



Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

37th Saturday after Pentecost/Publican and Pharisee

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org February 20-21, 2021

Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

Saturday, February 20

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, February 21

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Tuesday, February 23

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, February 24

7:00 pm Bible Study (Online)

Thursday, February 25

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

7:00 pm Making the Most of Great Lent (Online)

Saturday, February 27

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, February 28

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

DATES TO NOTE

Orthodox Great Lent Begins Monday, March 15

Western Easter is on Sunday, April 4

Orthodox Pascha is on Sunday, May 2

Announcements

➤ We are pleased to welcome **Fr Alexander Rentel, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America and his family** to our parish to lead us in the Sunday Divine Liturgy. In addition to being the first priest of the OCA, he is an accomplished scholar and professor at St Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood NY. Please join us after Sunday's Divine Liturgy greet Fr Alexander and his family at coffee hour.

➤ Our next **St Nicholas Community Food Pantry** will be held this Saturday, February 27. Please help support this parish ministry and our local community by bringing non-perishable donations to stock our pantry. All donations can be placed in the donation box by the back door of the church basement. Please contact Mat. Ashley or Kate Skowron for additional information.

➤ **Donations are now being sought** for the completed iconography in the Children's ("cry") Room. Please see Fr Thomas if you are able to support this incredible gift to our children. Fr Theodore is completing the drawings in the Candle Kiosk Room and will complete the work, God willing, this year.

➤ **This week is fast free** to remind us that our fasting should not lead to pharisaical self-complacency but to humility. The fulfillment of spiritual disciplines is not the goal of the spiritual life - they are a means to an end. Everything we do in our spiritual life should lead us to union with God and love for our neighbor.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* George Shaytar, Sandi Tirpak, Paul Yewisiak, *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights from Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. **From John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza** for the health of Galina Vilkova and Nora Kowalcheck and the child to be born of her. **From Charles Wasilko** for the health of sisters Doris and Marsha. **From Doris Wasilko** for departed servants of the Wasilko and Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko and Dyczko families. **From Irene Kulchock** for the health of Jan Pravlochak. **From Matushka Nancy Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant Deacon Joseph Mell; for the health of family.

Thank You

➤ to **Bob and Mary Beth Madalinsky** for sponsoring all categories of monthly donations for February: (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$25, Incense \$10).



St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: David (Part 1)

Scripture reference: I Samuel/Kingdoms 16-20

Questions to ask/review:

- Do you think David was afraid when he faced Goliath? Have you ever been afraid?
- How did David deal with his fear? You?
- David proved that you can do many things with God on your side no matter your age! Can you think of some things you can do right now to please God?
- What does the statement that Jonathon and David became "one in spirit" mean? How would David's life have been different without Jonathon's friendship?
- Which of these friendship characteristics do your friends exhibit? What is your own strongest friendship characteristic? Your weakest?
- Are our friends perfect? What happens when we expect them to be perfect?
- What's the greatest risk you've taken for a friend? Your friend for you? How does God work through our friendships?
- How do Saul's actions show what happens when hatred enters our lives?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Read or sing Psalms written by David from the book of Psalms.
- Role play (safely!) the battle between the Israelites and Philistines featuring David and Goliath.

Prayer: Lord, give us victory over giants, as You did David.

Hymns and Readings for Saturday, Feb 20

Tone 2 Troparion of Saturday

Apostles, martyrs, and prophets,
Holy hierarchs, saints, and righteous ones,
Having fought the good fight and kept the faith,
Ye have boldness towards the Saviour.
Intercede for us with Him, for He is good. //
and pray that He may save our souls.

Tone 4 Troparion (St Nicholas)

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility, and a teacher of
abstinence.
Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to
you!
Because of your poverty riches were granted to
you!
O holy Bishop Nicholas,
pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of
ages. Amen.*

Tone 8 Kontakion of Saturday

The universe offers thee the God-bearing
martyrs,
As the first fruits of creation, O Lord and
Creator, //
Through the Theotokos and their prayers
establish Thy Church in peace.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon of Saturday (Psalm 31/32)

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O ye righteous.

