

# *Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church*

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## **The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee**

**(02.13.2022)**

### *Luke 18:10-14*

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon 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 every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (*KJV*)

Believers are called upon in God's Holy Church to turn the heart, mind and soul toward the coming Great Lent and the journey to Pascha. The arrival of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is a step in the direction toward Pascha.

God's Holy Church prepares believers for the journey. Each person voluntarily determines and makes the choices regarding the degree of participation.

The Church offers nourishment, direction and teachings throughout the journey.

Each person has the opportunity to address personal sins, repent and take action to become more unified with Jesus Christ. The hunger in the soul seeks unity with Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ provides the lasting internal peace and satisfaction in life. Jesus Christ offers the healing and embracing love necessary for fulness in life. Joy is derived from unity with Jesus Christ.

The publican in the current Gospel realized his own sinfulness. He took responsibility for his sinfulness and turned to God for mercy. The Jesus Prayer is a way for believers to become like the publican.

Sincerely reciting the Jesus Prayer "Lord Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me a sinner" is a way to imitate the publican. Reciting the Jesus Prayer puts the focus on Jesus Christ and expresses personal responsibility for sin.

The Jesus Prayer acknowledges the desire for mercy for sins committed. The Jesus Prayer lifts the believer's attention to God. By reciting the Jesus Prayer, the believer directs personal actions and thoughts away from the perils of sin.

The Jesus Prayer is a forceful action creating a barrier against the negative attacks on the heart, mind and soul. The Jesus Prayer is a source of nourishment beneficial to the soul.

The Church provides the example of the publican each year to focus believers on the need for mercy. God's mercy relieves believers of the stress and weight of personal sin and enables new beginnings in Jesus Christ.

Regardless of how good believers may try to be, sin still is a perilous part of life. Only with the help and mercy of God can the perils be addressed. Individuals are not capable of addressing sin without the help and mercy of God.

God's love for the believer is uplifting and healing. God's love for the believer makes change possible. The Pharisee in the current Gospel was blind to his own sin. He was content and proud with himself.

The Pharisee was judgmental. He focused on what he thought he had done that was good and was blind to his own sinfulness. Good is derived from God and exists because of God. Great Lent and the journey to Pascha are intended to open the eyes, hearts, minds and souls of believers to the greatness and glory of God. When taken seriously, Great Lent and the journey to Pascha makes believers "new" in Christ.

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is located early in the movement to Pascha. Good beginnings increase the likelihood of good endings. Today is the time to consider actively preparing for Pascha.

Now is the time to get ready for the journey and take responsibility for personal sins. Now is the time to turn to the Lord God for mercy and to seek the new beginning in Christ.

The life in Jesus Christ is unlimited and unending for those following the narrow path and rejecting the way of sin. The Kingdom of God and eternal life are possible when unity with Christ exists and is treasured.

The world is full of trappings that put the soul in peril. Serious believers reject the perils of the world and are vigilant in guarding the soul. Prayer, fasting and repentance keep the believer on the narrow path to the Kingdom.

God seeks to save the lost, to redeem the sinner. Each person has the opportunity and the responsibility to take action against sin. The choices made in daily life determine whether God's Kingdom and eternal life are experienced.

God's Holy Church provides the narrow path for believers to follow to the Kingdom and eternal life. The Church welcomes believers seeking to repent and desiring the nourishment of the Divine services.

The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisees is rich in nourishment for attentive believers. Believers attentive to the Gospel heartily apply the content to daily life.

Now is the time to focus on personal sin and repent. Now is the time for new beginnings in Christ. Seeking God's love and mercy make new beginnings possible.

The love of God is always present and healing. The love of God summons believers to draw near. Reject sin, repent and love God. Welcome the love of God and embrace the love of God completely.

