



Sunday Bulletin February 17, 2019
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-
Proistamenos

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## **Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. Plagal First Mode. Psalm 11.7,1.**

**You, O Lord, shall keep us and preserve us.**

**Verse: Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has failed.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15**

TIMOTHY, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

## **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 18:10-14**

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into 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 like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up 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, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In today's gospel reading, we read about the Publican and the Pharisee. The tax collector (the Publican) stated "God be merciful to me a sinner." He stated this as he realized Who God was. The publican recognized, with humility, his unworthiness. Brothers and sisters, in like manner, we must also ask for God's mercy, with humility and contrition of heart. The Publican's prayer is a version of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy upon me the unworthy sinner." This is the prayer which we should be reciting constantly. We should recite this prayer when we are idle. Such a prayer prevents unclean and sinful thoughts from entering our minds. The publican gained knowledge of God. As one grows in knowledge of God, he or she begins to recognize how great God is and develops spiritual confidence. Additionally, such an individual develops a desire to become holy.

Jesus Christ enlightened us and came to us all, including the unworthy ones. He came not to the worthy, but the unworthy. Not to the clean, but to the unclean. He came not to the sinless but to the sinful. As we gain spiritual knowledge, we become pure. Such knowledge is derived from attending church services, from reading the scriptures, and from keeping the fasts. We must not be like the Pharisee who bragged about his fasting. Not because of the sin of not fasting. This is what the publican did. He knew who God is, and he knew himself, the Pharisee fell away and made the publican cling to Christ. The Church attempts to prepare us as we look inside ourselves and learn of ourselves. We learn more of God during great fast periods. As the Publican's humility, we should frequently recite the Jesus Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me the unworthy sinner. It is with such humility that the gates of heaven open up to us.

While studying theology, I learned that the priest's job is not only in front of the altar with vestments on. Instead, the priest is even more in touch with his parishioners when he is not vested and not standing before the altar. My studies have taught me that the priest is in greater touch with his people when he is humble and more like the publican rather than the Pharisee.

Brothers and sisters, we all need to have humility...the humility of the Publican. This is what will allow us entry into the Kingdom of God. Without it, we might as well be walking on the moon by ourselves. I pray that we gain the spiritual knowledge to be able to see God and gain the desire to become Holy.

With the humility of the publican, I remain

Your fervent supplicant,  
+Fr. Michael

## Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today



The Pharisees were an ancient and outstanding sect among the Jews known for their diligent observance of the outward matters of the Law. Although, according to the word of our Lord, they "did all their works to be seen of men" (Matt. 23:5), and were hypocrites (ibid. 23: 13, 14, 15, etc.), because of the apparent holiness of their lives they were thought by all to be righteous, and separate from others, which is what the name Pharisee means. On the other hand, Publicans, collectors of the royal taxes, committed many injustices and extortions for filthy lucre's sake, and all held them to be sinners and unjust. It was therefore according to common opinion that the Lord Jesus in His parable signified a

virtuous person by a Pharisee, and a sinner by a Publican, to teach His disciples the harm of pride and the profit of humble-mindedness. Since the chief weapon for virtue is humility, and the greatest hindrance to it is pride, the divine Fathers have set these three weeks before the Forty-day Fast as a preparation for the spiritual struggles of virtue. This present week they have called Harbinger, since it declares that the Fast is approaching; and they set humility as the foundation for all our spiritual labors by appointing that the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee be read today, even before the Fast begins, to teach, through the vaunting of the Pharisee, that the foul smoke of self-esteem and the stench of boasting drives away the grace of the Spirit, strips man of all his virtue, and casts him into the pits of Hades; and, through the repentance and contrite prayer of the Publican, that humility confers upon the sinner forgiveness of all his wicked deeds and raises him up to the greatest heights. All foods are allowed the week that follows this Sunday.

When lately we made mention of the Pharisee and the publican, and hypothetically yoked two chariots out of virtue and vice; we pointed out each truth, how great is the gain of humbleness of mind, and how great the damage of pride.