Epistle of the Saturday (2 Timothy 2:11-19)

This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him,
We shall also live with Him.
If we endure,
We shall also reign with Him.
If we deny Him,
He also will deny us.

If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

Remind them of these things, charging them
before the Lord not to strive about words to no
profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to
present yourself approved to God, a worker who
does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing
the word of truth. But shun profane and idle
babblings, for they will increase to more
ungodliness. And their message will spread like
cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,
who have strayed concerning the truth, saying
that the resurrection is already past; and they
overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the
solid foundation of God stands, having this seal:
“The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let
everyone who names the name of Christ depart
from iniquity.”

Gospel of the Saturday (Luke 18:2-8)

“There was in a certain city a judge who did not
fear God nor regard man. Now there was a
widow in that city; and she came to him, saying,
‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he
would not for a while; but afterward he said
within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor
regard man, yet because this widow troubles me
I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming
she weary me.’ ”

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge
said. And shall God not avenge His own elect
who cry out day and night to Him, though He
bears long with them? I tell you that He will
avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the
Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on
the earth?”

Communion Hymn of Saturday

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Praise befits
the just. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Ps 33:1)

"Show patience, and there will be peace."

On Perseverance

*St. Anatoly of Optina - "A Collection of Letters to
Nuns"*

"When patience greatly increases in our soul, it
is a sign that we have secretly received the
grace of consolation. The power of patience is
stronger than the joyful thoughts that descend
into the heart."

*St. Isaac the Syrian - "Ascetical Homilies"
(Homily Forty-Eight)*

"...In proportion to your humility you are given
patience in your woes; and in proportion to your
patience the burden of your afflictions is made
lighter and you will find consolation; in
proportion to your consolation, your love of God
increases; and in proportion to your love, your
joy in the Holy Spirit is magnified. Once men
have truly become His sons, our tenderly
compassionate Father does not take away their
temptations from them when it is His pleasure
to 'make for them a way to escape' (1 Cor.
10:13), but instead He gives His sons patience in
their trials. All these good things are given into
the hand of their patience for the perfecting of
their souls."

*St. Isaac the Syrian - "Ascetical Homilies"
(Homily Forty-Two)*

"Ask with tears, seek with obedience, knock
with patience. For thus he who asks receives,
and he who seeks finds, and to him that
knocketh it shall be opened."

*St. John Climacus - "The Ladder of Divine
Ascent" (Step 28)*

"Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do
not give up, but stand your ground
courageously. And assuredly, the angel who

guards you will honor your patience."
*St. John Climacus - "The Ladder of Divine Ascent"
(Step 5)*

"Do not be cast down over the struggle- the Lord
loves a brave warrior. The Lord loves the soul
that is valiant"
St. Siloan the Athonite

"...And so let us be glad and bear with patience
everything the world throws at us, secure in the
knowledge that it is then that we are most in the
mind of God."
St. Basil the Great - "Gateway to Paradise"

"Hope also requires a life corresponding to the
hope."
St. John of Kronstadt - My Life in Christ

"Tribulations worketh patience, and patience
probation, and probation hope," (Rom. 5:3,4).
And even as the violence of the wind, when it
rushes upon strong trees, and sways them in all
directions, does not root them up, but renders
them still firmer and stronger by these attacks;
so the soul that is holy, and lives in a religious
state, is not supplanted by the inroads of trial
and tribulation, but stimulated thereby to more
patience; even as the blessed Job, whom they
made more illustrious and honorable."
St. John Chrysostom - "Concerning the Statutes"

"Prayer breathes hope..."
St. John of Kronstadt - My Life in Christ

"When you pray, bring to mind the ploughman
who sows in hope. He Who causes to return
twofold the seed that the ploughman sows with
hope, Who has esteemed the seeking of His
kingdom and His righteousness to be greater
than temporal things, He himself will reward
your entreaty according to His promise."
*St. Isaac the Syrian - "Ascetical Homilies"
(Homily Twenty-Five)*

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, Feb 21

Tone 4 Troparion of the 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!”

