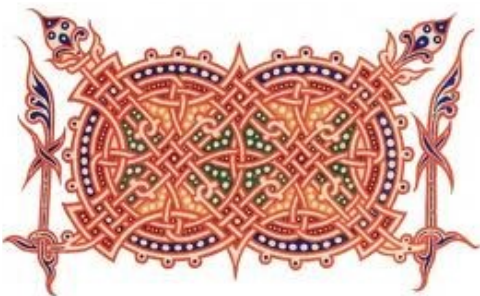


at all times in all places. Spiritual renewal and formation are accomplished through the cultivation of both the mind and the soul. It is also enhanced through the knowledge of language, the arts, science and any elements of culture and our world that are beneficial to our life and our relationship with God. Within the Greek Orthodox Church we have this unique opportunity to follow the example of the Three Hierarchs, synthesizing and sharing language, thought, faith, and the calling to lead others to God and to greater levels of understanding and being.

In our commemoration of the Three Holy Fathers, Hierarchs, and Ecumenical Teachers of our Church, Saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, I pray that we may affirm their divine wisdom through a deeper commitment to our life in the Church, the Body of Christ. May we also imitate their love of learning and use every means to strengthen education in our parish and to give our younger generations a faith and heritage that will prepare them for a fulfilled life on earth and a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God.

Amen.

Leonidas Ioannou
(Holy Monastery of Axion Estin)



HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from January 24 to February 7, 2021

Saturday January 30 - Holy Three Hierarchs:

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Holy Liturgy
11:30 pm - Coffee hour
6:00 pm - Akathist

Sunday January 31 (32nd Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Holy Liturgy
11:00 pm - Sunday School
12:00 pm - Coffee hour

Tuesday February 2 - Meeting of Christ in the Temple:

9:30 am - Matins
10:00 am - Holy Liturgy
12:30 pm - Coffee hour

Sunday February 7 (16th Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Holy Liturgy
11:00 pm - Sunday School
11:30 pm - Memorial Service for
the Dragomir, Kraitier, Porubin
and Fr. Buga families
12:00 pm - Coffee hour



The Presentation of Christ, our Great High Priest, in the Temple

Today we celebrate a great feast of the Church that speaks directly to the spiritual challenges that we all face on a daily basis, both as particular people and as members of this parish community. For today we celebrate the presentation of the infant Jesus Christ, forty days after His birth, in the temple. The Theotokos and St. Joseph bring the young Savior there in compliance with the Old Testament law, making the offering of a poor family that could not afford a lamb, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the old man St. Simeon proclaims that this Child is the salvation “of all peoples, a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.” The aged prophetess St. Anna also recognizes Him as the fulfillment of God’s promises.

Our epistle reading from Hebrews reminds us that the One brought into the temple that day is the Great High Priest Who offers Himself, Who becomes the Passover Lamb through Whom sin and death are destroyed so that we also may enter into the Heavenly Temple, into the very life of God. In ways that our minds cannot fully understand, Christ’s offering and priesthood are eternal, as He now intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father. He fulfills all the foreshadowing of the Old Testament to bring us through Him into the true Temple, the eternal Sanctuary of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Every day of our lives, in all that we say and do, we have the opportunity to join ourselves more deeply to Christ, to become more fully “partakers of the divine nature” whose lives are constant offerings to the Lord. He created us and all that is, and His salvation is the fulfillment of the entire universe. All that we must leave behind is our corruption, our sin and its sickening effects. Even as the person with a broken bone wants to get past the resulting pain and disability in order to regain health and strength, we want to do the same thing



in every dimension of lives. The focus is not on legal judgment, but on the healing of our distorted, weakened selves and world.

A very important aspect of this healing that we have not talked about a great deal in our parish is the strength that we find through participation in the full liturgical life of the Church. By that I do not mean coming to the Divine Liturgy on Sunday and major feast days whenever possible, which is a fundamental practice of the Orthodox Christian life. At least for Sunday liturgy, we do that fairly well here at St. Luke. Instead, I want to draw your attention this morning to the two other services that we celebrate virtually every weekend,

Great Vespers on Saturday evening and Matins on Sunday morning.