### St. John Chrysostom

CONCERNING LOWLINESS OF MIND., 4th Century

## **Hermogenes (Germogen), Patriarch of Moscow**

Our Father among the Saints Hermogenes (Germogen), Patriarch of Moscow, was born about 1530 in Kazan. While yet a layman, he lived as a clerk in the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Kazan. In 1569, the year that Metropolitan Philip of Moscow was slain in Tver (see Jan. 9), Saint Barsanuphius, Bishop of Tver, fled to Kazan fearing the wrath of Ivan the Terrible. So Hermogenes became a spiritual son of Saint Barsanuphius. He was made priest of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Kazan, and was a witness of the miracles of the newly-appeared icon of our Lady of Kazan (see July 8). Later he became Abbot of the Monastery of the Transfiguration, and in 1589 was consecrated Metropolitan of Kazan, in which capacity he converted and baptized many pagan Tartars and heterodox. In late 1604, the so-called false Dimitry, a pretender to the Russian throne who claimed to be the son of Ivan the Terrible (who had died in 1584), crossed the Russian border, having the support of the Jesuits and King Sigismund III of Poland, who hoped through Dimitry to force Papism upon the Russian people; a few cities, such as Chernigov, soon surrendered to him. Shaken by these calamities, Tsar Boris Gudonov died suddenly, and in June, 1605, the pretender entered Moscow and took the Russian throne. He then declared his intention to marry a Polish woman without her receiving Baptism in the Orthodox Church; when the authorities and the hierarchy remained silent out of fear, it was Metropolitan Hermogenes alone who fearlessly rebuked him and demanded that she renounce Papism and be baptized according to the rites of Orthodoxy. For this, Hermogenes was banished to Kazan. In 1606 Prince Basil Shuisky led the people in the overthrow of Dimitry, and Basil was elected Tsar in Moscow; Hermogenes was made Patriarch of Moscow. The overthrow of Dimitry did not end the endeavours of the Poles to subject Russia to themselves, and in those times of upheavals, treachery, and bloodshed, the valiant Patriarch Hermogenes showed himself to be a great spiritual leader of the people, and, like Saint Philip of Moscow almost half a century before, the conscience of Orthodox Russia in times of betrayal and terror. In 1609 King Sigismund succeeded in setting his son upon the Russian throne, and Patriarch Hermogenes again insisted that the new Tsar be baptized in the Orthodox Church, marry an Orthodox Christian, and have no dealings with the Pope. The Poles, together with rebel boyars who supported them, imprisoned Patriarch Hermogenes in an underground chamber of the Chudov Monastery during Holy Week of 1611, where they slowly starved him to death; he gave up his holy soul on February 17, 1612.

In 1653, his holy relics were found incorrupt; in 1812, when Napoleon captured Moscow, the Saint's tomb was desecrated in the search for treasure; when the French withdrew, the Patriarch's holy body was found intact on the floor of the cathedral; in 1883 his holy relics were again found whole. Saint Hermogenes was glorified on May 12, 1913, and added to the choir of holy hierarchs of Moscow, whose feast is celebrated on October 5; at the time of his glorification a multitude of miracles were wrought through his incorrupt relics.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Angelo Romas, Maria Lambrinos, Lilly Kashou, Issam Kashou, Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon, and Presbytera Magdalena Michalopoulos. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

Greek School would like to start up soon! Greek School will be held once per week on Saturday mornings. It is open to all children 7 years and older. (You don't have to be Greek to be a Greek school student). Please do not sign up if you are involved in Saturday morning sports. Please see Mrs. Gianoula Alikakos to sign up for Greek School. We look forward to starting Greek School classes soon.

Please note that the General Assembly meeting for today has been postponed to a later date yet to be decided.

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

It is possible for those who have come back again after repentance to shine with much lustre, and oftentimes more than those who have never fallen at all, I have demonstrated from the divine writings. Thus at least both the publicans and the harlots inherit the kingdom of Heaven, thus many of the last are placed before the first.

### **St. John Chrysostom AN EXHORTATION TO THEODORE AFTER HIS FALL, 4th Century**

Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. **Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church.** After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael at (607) 795-1474. For any building, facility or church property issues, please contact the Parish Council President or a member of the council. Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.

## **Holy Week Schedule for the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation for 2019**

**Presiding Priest/Proistamenos: Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis**

**Saturday of Lazarus, April 20, 2019: Orthros 9 AM Divine Liturgy 10 AM**  
(at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Binghamton)  
(This will be followed by the making of crosses from palms afterwards at the  
Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Vestal at 12 noon)

**Palm Sunday, April 21, 2019: Orthros 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM**

**Palm Sunday evening, April 21, 2019: Service of the Nymphios/  
Bridegroom matins 6:00 PM**

**Holy Monday, April 22: Service of the Bridegroom matins 7:30 PM**

**Holy Tuesday, April 23: Service of the Bridegroom matins and Hymn of Kassiani  
6:30 PM**

**Holy Wednesday evening, April 24: Service of the Bridegroom matins 5:30 PM**  
Service of the Sacrament of Holy Unction to immediately follow

**Holy Thursday morning, April 25: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
9:30 AM**

**Holy Thursday evening, April 25: Service of the Holy Passions of our Lord and  
the 12 Gospels 6:00 PM**

**Holy Friday morning, April 26: Service of the Royal Hours 9:00 AM**  
(All are invited to assist in the flower decoration of the Epitaphios at the conclusion of  
this service. Fr. Michael will provide written excuses for school absences for those  
children who spend the day at the church.)

Camp Annunciation Holy Friday Program begins with decorating the Epitaphios  
followed by a light Lenten lunch at 12 noon. All are encouraged to bring and share a  
dish to pass that conforms with the fast of Holy Friday). A JOY/HOPE meeting will be at  
1 PM. All adults and children are invited to attend.

**Holy Friday afternoon, April 26: Service of Great Vespers of the Apokathelosis  
(The un-nailing of our Lord from the cross) 3 PM**

**Holy Friday evening, April 26: Service of the Lamentations matins 6:30 PM**

**Holy Saturday morning, April 27: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
(The First Resurrection of our Lord raising Adam and Eve from the dead) 10 AM**

**Holy Saturday night, April 27: Matins of the Pascha 11:00 PM**

'O Come and Receive Ye the Light...' 11:45 PM  
Reading of the Gospel of the Resurrection of our Lord 12 AM midnight  
followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

**Easter Sunday (Pascha), April 28: Vespers service of Agape (The Gospel will be  
read in multiple languages. Please see Fr. Michael if you are interested in reading the  
Gospel in ANY other language besides Greek and English) 11 AM**