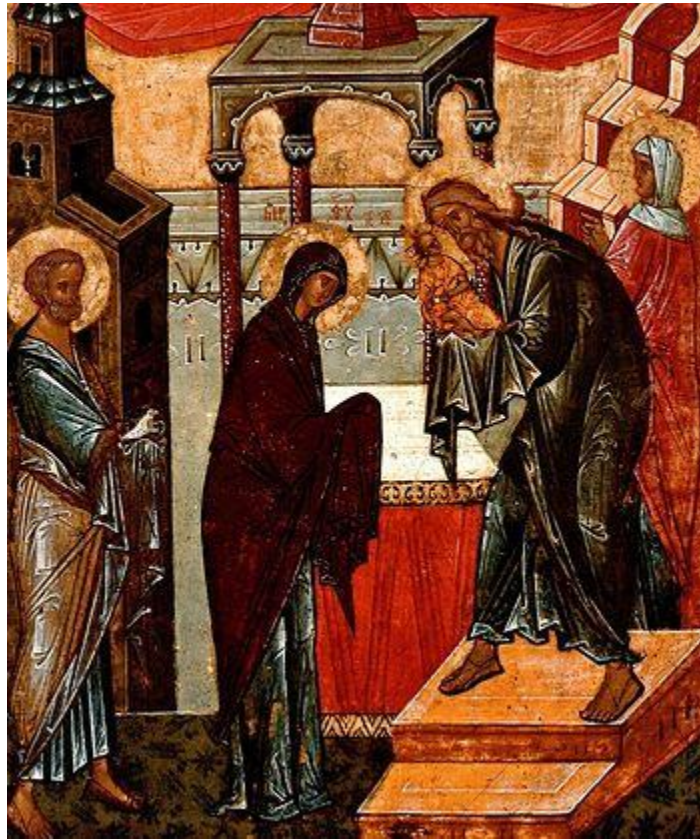
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*The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Holy Unmercenaries Cyrus and John. January 31. February 13, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.*

*Father Rodney Torbic*

# HOMILY ON THE MEETING OF THE LORD

Delivered by His Grace Bishop Atanasije (Jevtic), 1995 in Pozarevac



*Two-sided icon-tablet, late 15th-early 16th cc., Novgorod Museum-reserve*

Today we celebrate a great Feast, the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, we celebrate a joyous event of the Meeting of Heaven and earth, the timeless and the transient, God and man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Jerusalem Temple the newly born Savior was taken into the arms of the Righteous elder Simeon, who, having received a Divine promise that he would not die until he sees with his own eyes the Savior and Messiah, gave thanks to the Lord at that very moment for fulfilling that promise by saying: „Now you are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation...“. Receiving and taking into his elderly hands the Savior of the world, the righteous Elder recognized also in his prophetic vision the full history of what would be with Christ, and all of those who follow Him, and that is why He says to the Most Holy Theotokos: „Behold this Child is destined for the fall and rising, and for a sign

which will be spoke against and many will stand against,“ but they will not be able to prevail, for in Him the thoughts of the hearts of many will be revealed.

Christ gives account for the thoughts of man, thus He is not only our joy, but also our judgment. Many of the Saints rejoiced in appearing before the face of Christ, and prayed: „Lord, cleanse me, have mercy on me, renew me, for if I appear unprepared before You, it will be most dreadful for me, if You only turn Your face from me.“

Many today wish to encounter Christ. This is noticed all the more among our people, it is evident and felt. After half a century of slavery unles godlessness, we seek after the face of the Living God – and those who didn't know Him, and those who didn't feel Him, but they anticipated Him in the depths of their being. Whenever we seek after something great, good, lasting, true, righteous, humanly, beautiful, holy, then we seek after the Face of God, we seek Christ – the Image of the Invisible God. Our people today are in this search. However, the noise of those same godless ones who in the past banned Christ, can be heard after this awakening and renewing of the people. On the other hand, the assault from our enemies and false Christians from the West, as well as the false religions from the East, so that our people find themselves in a position which St. Simeon foretold the Most Holy Theotokos: that a sword will pierce her heart, but that is how the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

Our people today are being examined just as St. Simeon was when he encountered Christ. The thoughts and feelings of all of our hearts are being revealed. Some rush to escape, while others rush to defend themselves with words, statements, decisions on paper, and so they think to suffocate the thoughts and feelings of their hearts which God knows. Others, true Orthodox Serbs, battle for the good of their fellow man created in God's image, and for a better image and light among their people, that the light of the Meeting of the Lord which shone on those who sat in darkness, that it appear to us the glory of the Salvation of the Lord, which St. Simeon in his praise to Christ speaks of today.

On today's Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, when the heavens meet the earth, God meets man, history meets eternity, when - as our people beautifully say – spring and winter meet, may we also open our hearts for an encounter with the Lord. He is there, knocking on everyone's doors, „Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him,“ says the Lord (Rev. 3:20). May we open the doors of our beings, our hearts, that we never close them, how our old, trite, weathered beings would be renewed – our souls and bodies – and rejoice at the

meeting with the Lord, the Meeting of the Lord, who comes to us in the arms of the Most Holy Theotokos, that He might take all of us in His eternal bosom. For He is eternally in the bosom of the Father, and there has He prepared us a place.

