

# Sts. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

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February 21, 2021

## SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE

TONE 4

Today ..... 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
Wed. 24 ..... 7:15pm Bible Study  
Sun. 28 ..... 10:00am Divine Liturgy

**One must be baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian to receive Holy Communion. Guests are invited to receive a blessing at the chalice and partake of the post-Communion bread (Antidoron).**

**Fast Days:** Strict fast on Wednesday and Friday.(fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, oil, wine and hard spirits as you are able.)

**Troparion – Tone 4**  
**(Resurrection)**

*When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"*

**Troparion – Tone 1**  
**(Lenten Triodion)**

*Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee!  
Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears!  
Let us cry to our Savior:  
"Have mercy on us,  
O only merciful One!"*

**Prayers for those** in our Sts. Peter and Paul community (parishioners, family, friends) can be listed for remembrance in our litanies during the Liturgy. Feel free to give names to Fr. Nicholas - please indicate how each person listed is connected to us (parishioner, family, friend, etc.), as well as why we are praying for them (health, memory, travel, etc.).

**Confessions can be heard** by appointment. If you need, I will come to you during the week. Please do not hesitate to call for a time to drop by the church or to have me visit you.

**Remembrances** for both the living and the dead during the prayers of preparation of the Eucharistic Lamb and during the Augmented Litany should be given the week before the desired remembrance so that the names can be put into the bulletin and given to the Deacons for the prayers. Any names of the living that are not marked as sick or traveling will be listed under general prayers.

## SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

### Church Lectionary

#### Today

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

Hebrews 13:17-21  
John 10:9-16  
2 Timothy 3:1-9  
Luke 20:46-21:4

### Reading the Bible in a Year

Feb 21: Joshua 17-20  
Feb 22: Joshua 21-24  
Feb 23: Judges 1-4  
Feb 24: Judges 5-8  
Feb 25: Judges 9-12  
Feb 26: Judges 13-16  
Feb 27: Judges 17-21

***If suffer some misfortune, then think: "The Lord sees my heart, and if it pleases Him, it will be well both for me and and others." And thus your soul will always be at peace. But is someone murmurs, "This is bad, and that is bad," then he will never have peace in his soul, even though he fasts and prays a lot.***

-St. Silouan the Athonite

**In silence the acquisition of holiness can be ours**

This holiness is not simply the result of having cultivated virtues, or controlling oneself through asceticism, but rather having a completely organic relationship with Christ. This organic relationship is the result of going through stages of repentance and purity, leading to a remarkable state of union with Christ, seen by the Church as deification, or theosis.

We can feel discouraged when we struggle to change our bad behaviors, or overcome sins that seem to follow us like bad debt. We feel overwhelmed and wonder if we'll ever have victory. During times like these it is good to remember the words of Saint Peter of Damaskos: "It is through victories in small things that the fathers won their great battles."

Because this victory has as its foundation the gradual transformation of self, we must never think any sin too

**Health of the Parish**



\$15,000.00

\$12,700

\$10,000.00

\$5,000.00

small to be confessed. The more we are truthful with our confessor, the greater the chance of victory over all our sins, including sins that seem incidental. These sins build up over time, helping submerge the will, so that even the big sins are excusable in our minds. The big battles are never won without the little skirmishes leading to victory.

A large part of us does not want to let our conscience enlighten us, as we fear knowing ourselves. That God speaks to us in the silence of our heart is a great threat to us, for we don't want to repent, we don't want to reform, we don't see the need for change, for it is easier to live the lie. Yet when we listen in silence to the Voice of God, we can make progress on the path to holiness. And this holiness comes to us through God's grace, but we have to be willing to be open to the will of God. Change will only come when we open our hearts and minds to God's will, and let Him change us.

**The darkness can only be scattered by the Light of Christ**

The very essence of our Christian faith is love because God Himself is love (1 John 4:8). Thus, our Christian morality, our ethics, and even our liturgical services and rites, are inconceivable in the absence of love. And, this love is not merely an act that has sprung up from a sense of ethical duty, but something that binds our world, the one seen, to the heavenly world, that world unseen. One world is temporal, and the other world is eternal, yet both have been created by God. We must remember that in this temporal world we prepare ourselves for eternity. Darkness and hatred can only be conquered by love. No one can possibly be

**February/March Events**

**February**

- 21 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 24 – 7:15pm Bible Study via Google Meet
- 28 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

