

February 21, 2021: The 33rd Sunday after Pentecost (the Publican and the Pharisee)

Epistle reading: II Tim. 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 reading: 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."

With the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee we begin a new chapter in the Ecclesiastical year: THE TRIODION, which runs until Great Saturday (Easter Eve).

The Triodion is the time of repentance and spiritual cleansing, which takes us through three weeks of preparation for the unique journey of Great Lent, whose highlight is the Holy Week. The Triodion runs until the Great and Holy Saturday, the eve of the Lord's Resurrection.

The Church announces this event at the Matins service of this week with some beautiful hymns/prayers, such as: "*Open to me the doors of repentance, O, Giver of Life...*", which is sung through the entire period of the Triodion.

This comes in the context of the Gospel reading, which portrays the "*Two men who went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector,*" and their completely opposite attitude while praying. The Pharisee stands in arrogance and pride in front of the Temple and lists all the good deeds he had acquired, despising at the same time his fellow worshiper, the Publican, who, in total humility and overcome with the genuine spirit of repentance, prays and says: "*God, be merciful to me a sinner!*"

The two men represent the two categories of people/Christians who attend the same church service but return to their homes with different results, based on the attitude and the intent they came to church with.

May the Good and Merciful God give us the Publican's humility and spirit of repentance!

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Service Attendance

Due to the continuing State of Emergency, and the recent measures imposed by the provincial authorities, the maximum number of people attending Church services is 20.

In order to give more people a chance to attend, we ask those who attended last Sunday, to skip this upcoming Sunday, establishing some sort of a rotation system. Also, only one person from the same family, please!

We apologize for this inconvenience and hope that the restrictions will continue to be relaxed in the near future.

Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: wearing a mask, washing hands, social distancing, etc.

Thank you all and may God keep us safe!

We are live streaming the Liturgy

**As we continue to operate under these restrictions, we are live streaming the Divine Liturgy on You Tube.
To access the Sunday Services, [click here.](#)**

ROYA
PERIODICAL

- Accomplishments/milestones
- Birthdays/namedays
- Artwork
- Reflections/creative writing
- Spiritual stories
- Recipes
- Book recommendations
- Prayer corners
- Photography
- Romanian culture
- Local parish activities
- ROYA memories
- Prayer requests

Prayer at the time of pandemic

O Lord, our God, who are rich in mercy and, with Your wise care, guard our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop this pandemic, as You have ceased the punishment of the people in the days of King David. You who are the Physician of our souls and our bodies, give healing to those contaminated with this disease, hastily raising them from their bed of suffering, to glorify You, the Most Merciful Savior, and protect those who are healthy from any disease.

Bless, strengthen and shield, O Lord, with Your grace, all those who, with love of people and sacrifice, care for the sick at their homes or in hospitals. Remove all disease and suffering from the people and teach us to value life and health as gifts coming from You.

Grant us, O God, Your peace, and fill our hearts with unwavering faith in Your protection, with hope in Your help, and with love towards You and our neighbor.

For Yours is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we give glorify: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

THE CHURCH IS BORN FROM THE SIDE OF CHRIST

Do you wish to learn from another source as well the strength of His blood? Look from where it first flowed and where it had its source! It flowed down from the cross, from the Master's side. St. John says that, when Christ was dead but still on the cross, the soldier came and pierced His side with a lance, and straightaway there came out water and blood. The one was a symbol of baptism, the other of the mysteries. Therefore, he did not say: "There came out blood and water, but first water came forth and the blood, since first comes baptism and then the mysteries. It was the soldier, then, who opened Christ's side and dug through the rampart of the holy temple, but I am the one who has found the treasure and gotten the wealth...

Blood and water flowed from His side... Beloved, do not pass over this mystery without thought; it has yet another hidden meaning, which I will explain to you. I said that water and blood symbolized Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. From these two sacraments the Church is born: from baptism, - the cleansing water that gives rebirth and renewal through the Holy Spirit, - and from the Holy Eucharist. Since the symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist flowed from His side, it was from His side that Christ fashioned the Church, as He fashioned Eve from the side of Adam... Do not understand, then, how Christ has united His bride to Himself and what food He gives us all to eat? By one and the same food we are both brought into being and nourished.