

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR ...

The health and salvation of-

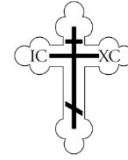
Metropolitan Onufriy + Ukrainian Orthodox Church	William Vivian
Metropolitan Isaiah Archbishop Benjamin	Valerie Deanna
Bishop Neofitos of Eldoret	Thomas
Archpriests Matthew & George	James
Hieroschemamonk Ambrose	Matthew
Subdeacon James	Keith
Reader Aleksei	Michael
Matushka Naomi	Rose
Jonathan • Phoebe • Anne	Abi
Iraida • Longinus • Nina	Gregory
Amal • Nicula • Maximus	John
Dmitry • Natalia	Keith • Diane
Danil • Anna • Kenneth	Robert
Venetia	Skyler
Catechumens Rebecca, Isaac, Anna, Adalie, Everett, Ivey, Emily, David, Gregory, Christian, Michael, Lucy, Corey, Bryan, Damon, Samuel	Crystal Michael

The repose and salvation of-

Archbishop Anastasios (1/25)
Dionysios (1/6)
Laura Christine (1/18)

Please let Father know if there are any names you would like added to the list.

*A mission parish under the omophorion of His Eminence Benjamin,
Archbishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West,
Orthodox Church in America*



ST TIKHON ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Sunday, February 9, 2025

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

Beginning of the Lenten Triodion

Leavetaking of the Meeting



Courtesy: godisourrefugeandstrength.com

Sundays at 9:05 AM – Hours + Divine Liturgy

Next Saturday, Feb. 23, 5:30 PM – Great Vespers + Confession

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Publican and Pharisee

I do not know that we can move from pride [and] vanity into humility in a single [moment] 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 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!

From a homily given on 4 February, 1990, by Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh

Troparion – Tone 8 (Resurrection)

Thou didst descend from on *high*, O Merciful One! /
Thou didst accept the *three*-day burial to free us from our sufferings! ///
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: glory to Thee!

Troparion – Tone 1 (Meeting)

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace! /
From thee hath shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, /
Enlightening those who *sat* in darkness. / Rejoice and be glad, O righteous elder; /
Thou didst accept in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls ///
Who grants us the resurrection.

Kontakion – Tone 1 (Triodion)

Let us flee from the pride *of* the Pharisee! /
And learn humility from the Publican's tears! /
Let us cry to our Savior: have mercy on us, ///
Only merciful One!

Kontakion - Tone 1 (Meeting)

By Thy Nativity, Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, /
And didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ God. /
Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. ///
Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of mankind!

Epistles: II Timothy 3:10-15 (Sunday) / Hebrews 7:7-17 (Meeting)

Gospels: Luke 18:10-14 (Sunday) / Luke 2:22-40 (Meeting)

Also this week: Hieromartyr Haralambos, Bishop of Magnesia in Thessaly, and those with him (February 10); Hieromartyr Blaise (February 11); St Meletius, Abp. of Antioch (February 12); Ven. Martinian of Caesarea (February 13); Ven. Auxentius of Bithynia (February 14); St Onesimus, Apostle of the Seventy (February 15).

*** NO fasting all week ***