

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



Icon of the Publican and Pharisee

January 21, 2024: Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee		
Epistle: 2 Tim. 3: 10-15		Gospel: Lk. 18: 10-14
This Weekend	4:00	+ Kim Mellow (Family)
	10:30	For Our Parishioners
Mon., Jan. 22	9:00	+ Victims of Abortion
Tues., Jan. 23	9:00	Johanna (Elnitsky) & Maynard Brown (70th Wedding Anniversary) [Lauren Telep]
Wed., Jan. 24	9:00	+ Robert Harris (Jule Harris)
Thurs., Jan. 25	9:00	+ Halyna Iwasiw (Father Nestor)
Fri., Jan. 26	9:00	+ Howard Smith (Son, Howard)
Sat., Jan. 27	No Morning Divine Liturgy	
	2:00	Confessions
	4:00 pm	For Our Parishioners
Sun., Jan. 28	10:30	+ Nick Chaykosky (John & Mary Ann Turko)

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE

Introduction

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the first Sunday of a three-week period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. It marks the beginning of a time of preparation for the spiritual journey of Lent, a time for Eastern Christians to draw closer to God through worship, prayer, fasting, and acts of charity.

Biblical Story

The name for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus

Christ found in Luke 18:10-14. This is the story of two men, one a Pharisee, a member of a Jewish sect known for its diligent observance of the Law, and the other a Publican, a government official charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes.

Both men enter the temple, and the Pharisee stands openly and prays, thanking God that he is not like other men, specifically extortioners, the unjust, adulterers, “or even this tax collector” (v. 11). He then begins to list his

religious accomplishments by stating, “I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I possess” (v. 12).

In direct contrast to the pride of the Pharisee, the Publican goes to a place where he will not be noticed by others and beats his breast saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (v. 13).

Having told this story, Jesus affirms that it was the Publican who returned home justified and forgiven rather than the Pharisee. He states, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v. 14).

The theme of this parable is repentance. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting-point of the journey to Pascha. To repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means “change of mind.” To repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship with God and with others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Gospel depicts him as a man

that is pleased only with himself who thinks that he has complied with all of the requirements of religion. But in his pride, he has falsified the meaning of true religion and faith. He has reduced these to external observations, measuring his piety by the amount of money he gives.

The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a “change of mind.” He humbles himself, and his humility justifies him before God. He becomes, in the words of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3), “poor in spirit.” He acknowledges that he is a sinner, and he knows that salvation is only found in the mercy of God. Here we find an example of true humility, an essential aspect of repentance. A “change of mind” and the transformation of our lives can only happen when we humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our willingness to turn from sin, and receive His grace into our lives.

Our preparation for Lent thus begins with a prayer for humility, the beginning of true repentance. Through repentance, we can find and return to the true order of things, a restoration of our spiritual vision that will guide us in a very difficult and challenging world. By entering Great Lent in hu-

mility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He bless-

es by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

THE POWER OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

In 1657, the Most Reverend Father Don Bernardo de Ontevieros, General of the Benedictine order in Spain, and Abbot Don Millan de Mirando, arrived at the Monastery of Our Lady of Montserrat in order to participate in some conferences. During one of the conferences, a woman and her young daughter shows up and the daughter began to beg the Abbot Millan de Mirando to celebrate three Masses in memory of her deceased father, wholeheartedly convinced that with these Masses the soul of her father would be freed from the pains of purgatory. The good abbot, moved to tears by the girl, began to celebrate the first Mass the next day, and the girl, who was present with her mother, confirmed seeing her father kneeling, surrounded by frightening flames at the step of the main altar during the consecration. The priest and the General, dubious, asked the

girl to put a tissue close to the flames that surrounded her father in order to verify her story. Following their request, the girl put the tissue into the fire, which only she could see, and the tissue began to burn with a lively flame.

During the second Mass the girl confirmed having seen her father dressed in a vibrantly colored suit standing next to the deacon. At the third Mass, the father appeared to his daughter dressed in a snow-white suit. As soon as the Mass ended the girl exclaimed, "There is my father going away and rising into the sky!" The girl then thanked the community of monks on behalf of her father as he had asked her to do. The Most Reverend General of the Benedictine order in Spain, the Bishop of Astorga, and numerous citizens of the town were present.

OUR CONDOLENCES

In your Christian charity, please remember in your prayers the soul

of our Parishioners who recently fell asleep in the Lord.

+ **William Vervan** passed away on Saturday, January 6th. He was buried from St. Cyril's on Monday, January 15th.

+ **Henryka Minajew**, the wife of our former maintenance man Victor Minajew, passed away last month.

She was buried from St. Cyril's on Tuesday, January 16th.

+ **Leona Korzemba** recently passed away. She was buried from St. Cyril's on Thursday, January 18th.

May their memory be eternal!
Vichnaya Pamyat!

KEEP GREETING ONE ANOTHER

A reminder to all: just as we prepared for Christmas with a 40-day preparation and fasting period, so now we celebrate the bright days of Christmas, New Year's, and Theophany for 40 days. Please continue to sing our beautiful Christmas carols, and to greet one another with our traditional "Christos Razhdayetsia! Slavite Yeho! Christ

is Born! Glorify Him!" During the darkness of the Winter months, do all you can to keep the bright light of Christ burning brightly! Let

Christ shine through you!

Note: according to tradition, we continue to sing Christmas carols up until the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord on February 2nd.

HUMOR... THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The boy listened closely as the rabbi read the Bible. "May I ask a question" he asked. "Sure. Go ahead. Ask your question," replied the rabbi. Well, the Bible says that the children of Israel

crossed the Red Sea, the children of Israel built the Temple, the children of Israel did this and the children of Israel did that. Didn't the grown-ups ever do anything?