Open your hearts, listen to the depths of your thoughts, desires, feelings, anticipations, nostalgias, yearnings, the pursuits of your hearts. For our hearts are created in the image of God and they yearn for God; the truth is often buried in passions, desires, appetites, ambitions, prejudices. Let us free ourselves of them and meet the Lord, for He always comes to meet us. He is the One who came, who is with us, Who always comes to be with us.

I wish a happy feast especially to our little children, who celebrate not only Christmas, when God became a Little Child, but also the Meeting, when the Lord was received as a Child from the hands of man so that He could receive man into everlasting life in the Heavenly Kingdom. Pray to God for those children that suffer, who are orphans, who are wounded, who are refugees. There are plenty of them, not only in Serbian lands, in the South, in Kosovo and in the Western lands, in Krajina, but also in Cyprus, Georgia, the Middle East and elsewhere.



Do you know how many of our children suffer in the West, when they are mocked, when in schools they are ridiculed, because they are Serbian, because they are Orthodox, saying that even God has turned His back to us and will judge us. But let that not worry us or cause us to stumble, for our pursuit, yearning and anticipation

from the depths of our hearts is to seek out the Face of the Living God and to appear before Him that He judge us. For it is better that He judges us than people.

A happy feast to all of you who, with your donations, help the crucified and suffering people in the Serbian lands and Krajinas, and may the Lord reward you with joy and celebration in life eternal in God's Kingdom. Amen.

*Bishop Atanasije (Jevtic)*

## *The Prologue from Ochrid* *St Nikolai of Zhicha*

### **1. SAINT SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER**

During the reign of the Egyptian Emperor Ptolemy Philadelphus, Simeon was chosen as one of the famous Seventy, to whom was entrusted the task of translating the Bible from Hebrew into Greek [The Septuagint]. Simeon was performing his task conscientiously, but in the process of translating the book of the Prophet Isaiah he came upon the prophecy: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son* (Isaiah 7:14). He became confused and took a knife to remove the word "virgin" and replace it with the words "young woman," and thus to translate it into Greek. At that moment, however, an angel of God appeared to Simeon and restrained him from his intention, explaining to him that the prophecy is true, that it was correctly written. The messenger of God also said that Simeon would become convinced of it personally, for, according to the will of God, he would not die until he saw the Messiah born of the Virgin. The righteous Simeon rejoiced to hear such a voice from heaven, left the prophecy unchanged and thanked God, Who made him worthy to live and see the Promised One. When the young Child Jesus was presented in the Temple in Jerusalem by the Virgin Mary, the Spirit of God revealed this to Simeon, who was very old and "as white as a swan." Simeon quickly entered the Temple and there recognized both the Virgin and the young Child by the light that shone around their heads like a halo. The joyful Simeon took Christ into his hands and prayed to God to release him from this life: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation* (Luke 2:29-30). Anna the Prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, was also there; she too recognized the Messiah, and she proclaimed Him to the people. At that time Anna was eighty-four years old. St. Simeon died shortly thereafter. This righteous Elder Simeon is considered to be a protector of young

children.

## **2. THE HOLY MARTYRS ADRIAN AND EUBULUS**

These two holy souls came from their home in Baneas in Caesarea of Cappadocia to visit, console and encourage the Christians imprisoned in the dungeon. However, they too were arrested and sentenced to death. Adrian was beheaded, and Eubulus was thrown to wild beasts, in the year 309 A.D. Thus, not grieving over this life, they honorably and joyfully entered into life eternal.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

#### **A PRAYER FOR A SMALL CHILD**

O Powerful Lord, have mercy and save--

Do not extinguish this small flame with death!

This child is like the small flame of a candle,

And the winds of the world are terrible, even to the stars.

A weak fire is extinguished beneath the ashes,

As can be a human soul beneath Thy hand.

When the water rises and reaches the throat,

And the flame wanes and the fire becomes dampened,

O Lord, save, have mercy, and console us!

Thus, David the Prophet prayed to Thee.

Even though he was a great torch,

At the foot of heaven he was a weak child,

And from malicious desires he wavered in pain,

And from malicious thoughts his head began to ache;

Every wind of malice weakened him.

He would have been extinguished quickly from the turbulent winds,

If Thou hadst not saved him. O speedy Helper.

O Lord, have mercy and save us even now,

And do not extinguish this small flame with death!  
Through the prayers, O God, of Thy beloved elder,  
Holy St. Simeon, the wondrous God-receiver.