Tone 4 Troparion of St Nicholas

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence. Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to you! Because of your poverty riches were granted to you! O holy Bishop Nicholas, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tone 3 Kontakion of St Nicholas

You appeared as a priest in Myra, O Saint Nicholas, Fulfilling the gospel of Christ, O ven’rable one; You laid down your life for your people And rescued the innocent from death. Therefore you have been blest as a great init’ate of the grace of God.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 Kontakion from the 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!”

Tone 4 Prokeimenon of the Resurrection

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all. (*Ps. 103:26*)

Epistle of the Sunday (2 Timothy 3:10-15)

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.

Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 18:10-14)

“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.”

Communion Hymn of Sunday

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Triodion

With God on this present day we begin the Triodion, the hymns of which were composed by many of our holy and God-bearing Fathers, inspired by the Holy Spirit according to their worthiness. It was our Holy Fathers’ idea that through the entire Triodion would be commemorated in a concise form all God’s benefits to us from the beginning, using it as a reminder for all of us that we were created by Him, and were exiled from Paradise through the tasting of the fruit, rejecting the commandment that was given to us for our knowledge, and we were cast out through the envy of the arch villain serpent and enemy, who was made to crawl for his arrogance. That we remained cut off from the benefits of Paradise and were led by the devil. That the Son and Word of God, having suffered in His mercy, bowing the heavens, descended and made His abode in the Virgin and became man for our sake, showing us through His life the ascent into the heavens, through humility first of all then fasting and the rejection of evil and through His other deeds. That He suffered and rose from the dead and ascended once more into heaven, and He sent down the Holy Spirit upon His holy disciples and Apostles, who all proclaimed Him to be the Son of God and the most perfect God. And that once more the divine Apostles acted through the grace of the most Holy Spirit and gathered all the saints from the ends of the earth through their preaching, filling the world on high, which was the intention of the Creator from the beginning.

Now the purpose of the Triodion intended by the Holy Fathers on these three present feasts of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, and the Second Coming is a kind of preparatory lesson and stimulation to prepare ourselves for the spiritual labors of the Fast, having put aside our usual corrupt habits. First of all they present to us the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, and they call the week following precursory. For those

who desire to go off to do military battle, first ascertain the time of the battle from the leaders, so that having cleaned and polished their weapons, and preparing well all their other matters, and having removed all obstacles from their path, they earnestly go forth to their labors, taking the necessary supplies. Often before battle they tell anecdotes and tales and parables to incite their hearts to zeal, driving off idleness, fear, despair and other inadequate feelings. So the divine Fathers herald the coming fast against the armies of demons as a passion which holds fast our souls to cleanse ourselves of the poison accumulated over a long period of time. Not yet possessing those benefits, let us strive to obtain them, and arming ourselves properly, so let us set off to the labors of the Fast.

Now the first weapon among the virtues is repentance and humility. And the temptation to attain the greatest humility is pride and arrogance. So they place before us first of all this present trustworthy parable from the Divine Gospel. It encourages us to shun the desire for the pride and arrogance of the Pharisee, and to cultivate the opposite desire of the Publican for humility and repentance. For the greatest and most grievous passion is pride and arrogance, since this is how the Devil fell from the heavens before the morning star and was cast into darkness. Because of this Adam, the father of our race, was driven from Paradise through partaking of the fruit. Through this example the Holy Fathers encourage all not to be proud of their successes, but always to be humble. For the Lord sets Himself against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Better a man who has sinned, if he knows that he has sinned and repents, than a man who has not sinned and thinks of himself as righteous. For Christ said, "I say to you that the Publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee." This parable reveals that no one should exalt himself, even though he has done good deeds, but rather should always be humble and pray from his heart to God, for even if he should fall into the most serious sin, salvation is not far off.