**March**

- 03 – 7:15pm Bible Study via Google Meet
- 07 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 10– 7:15pm Bible Study via Google Meet
- 14– 10:00am Divine Liturgy *Forgiveness Sunday*
- 17 – 7:00pm Canon of St. Andrew

drawn to an Orthodoxy that offers nothing but judgement and condemnation. Only the message of the Incarnate Son of God Who condescended to take on our flesh, and share His Divinity with our humanity, displaces the darkness that would overwhelm our lives, and our world. The Christ Who healed the sick, forgave the sins of the woman at the well, and sat down with tax collectors and sinners, must be mirrored by we who bear his Holy Name, calling ourselves Christians. Only then will the darkness of this world be dispelled, and replaced by the Light of Christ.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

## 2 Timothy 3:10-15 (Epistle)

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

## Luke 18:10-14 (Gospel)

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

### A Prayer for Use During the Week

**Dear Lord, I confess I am asleep to just how much I struggle with being a generous person. I confess I hoard some things like clothes and money and food to help me not be afraid. But I should put all that fear in Your hands, Lord, and rest in the truth that You love me and know my needs and you will give me the strength to live a balanced life and not a life deluded by the false security of my things! Please help me this year to really unburden my life with all the excess that hide me from my own lack of faith in You. Amen!**

## Children's Word

### **What's the difference?**

Have you ever played a “find the difference” game? You know, you look at one picture and then you look at the other picture. Then you try to figure out what is different about the two..

In today's Gospel reading, we hear a parable about a man who played “find the difference” in real life! This man looked at himself, and then he looked other people. He tried to figure out what was different about him and others. He tried to show how he was better than others. He saw another man in the temple and told God how he was better than that tax collector.

This man, called the Pharisee, prayed like this: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men...even like this tax collector.” This Pharisee “found the difference” and showed God too!

“Find the difference” games are fun, but God doesn't want us to do them in real life. He doesn't want us to compare ourselves to other people. He doesn't want us to notice what other people are doing wrong! Why? Because we could be like this Pharisee in the story today. Did you see how that Pharisee said how he was better? Did you see how that Pharisee said he was great?

God wants us to pay attention to what God wants from us. Let's not try to “find the difference” with other people. Let's notice what God wants!

### SAINT GORGONIA THE SISTER OF SAINT GREGORY

Have you ever described a brother or sister, or a friend? If somebody said, “What's your sister like?”, what would you say? Maybe you would tell what she looked like, or what she likes to do, or what her favorite things are.

Many years ago (1,400 years!), one of the great saints of our Church, Saint Gregory the Theologian, described his younger sister, Saint Gorgonia. Sadly, she died before he did, and Saint Gregory gave a beautiful sermon about her.

In his sermon, Saint Gregory didn't tell what his sister looked like, but he did tell what she liked to do. His sister, Gorgonia, liked to help other people. She took care of her family, and she took care of strangers too! Gorgonia was married with five children. She helped her husband become a Christian. She raised her children to be faithful Christians too. She also helped strangers by inviting them to her house, and serving them, giving them food and a place to stay.

Saint Gorgonia came from a holy family. Her mother was Saint Nonna, and her big brother was Saint Gregory the Theologian, one of the Three Hierarchs. But you don't have to come from a holy family to love the Lord and to do what He asks! Saint Gregory told how his sister, Gorgonia, was an example for everyone. Wouldn't that be how you'd want somebody to describe you?

We celebrate St. Gorgonia on Tuesday, Feb. 23rd.

# The Widow's Mite

February 18, 2021 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

St. Basil was one of the most powerful leaders the Church has known, and that's because he followed up his preaching to the people with action. His legacy of generosity and his preaching to the people that they **MUST** develop the discipline of generosity in their own lives echoes loudly in the ears of the Church to this day!

Look what he said: "The shoes rotting in your closet belong to the person with no shoes! You do wrong you could help, but fail to help." As I look around my own house and see the abundance of clothes, shoes, and even food that I sometimes have to throw out because of rot, I confess I feel these words especially strong.

And it is no mistake that the Church gives us the same story back to back as we enter the Triodion Period in preparation for Great Lent!

Look at our lesson today in Mark 12:38-44:

*The Lord said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." And he sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living."*

Notice, please, where the Lord begins His confrontation with us all in His message. He starts with the example of the well off in society. It seems He always does this not because it's bad to be well off, but it's **DANGEROUS** to be well off. The danger of being asleep in a false sense of security warrants the Lord's strong words. It would be wise to pay attention to that reality.

The Lord even goes so far as to say these blind, well off, people will receive greater condemnation **BECAUSE** their thoughtlessness resulted in the poor suffering! It isn't the wealth that's the problem for the Lord. In fact, St. Basil insists that the poor exist to provide a means of salvation for the rich and the rich exist so that the poor will be saved. One saint even said, "When a beggar extends his hand to you, he is not asking for money, but offering you the kingdom of God!"