### REFLECTION

How great a glory in heaven was attained by St. Simeon the God-receiver, who held the Savior of the world in his hands! The following incident, as related in the life of St. Peter the Athonite (June 12), clearly shows this. As a commander during a battle, Peter was enslaved, chained and cast into prison in the town of Samara on the shores of the Euphrates River. Languishing in prison for a long time, Peter begged St. Nicholas with tears to pray to God for him, that he might be freed from prison, vowing that he would completely dedicate himself to God. St. Nicholas appeared to him in a dream, saying that although he [St. Nicholas] had prayed to God for him, God was delaying his deliverance because he [Peter] had earlier made a similar vow to God and had not keep it. And St. Nicholas further counseled Peter that he ought to pray to St. Simeon the God-receiver, "who is very mighty before God and stands close to the throne of God, together with the All-holy Virgin and St. John the Forerunner." Peter heeded the counsel of St. Nicholas and proceeded to pray to St. Simeon. Again St. Nicholas appeared to him with St. Simeon, not in a dream but in reality. Peter saw Simeon, glorious in appearance with light shining from his countenance. He was attired in the vestments of an Old Testament priest and bore a golden staff in his hand. St. Simeon said to Peter: "Do you want to fulfill the vow and become a monk?" To this Peter replied: "Yes, master, with God's help." Simeon then touched Peter's chains with his staff, and the chains melted like wax. Opening the doors of the dungeon, the saint led Peter from prison.

### CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the Lord Jesus as the Cornerstone:

1. As the Cornerstone in building personal character;
2. As the Cornerstone in building the family and the nation;
3. As the Cornerstone of every good-intentioned social transformation and inspiration of mankind.

### **HOMILY on the Spirit of God, Who speaks through the Spirit-bearers**

"Take no thought how or what ye shall speak ... For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:19-20).



These are the words of Him Who knows all and Who declared to the world knowledge which was unknown before He visited mankind. If someone is filled with the Spirit of God, he does not speak from the spirit of man. Instead, the Spirit of God speaks from him and through him. He is only an instrument or a lyre of God's Spirit, through which God the Spirit speaks. When that kind of man speaks, he speaks infallibly and no one can find falsehood in his speech except those who, because of the perversion of their minds, consider truth as falsehood. How men speak when filled with the Spirit of God was clearly shown by the example of the prophets, and more clearly by the example of the apostles. So miraculous and unbelievable did the words of the apostles seem to strangers--that is, to those who bereft of the Spirit of God in themselves and who were only able to speak of the earth--that they considered the apostles to be intoxicated. In reality, all those people who were the first to speak about the hidden miracles of this physical world--the power of steam, magnetism, electricity, wireless telegraphy, and conversation at a distance--appeared intoxicated and foolish to the ignorant. How can spiritual men, when led by the Spirit of God and speaking about countless hidden mysteries of the spiritual kingdom, not seem intoxicated and foolish? Whoever humbles himself before God, him God makes powerful. The Spirit of God settles in a contrite heart and from there speaks through the mouth of man. This is confirmed not only by the prophets and apostles, but also by God's innumerable sons and daughters.

O Good Lord, do not refuse us Thy Holy Spirit.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

## *Services this Week*

- ❖ **THE MEETING [PRESENTATION] OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE**  
(Tuesday- February 15<sup>th</sup>) – Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM
- ❖ **Holy and Righteous Simeon the God-receiver and Ana –**  
(Wednesday – February 16<sup>th</sup>) Divine Liturgy 09:30 AM
- ❖ **Saturday– February 19th – PARACLESIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NECTARIOS -05:00 PM**
- ❖ **34th Sunday after Pentecost – SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON**  
(Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

## **Donations January 30, 2022**

**Offering - \$2,797.00 Candles - \$31.00 Donations - \$198.00**

**Large Candles**

**In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak**

**In Memory of Parents, Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Robert &  
Milica Knepp**

**In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich from Richard Kondas**

**In Memory of Ed Gartrell from Steve Purich**

**In Memory of Linda (Locher) Leckrone from Dorothy Podolak**

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**SALE!!!!**

**The kolo is selling Nut, Poppysseed, Apricot and Lekvar - \$10/each**

**And Pumpkin Rolls - \$8/each – while supplies last**

**Please see Pat Niel**

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

**\*TODAY Sunday, February 6th\***

**Fish and Pierogi Luncheon!!! (Donations...)**

**Please join us.**

**\*Sunday, February 20th\***

**Men's Club Slava Celebration**

**With a Serbian Steak Dinner**

**LENTEN FISH FRIES**

**Fridays, March 4th thru April 15th**

**Please notify Suzette Gardenhour of the Friday's you can work!!**