

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



Icon of the Publican and Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14)

January 25, 2026: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

Epistle: 2 Tim. 3: 10-15

Gospel: Lk. 18: 11-14

This Weekend 4:00 pm + Robert Harris (Wife, Jule)
10:30 For Our Parishioners

Mon., January 26 **No Divine Liturgy Today**

Tues., January 27 9:00 + Howard Smith (Son, Howard)

Wed., January 28 9:00 + Jacob, Ann & Karen Jablonski (Gloria Jablonski)

Thurs., January 29 9:00 + Halyna Iwasiw (Father Nestor)

Fri., January 30 9:00 + Helen & Andrew Kollar (Daughter)

Sat., January 31 **No Morning Divine Liturgy**

2:00 pm Confessions

4:00 pm + Frank Cole, Jr. (Carol)

Sun., February 1 10:30 For Our Parishioners

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 humility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He blesses by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

HOW CAN WE PRAY TO THE SAINTS?

Praying to saints is an integral part of the spiritual journey. When approaching a saint in private prayer, one typically begins with a heartfelt invocation, calling upon the specific saint by name: for example, “Holy [Saint’s Name], pray for us.” In this invocation, we ask for the saint’s intercession, since he or she, being close to God, can aid us: as it says in the Bible, “The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects” (James 5:16). The prayer then unfolds as we express our specific needs, concerns, or gratitude. We can ask the saint’s guidance, protection, or assistance, and often we ask for grace to follow his or her good example in living as a disciple of Jesus. Thus, we acknowledge the saint’s virtues and exemplary life, which serve as an inspiration for the believer to cultivate similar qualities in his or her own spiritual journey.

During the public worship of the Church – the Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Molebens, and other services – Ukrainian Catholics pray to the saints in many different ways. During the Divine Liturgy, we regularly honor the Theotokos, the Virgin Mary, and

the priest also remembers a variety of saints. Almost every day of the year has one or several saints who are remembered on that day, and, over the centuries, different hymns have been written in their honor, which Ukrainian Catholics sing during the Divine Liturgy and other services. Some saints are widely venerated, and their feast days are celebrated with real solemnity: these include John the Baptist (June 24 and August 29), the Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29), and, of course, the Mother of God. Mary has many feasts, but the most important are her birth (September 8), her entry into the Temple (November 21), the Annunciation (March 25), and her Dormition (August 15).

Other saints also have major feasts in their honor: for example, the Great Martyr George (April 23) and the Great Mary Demetrios (October 26), the prophet Elias (July 20), St. John the Theologian (September 26), St. Nicholas (December 6), and the three holy hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom (January 30). But this list is far from complete.

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. (There is no more Christmas caroling on this day).

ON WINTER CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Winter sometimes brings stormy weather. We kindly ask our parishioners to use good judgment and common sense by not driving when conditions are dangerous. As weather varies from place to place, it may be that services will be held as scheduled, despite the fact that conditions in your area are difficult. Please prioritize your safety and that of others by assessing the situation before venturing out.

Also, wintertime is cold and flu

season. If you are truly sick, please stay home. Refrain from attending services to avoid the risk of infecting your fellow parishioners with your illness. Rest assured, God will understand your need to take care of your health and the well-being of the community.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in these matters. Let us all do our part to ensure a safe and healthy winter season.

BINGO AT THE MANOR ON MAIN

Due to the inclement weather forecast for this Sunday, our Cash Bingo at the Manor on Main has been rescheduled to Sunday, February 15th. We want to keep everyone safe. Also,

please pray for those who may suffer during the storm and for those who will be working hard to clear the snow and restore utilities.

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 double checked 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 on Sunday, February 1st immediately after the 10:30 Divine Liturgy. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

PIGGIE DINNER

Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre will hold a Piggie/Holubtsi Dinner on Saturday, January 31, 2026. Dinners may be picked up between 12:00 (noon) and 4:00 pm in our school hall, corner of North River and West Chestnut Streets, Wilkes-Barre. Dinners include; Piggies

(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.

MYASOPUSNA 2026

A Ukrainian Cultural Celebration

Join us for a vibrant celebration of Ukrainian culture at MYASOPUSNA 2026! Experience an afternoon filled with traditional dance, music, and authentic cuisine on Sunday, February 8, 2026, from noon to 4:00 PM at the Transfiguration of Our Lord Church Hall, located at Bliss & Center Street in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke.

Event Highlights

- Live performances featuring the Kazka Ukrainian Folk Ensemble, St. Mary's Ukrainian Dancers, and The Englot Sisters
- Handcrafted Ukrainian items for sale, including a Pysanky (Easter egg) demonstration, embroidery, and a variety of gift items

- Exciting basket raffle

Homemade Ukrainian Dinner

Savor a delicious homemade Ukrainian dinner, including Halubtsi, ham, kobasa, kapusta, varenyky, black bread, beverage, and dessert. Ukrainian beverages will also be available for purchase.

Dinner tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12 for children (12 & under). Please note: advance purchase only—

no tickets will be sold at the door.

Doors open at 12:00 PM, with dinner service from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM. Entertainment begins at 1:30 PM.

Ticket Information

To purchase tickets, call 570-735-4654 or leave a message at 570-735-1901. Don't miss this opportunity to immerse yourself in Ukrainian heritage and celebrate with the community!

PYSANKY CLASSES

Learn the art of making Ukrainian Easter Eggs. Classes are February 22nd and March 1st, with two times to choose from: 12:00 and 3:00. Fee of \$25 includes all supplies. Location: St.

Cyril's Parish Hall, 207 River Street, Olyphant. For reservations call: Tammy 570-766-1919. Class sizes are limited and fill up fast.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM

The Collection Processing Team for the month of January 2026 is

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

Sunday Collection for Jan. 17 & 18, 2026: \$

Sincere thanks to all of you for your kindness and generosity.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE...

Happy Birthday and Mnohaya Leeta to the following Parishioners who celebrate their birthdays in January:

Jane Granza

Carol Pompey

John Turko, Sr.

Marie Martin

Rosemarie Sember

Melanie Mohila

Nick Spryn

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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Humility is the Mark of a Sinner

In the case of that Pharisee who was praying, the things he said were true. Since he was saying them out of pride and the tax collector was telling his sins with humility, the confession of sins of the last was more pleasing to God than the acknowledgment of the almsgiving of the first. It is more difficult to confess one's sins than one's righteousness. God looks on the one who carries a heavy burden. The tax collector therefore appeared to Him to have had more to bear than the Pharisee had. He went down more justified than the Pharisee did, only because of the fact he was humble. If this Pharisee had been sinful, his prayer would have added iniquity to iniquity, but the Lord purified the tax collector of his iniquity. If just by praying, the Pharisee's prayer provoked God's wrath, then as a result of that provocation, the prayer of the tax collector proved all the more potent.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

The stern Pharisee, who in his self pride not only boasted of himself but also discredited the tax collector in the presence of God, made his justice void by being guilty of pride. Instead of the Pharisee, the tax collector went down justified, because he had given glory to God, the Holy One. He did not dare lift his eyes but sought only to plead for mercy. He accused himself by his posture, by striking his breast, and by entertaining no other motive except propitiation. Be on your guard, therefore, and bear in mind this example of severe loss sustained through arrogance. The one guilty of insolent behavior suffered the loss of his justice and forfeited his reward by his bold self-reliance. He was judged inferior to a humble man and a sinner because in his self-exaltation he did not await the judgment of God but pronounced it himself. Never place yourself above anyone, not even great sinners. Humility often saves a sinner who has committed many terrible transgressions.

St. Basil the Great