Our struggle is never about the money. We don't have any money problems in the Church. We have a perspective problem. Our money is an icon of our work, our time, and even our security. And this icon invites me to struggle with the Truth that only God can ultimately provide my truest security and safety. If I build my life on the shifting sands of my own abilities or the stock market or my career or even my inheritance, I will find that all of those "safety nets" have holes in them. My spiritual struggle, and make no mistake, this is a spiritual struggle, is to learn to depend on God for my peace and security, and not on my own strengths.

And the only way to learn this vital lesson is through generosity; through true sacrificial giving!

It is in this hard work the Church invited me to confront in Great Lent as one of the Three Pillars of Lent is Generosity. My freedom to be generous is in direct correlation to my spiritual maturity! Period. Full Stop. End of discussion. There is no escaping this fundamental truth, and there is no way to successfully hide from the implications of both a generous life and a stingy life. And your closets reveal which life you are living! All those extra shoes, all those extra clothes, all that extra food belongs to the poor and you've stolen these from the poor.

Today, well, it seems that "spring cleaning" is going to take on a spiritual dimension this year for me. I pray it does the same for you. And I pray that these preparation Sundays for Great Lent won't escape your attention as we all struggle to be Orthodox on Purpose!

## 2-е Тимофею 3:10-15

А ты последовал мне в учении, житии, расположении, вере, великодушии, любви, терпении, в гонениях, страданиях, постигших меня в Антиохии, Икони, Листрах; каковые гонения я перенес, и от всех избавил меня Господь. Да и все, желающие жить благочестиво во Христе Иисусе, будут гонимы. Злые же люди и обманщики будут преуспевать во зле, вводя в заблуждение и заблуждаясь. А ты пребывай в том, чему научен и что тебе вверено, зная, кем ты научен. Притом же ты из детства знаешь священные писания, которые могут умудрить тебя во спасение верою во Христа Иисуса.

## От Луки 18:10-14

два человека вошли в храм помолиться: один фарисей, а другой мытарь. Фарисей, став, молился сам в себе так: Боже! благодарю Тебя, что я не таков, как прочие люди, грабители, обидчики, прелюбодеи, или как этот мытарь: пощусь два раза в неделю, даю десятую часть из всего, что приобретаю. Мытарь же, стоя вдали, не смел даже поднять глаз на небо; но, ударяя себя в грудь, говорил: Боже! будь милостив ко мне грешнику! Сказываю вам, что сей пошел оправданным в дом свой более, нежели тот: ибо всякий, возвышающий сам себя, унижен будет, а унижающий себя возвысится.

## 2 Timoteut 3:10-15

Dhe ti ndoqe nga afër mësimin tim, sjelljen, këshillat, besimin, durimin, dashurinë, ngulmin, përndjekjet, vuajtjet që më ndodhën në Antioki, në Ikonio, dhe në Listra; ti e di çfarë përndjekjesh hoqa, por Perëndia më shpëtoi nga të gjitha. Të gjithë ata që duan të rrojnë me perëndishmëri në Krishtin Jezus do të përndiqen, por njerëzit e këqij dhe mashtrues do të shkojnë keq e më keq, duke gënjyer dhe duke u gënjyer vetë. Por ti qëndro në ato që mësove dhe u binde plotësisht, duke e ditur prej kujt i mësove, dhe se që nga fëmijëria i nje Shkrimet e shenjta, të cilat mund të të bëjnë të ditur për shpëtimin me anë të besimit që është në Krishtin Jezus.

## Luka 18:10-14

“Dy njerëz u ngjitën në tempull për t’u lutur; njëri ishte farise dhe tjetri tagrambledhës. Fariseu rrinte në këmbë dhe lutej në vetvete kështu: "O Perëndi, të falënderoj që nuk jam si njerëzit e tjerë, grabitqarë, të padrejtë, kurorëshkelës, dhe as si ai tagrambledhës. Unë agjëroj dy herë në javë dhe paguaj të dhjetën e gjithçkaje që kam". Kurse tagrambledhësi rrinte larg dhe as që guxonte t’i çonte sytë drejt qiellit; por rrihte kraharorin e vet duke thënë: "O Perëndi, ji i mëshirshëm ndaj mua mëkatarit". Dhe unë po ju them se ky, dhe jo tjetri, u kthye në shtëpinë e vet i shfajësuar; sepse kushdo që lartohet do të ulet, dhe kush ulet, do të lartohet.”