



**Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Bulletin
And Holy Transfiguration Chapel**

A Parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

870 Forest Street

Dover, Delaware 19904

Website: www.snicholasuoc.org



Father Stephen Hutnick

(302) 798-4455

E-mail: otche10@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 870 Forest Street

Dover, DE 19904

We would like to welcome all of our visitors and friends to Saint Nicholas Orthodox Parish. We would like to ask all of our new visitors to please sign our register so that we might be able to keep in contact with you about Parish celebrations and events. Through the intercession of Saint Nicholas we hope and pray that our community might continue to grow in numbers and in service to the Lord. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and in love.

In case of an emergency, please call Father Stephen day or night at the above telephone number.

February 25, 2024
Volume 17: Number 08
Celebrating our 17th Year of Serving the Lord
Schedule of Services and Activities

Sunday, February 25 – Sunday Publican and Pharisee – Tone 5

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Fast Free Week

Sunday, March 3 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son – Tone 6

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Sunday, March 10 – Meatfare Sunday – Tone 7

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Stephen

Sunday, March 17 – Cheesefare Sunday – Tone 8

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Forgiveness Service

Thursday, March 21

6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

SCRIPTURAL READINGS

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee – Matins: Matthew 28:16-20; Liturgy: 2 Timothy 3:10-15; Luke 18:10-14

Monday – 2 Peter 1:20-2:9; Mark 13:9-13

Tuesday – 2 Peter 2:9-22; Mark 13:14-23

Wednesday – 2 Peter 3:1-18; Mark 13:24-31

Thursday 1 John 1:8-2:6; Mark 13:31-14:2

Friday – 1 John 2:7-17; Mark 14:3-9

Saturday – 2 Timothy 3:1-9; Luke 20:45-21:4

Sunday of the Prodigal Son – Matins: Luke 24:36-53; Liturgy: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Luke 15:11-32

"HE WHO EXALTS HIMSELF WILL BE HUMBLD"



This morning, Orthodox Christians throughout the world take our first step on our annual journey to Paska. Today is the first of the Pre-Lenten Sundays, commonly known as the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Christ's famous parable concerning these two individuals is placed before us as we begin our lengthy spiritual pilgrimage that will take us to the joyful commemoration of our Lord's Resurrection.

Through observing the Publican and the Pharisee at prayer, we are provided with a wonderful insight into what is really pleasing to God. Pharisees were well respected within the Jewish community, for they were well versed in the Law of Moses. Everything they did - their prayer life, their ascetic practices, their almsgiving - was carried out to the "letter" of the law. Publicans were tax collectors, employed by the Romans to cheat their own people. They were looked upon with disdain, and were perceived as being "traitors" to their nation.

This parable beautifully shows us that God looks at what is in a person's heart rather than the image he projects. Through his own words, the Pharisee is exposed for being a proud and arrogant man. The Publican, however, proves to be the better man, as he humbly asks the Lord to be merciful unto him.

As we approach the Great Fast, the Church urges us to prepare ourselves for it with great humility, being mindful of our sinfulness. Without humility, we cannot return to God as we are called upon to do during the Lenten Season. May the words of the Kondak hymn for this Sunday guide us in the penitential weeks ahead: "Let us flee from the words of the boastful Pharisee and learn the humility of the Publican, crying out to our Savior: Have mercy on us, O You who alone are merciful!"

For this Sunday, we begin the Lenten Triodion. Let us meditate on some of the verse from Vespers and Matins: The Pharisee, overcome with his pride, and the Publican, bent down in repentance, came before You, the only Lord: the first trusted in himself and was deprived of Your blessings; the other spoke but a few words and received Your blessings in abundance. Behold my tears and strengthen me, O Christ our God, for You are indeed the Lover of Mankind.

Because of my sins my eyes are weighed down, and I can no longer raise them up to see the light of heaven. But grant that I may repent like the Publican; O Lord, have mercy on me.