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS COMING TO AN END

Volunteers are needed! Again, special thanks to the Parishioners who decorated the Church for Christmas. We received so many comments as to how beautifully the Church was

decorated.

Taking down the decorations is much easier. Everything is doublechecked to see that it is marked with a ribbon for its proper location

for next Christmas. Lights are wound, everything is stored in bins, etc. and stored in the Church basement. We need the men of the Parish to help with the manger itself, the larger trees, ladders, etc.

Lend us a hand today (Sunday) IMMEDIATELY after the 10:30 Divine Liturgy next Sunday, January 28th. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

MYASOPUSNA 2024

Transfiguration of Our Lord Church Ukrainian Catholic Church is pleased to announce that dinner tickets are now available for their Annual Myasopusna Festival, held at the church's banquet hall at 240 Center Street, Nanticoke, on Sunday, February 4, from noon to 4 pm. The Myasopusna (Meatfare) Festival is the parish's pre-lenten celebration, preceding the Great Fast. Dinner (a platter of holuptsi, kobasi, pyrohy, black bread and butter, and a home-

made dessert) will be served from 12:30 to 2:00 pm, followed by live Ukrainian dance performances by Saint Mary's Ukrainian Dancers. A variety of Ukrainian crafts will be on display and for sale. Dinner tickets are \$20 if purchased by January 30 (\$22 at the door). Children under 12 are half price. Tickets can be purchased by calling Helen (735-4654) -leave a message OR from the rectory OR from Lisa 570-574-1016. Invite your friends and neighbors!

PIGGIE/HOLUBTSI DINNER

Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre will hold a take-out Piggie / Holubtsi Dinner on Saturday, January 27, 2024. Dinners may be picked up between 12:00 (noon) and 4:00 pm in their school hall, corner of North River and West Chestnut Streets, Wilkes-Barre. Dinner includes; Pig-

gies (meat & rice stuffed cabbage), mashed potatoes, vegetable, bread and butter and dessert. Dinners will be \$15.00 for adults and \$9.00 for children (12 and under). Walk-in customers will be welcomed, but reservations are Strongly Encouraged, (570) 829-3051."

INCLEMENT WEATHER

It is very rare that the Divine Liturgy is canceled, especially on a Sunday. I want to encourage those of you who must walk further or more importantly, who drive to church, to PLEASE USE COMMON SENSE, when making a determination about attending the Divine Liturgy on the

snowy, icy, inclement weekend or even more so on the weekday. If attendance means putting yourself and others at risk, I am sure the Lord understands if you should decide to pray at home. Please use common sense and a well-informed conscience when making such a decision.

WBS PENGUINS HOCKEY

We are considering having a Parish Group outing to a Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins Hockey game. The date would be on Saturday, Feb-

ruary 24, 2024 at 6 pm. If you are interested in attending, please let Fr. Nestor know as soon as possible so that tickets may be obtained.

UKRAINIAN PYSANKY CLASSES

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church in Olyphant will be offering Ukrainian Pysanky classes on February 18th and March 3rd. The two-hour beginner class will teach the basics to create a traditional Ukrainian pysanky egg. The cost of the class is \$25 for each person. Supplies are included. Classes will

be held in St. Cyril's Parish Hall, 207 River Street, Olyphant, with plenty of free parking. There will be two classes each day: 12:00 noon and 3:00 pm.

Class size is limited and you must call for a reservation to register. Call Tammy Budnovitch at 570-766-1919.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...

The Collection Processing Team for the month of January 2024 is Team

#1: Jerry Sereditch, Michaelene Davis, and Gloria Jablonski.

Sunday Collection for January 13 & 14, 2024: \$.

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

135 River St., Olyphant, PA 18447-1435

Telephone: 570-291-4451 Fax: 570-489-6918

Web Site: stcyrils.weconnect.com

E-Mail: sscyrilandmethodius@comcast.net

Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Faults of the Pharisee

Many are the faults of the Pharisee. First of all, he is boastful, and without sense, for he praises himself, even though the Sacred Scriptures cry aloud, "Let a neighbor praise you, and not your own mouth: a stranger and not your own lips" (Prov. 27:2). ... Our virtue, therefore, must not be contaminated with fault, but must be single-minded and blameless and free from all that can bring reproach. For what profit is there in fasting twice a week, if you so doing serve only as a pretext for ignorance and vanity, and if it makes you prideful, haughty and selfish? You tithe your possessions and make a boast of it; but in another way you provoke God's anger, by condemning men generally on this account and accusing others. And you yourself are puffed up, though not crowned by the divine decree for righteousness, but on the contrary, heap praises upon yourself. For I am not, he says, as the rest of mankind. Moderate yourself, O Pharisee: "Set a guard, O Lord, over your mouth, keep watch over the door of your lips" (Ps. 140:3).

You speak to God Who knows all things. Await the decree of the Judge. None of those skilled in the practice of wrestling ever crowns himself; nor does any man receive the crown of himself, but awaits the summons of the arbiter. Lower your pride, for arrogance is both accursed and hated by God. Although, therefore, you fast with puffed up mind, your so doing will not avail you; your labor will be unrewarded; for you have mingled dung with your perfume. Even according to the law of Moses a sacrifice that had a blemish was not capable of being offered to God; for it was said unto him, "Of sheep, and ox, that is offered for sacrifice, there must be no blemish therein" (Lev. 22:21). Since, therefore, your fasting is accompanied by pride, you must expect to hear God saying, this is not the fast that I have chosen (Cf Isa. 58:5) ... You offer tithes, but you wrong in another way Him Who is honored by you, in that you condemn men generally. This is an act foreign to the mind that fears God.

St. Cyril of Alexandria