These services, along with others, are conducted daily in monasteries, but most parishes understandably serve them only on Saturday night and Sunday morning. We do so because of the great glory and dignity of Sunday as the day of resurrection, the day in which we celebrate Christ’s resurrection. His High Priesthood shines forth in the Divine Liturgy of every Sunday, for it is through Him that we enter into the Heavenly Banquet, into the joy of the true Temple of the Kingdom of Heaven. And when we receive Communion, we are united with God in the most profound and intimate way possible. His Body and Blood truly become our own.

As we all know, deliberate preparation is in order each time that we receive the Eucharist. We must say the prayers of preparation; we must fast from food and drink; and we must take Confession on a regular basis and especially when we have a guilty conscience or are aware of having committed grave sin. None of us should ever take Communion for granted or fail to prepare ourselves as best we can. Whenever you have questions about anything related to taking Communion, just let me know.

Participation in Great Vespers is also very helpful preparation for the Sunday Divine Liturgy. It is actually the first service of Sunday, for in biblical times the day began with sundown the night before. Vespers is much simpler and less ornate than the Divine Liturgy, as it consists of prayers, hymns, readings and Psalms that recall our creation, our fall, and the shining of the “Gladstone Light” Jesus Christ Who rose victorious from the tomb. Portions of the service focus on the distinctive themes of that particular Sunday and prepare us to meditate upon them in preparation for Liturgy. Sometimes there are Old Testament readings, and the service usually lasts about an hour.

“Orthros” means “early dawn” and we pray at that time on Sundays because that is when the women went to the tomb of Christ and received the good news of His resurrection.

“Matins” means “morning” and is simply another name for the service. On most Sundays, the service focuses on the resurrection. Each week, the priest reads one of eleven accounts from the gospels of Christ’s appearances after His resurrection. The chanters sing one of the eight resurrection *troparia* and there are various other readings and chants that relate to the saints being commemorated and the season of the church year. We move from orthros into liturgy with the Great Doxology that begins “Glory to Thee, Who has shown us the light.” That’s when we turn up the lights and open the royal doors, for we are now entering through our Great High Priest into the great glory of the liturgy of the Kingdom of Heaven. The One who was taken to the temple as a baby now takes us into the true Temple, into heavenly worship of the Holy Trinity as He nourishes us with His Body and Blood.

If something is important to us, we prepare for it. The more we put into something, the more we get out of it. Attending vespers and matins prepares us to share in the great blessing of the Divine Liturgy and especially of receiving Communion. It will also strengthen our parish

as a community, for at the very heart of the life of the Church is our worship, which is not limited to an hour and half on Sunday mornings. We do not have as many services as larger parishes with a full-time priest and more chanters and servers, but we do what we can. As your priest, I ask you to do what you can to strengthen your spiritual life and our collective entrance into the

Heavenly Temple by coming to vespers and orthros whenever that is possible for you. You will find it to be a blessing in your life and not a major inconvenience.

Of course, some have health problems, transportation issues, and work schedules that make it impossible for them to do so with regularity; if so, pray at home. Most of us, however, could attend either service at least once a month. Rest assured that this is not some kind legal requirement and no one is taking roll; instead, it is an invitation to join ourselves as fully as we can to Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest Who wants us to share with Him in the joy of the Heavenly Temple. Sts. Simeon and Anna were

prepared by years of prayer and fasting to meet Him in the Jerusalem temple, and now He makes it possible for us to meet Him in the Temple of Heaven, and even to dine at His table. There is no question that we all need to prepare for that, for we want the eyes of our hearts to be as open as possible to the “light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel,” our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and honor, together with His Un-originate Father and the All-Holy, Good, and Life-Giving Spirit, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Fr. Philip LeMasters

(Source: <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/>)