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life. As we worship in Your Temple this morning, teach us how to purify the temples of our bodies, and in Your compassion, purify me by the goodness of Your mercies.

Vain pretensions deprive us of every good deed while humility purifies us of every evil. O faithful, let us embrace the ways of humility and totally despise the ways of vain-glory.

O faithful let us humble ourselves. With tears and sighs let us strike our conscience so that on the day of eternal judgment we may be found without reproach and may obtain forgiveness. For this is the true repose that we hope to see one day and for which we now pray. It is the repose from which all pain, sorrow and sighing are absent. It is the marvelous garden and the new Eden which Christ has gained for us; for He is the Word of God and coeternal with the Father.

2. HUMILITY

(Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee)

Today is called the "Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee". On the eve of this day, on Saturday at Vespers, the liturgical book of the Lenten season - **THE TRIODION** - makes its first appearance and texts from it are added to the usual hymns and prayers of the weekly Resurrection service. They develop the next major aspect of repentance: humility.

The Gospel lesson (Luke 18:10-4) pictures a man who is always pleased with himself and who thinks that he complies with all the requirements of religion. He is self-assured and proud of himself. In reality, however, he has falsified the meaning of religion. He has reduced it to external observations and he measures his piety by the amount of money he contributes to the Temple. As for the publican, he humbles himself and his humility justifies him before God. If there is a moral quality almost completely disregarded and even denied today, it is indeed humility. The culture in which we live constantly instills in us the sense of pride, of self-glorification and of self-righteousness. It is built on the assumption that man can achieve anything by himself, and it even pictures God as the One who all the time "gives credit" for man's achievements and good deeds. Humility - be it individual or corporate, ethnic or national - is viewed as a sign of weakness, as something unbecoming, a real man. Even our churches - are they not instilled with that same spirit of the Pharisee? Do we not want our every contribution, every "good deed", all that we do "for the Church" to be acknowledged, praised, publicized?

But what is humility? The answer to this question may seem a conflicting one for it is rooted in a strange affirmation" **GOD HIMSELF IS HUMBLE!** Yet to anyone who knows God, who contemplates Him in His creation and in His saving acts, it is evident that humility is truly a divine quality, the very content and the radiance of that "glory"

which, as we sing during the Divine Liturgy, fills heaven and earth. In our human mentality, we tend to oppose "glory" and "humility" - the latter being for us the indication of a flaw or deficiency. For us it is our ignorance or incompetence that makes or ought to make us feel humble. It is almost impossible to "put across" to the modern man, fed on publicity, self-affirmation and endless self-praise, that all that which is genuinely perfect, beautiful and good is at the same time naturally humble; for precisely because of its perfection, it does not need "publicity", external glory, or "showing off" of any kind. God is humble because He is perfect; His humility IS His glory and the source of all true beauty, perfection and goodness, and everyone who approaches God and **KNOWS** Him immediately partakes of the Divine Humility and is beautified by it. This is true of Mary, the Mother of Christ, whose humility made her the joy of all creation and the greatest revelation of beauty on earth, true of all the Saints, and true of every human being during the rare moments of his contacts with God.

How does one become humble? The answer, for a Christian, is simple: by contemplating Christ, the divine humility incarnate, the One in whom God has revealed once and for all His glory as humility and His humility as glory. "Today", Christ said on the night of His ultimate self-humiliation, "the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him." Humility is learned by contemplating Christ Who said, "Learn from Me for I am meek and humble of heart." Finally, it is learned by measuring everything by Him, by referring everything to Him. For without Christ, true humility is impossible, while with the Pharisee, even religion becomes pride in human achievements, another form of pharisaic self-glorification.

The Lenten season begins then by a quest, a prayer for humility which is the beginning of true repentance. For repentance, above everything else, is **A RETURN TO THE GENUINE ORDER OF THINGS**, the restoration of the right vision. It is, therefore, rooted in humility, and humility - the divine and beautiful humility - is its fruit and end. "Let us avoid the high flower speech of the Pharisee," says the Kondak of this day, "and learn the majesty of the Publican's humble words. . ." We are the gates of repentance and at the most solemn moment of the Sunday Vigil; after the Resurrection and the appearance of Christ have been announced - "having beheld the Resurrection . . ." - we sing for the first time the Tropars which will accompany us throughout the entire of Lent:

Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life, for my spirit rises early to pray towards Your holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled; but in Your compassion, purify me by the loving kindness of Your mercy.

Lead me on the paths of salvation, O Mother of God, for I have profaned my soul with shameful sins and have wasted my life in laziness. But through your intercession, deliver me from all impurity.

When I think of the many evil things I have done, wretch that I am, I tremble at the fearful day of judgment. But trusting in Your loving kindness, like David I cry to You: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY - is expressed to the following: Christina Mentis, 2/25. May God grant her a very happy birthday and keep her for many, happy and blessed years!

REDNER FULL SALE SLIPS – are still being collected. Please save the whole slip.

READER MINISTRY:

February 25 - Christina Mentis

March 3 –Margaret Perkins

March 10 – Subdeacon Kevin Minnich

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL – Metropolitan Antony, Father Geroge Bazylevsky, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Constantine Christo, Father Vasyl Dovhan, Father Oleh Hucul, Father Mark Leisure, Father John Nakonachny, Father James Norton, Father Paul Pappas, Father John Perich, Father Volodymyr Wronskyj, Pani Matka Lilly Lemar, Matushka Laura Odell, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Jamison, Mikey Arntz, Wakako Alexander, Theresa Barnes, Paul Calistor, Joe Chas, Rita Cook, Dmitra Cookson, Davis William Doty; Steve Forte, Thomas Holt, Dot Howell, Norma Husnick, Walter Katolic, Judith Kocinski, Kristina Koutsoudes, Olympia Koutsoudes, Gina Louk, Frederick McCarthy, Bruce McGloan, Patricia McGloan, Stephen McNulty, Chritina Mentis, Connie Mentis, John Moniodes, Olga Moniodes, Margaret Perkins, Barbara Perrigina, Natassia Perrine, Robert Perrine, Michael Previte, Sandra Ramondi, Carolyn Ritter; Jim Saturno, Clay Seman, Gail Sherman, Lorraine Sherman, Gerald Sovinski, Diane Staples, Nicholas Taylor, Kathy Theodorakos, Merryl Trader, Ralph Vurgich, Cheryl Zabowski, Edward Zabowski, Markos Zerefos.

MARTYRDOM KNOWS NO AGE LIMIT

Throughout the pages of Church History, we often hear stirring tales of men and women who willingly submitted to torture and martyrdom at the prime of their lives. The saint depicted on the cover of today's Church Bulletin falls into a different category: he gave his life for Christ at the advanced age of 113!

ST. HARALAMBOS was born in the town of Magnesia in Asia Minor in the 2nd century. He served his home town as a priest and later as a bishop. He was much loved by his flock as he worked tirelessly to bring Christ's message to them. In doing so, Haralambos incurred the wrath of the provincial governor, who launched an aggressive campaign of persecution against the Christians of Magnesia. Haralambos did not hide from the attackers. Instead, he defiantly continued to preach the Gospel openly, bringing about his arrest and imprisonment.

Haralambos certainly faced great physical torment. First, he was tied to a post in a public square and slashed repeatedly with knives. When he refused to renounce Christ, Haralambos was dragged through the streets by his beard. He was systematically tortured for several months. Still, the faith of Haralambos remained strong. Ultimately, the Emperor Septimus Severus ordered him to be brought to Antioch, where he was to be beheaded. Just as the executioners were about to carry out this sentence, the saintly bishop died, thus depriving his enemies the satisfaction of taking his life.