



Prophet Elias News

News in a time of pandemic for the Orthodox Church of the
Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
6th – 19th February 2022



On the Publican and the Pharisee by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

How short, and how well known today's parable, and yet, how challenging...

Two men come into the church of God, into a sacred realm which - in a world that is lost to Him - belongs to Him unreservedly: into His Divine Realm. One of the men walks boldly into it, takes a stand before God. The other one comes, and doesn't even dare cross the threshold: he is a sinner, and the Realm is holy, like the space around the Burning Bush in the desert which Moses could not enter without having unshod his feet..

And how different the words spoken! The Pharisee apparently praises God; he gives Him glory - but for what? Because He has made a man like him - a man so holy, so worthy of Him; a man who not only keeps all the commandments of the Law, but goes beyond what God Himself has commanded. Indeed, he stands before God praising Him that he, the Pharisee, is so wonderful that he is God's own glory, the shining, the revelation of God's holiness...

The Publican does not dare enter into the holy Realm of God.

And the parable is clear: the man who came and stood brokenhearted, ashamed of himself, knowing that he is unworthy of entering this sacred space, that man goes back home forgiven - loved, indeed: accompanied by God Himself Who came into the world to save sinners and Who stands by everyone who *needs* Him, who recognises his need unto salvation.

The Pharisee also goes home, but he goes home *less* forgiven. His relationship with God is not the same; *he* is at the centre, God is peripheric to him; *he* is at the heart of things, God is subservient to him. It does not mean that what he did was worthless; it simply means that it has born no fruit of holiness in him. The deeds were good, but they were spoiled, poisoned by pride, by self-assertion. The beauty of what he did was totally marred because it was addressed neither to God nor to his neighbour; it was turned in on himself. And we are told that this pride has despoiled this man, has taken away from him the fruits of his good works, the fruit of his outward faithfulness to the law of God. Only humility could have given him and his action full meaning, only humility could have made his actions into life.

But then, the question stands before us: how can we learn *anything* about humility if that is the *absolute* condition to be not like the barren fig tree, but fruitful, to be rich harvest from whom people can be fed.

I do not know that we can move from pride into humility in a single step, unless something so tragic happens to us that we discover ourselves completely bereft of everything that supported our sinful, destructive, barren condition. But there is one thing which we can do: however much we think that we are possessed of gifts of all sorts of heart and mind, of body and soul, however fruitful our actions may be, we can remember the words of Saint Paul: 'O, man! What have you got which was not *given* you?' And indeed, he echoes at this point what Christ said in the first Beatitude, the Beatitude that opens the door to all other Beatitudes, the Beatitude which is the beginning of understanding: *Blessed are the poor in spirit...* Blessed are those who know that they are nothing, and that they possess nothing which is not a gift of God.

We were called into being out of naught, without our participation: our very existence is a gift! We have been given the knowledge of the existence of God, and indeed, a deeper, more intimate knowledge of God - all that is gift! And then, all that we are is a gift of God: our body, our heart, our mind, our soul - what power have we got over them when God no longer sustains them? The greatest intelligence can of a sudden be swallowed into darkness by a stroke; there are moments when we are confronted with a need that requires all our sympathy, all our love - and we discover that our hearts are of stone and

of ice. We want to do good - and we cannot, as Saint Paul knew already when he said: 'The good which I love, I don't do, and the wrong which I hate I do continuously.'

And what of our relationships, of the friendship which is given us, the love which sustains us, the comradeship? Everything that we are and which we possess is a gift. What is the next move? Isn't it gratitude? Can't we turn to God not as a pharisee, priding ourselves on what we are and forgetting that all that is His, but turning to God and saying: 'O, God! All that is a gift from You! All that beauty, intelligence, a sensitive heart, all the circumstances of life are a gift!' Indeed, *all* those circumstances - even those which frighten us - are a gift, because God says to us: 'I trust you enough to *send you* into the darkness to bring light! I send you into corruption to be the salt that stops corruption! I send you where there is no hope to bring hope, where there is no joy to bring joy, no love to bring love.' And one could go on, on, on, seeing that when we are sent into the darkness it is to be God's presence and God's life, and that means that He trusts us - He *trusts* us, He believes in us, He hopes *everything* for us. Isn't that enough to be grateful?

Yes, the ideal would be for us to be humble - but what is humility? Who of us knows? But gratitude we all know; we know small ways, and small aspects of it! Let us reflect on it, and, let us in an act of gratitude recognise that we have no right to be in God's own realm - and He lets us in! We have no right to commune with Him, either in prayer or in sacrament - and He calls us to commune with Him! We have no right to be His children, to be brothers and sisters of Christ, to be the dwelling place of the Spirit - and He grants it all in an act of love!

And if we grow in true depth of gratitude, at the depth of gratitude we will learn what humility is - not abasement, but adoration, the awareness that He is all we possess, all that we are, and that we are open to Him like the earth, the rich earth that is open to the plough, to the sowing, to the seed, to the sunshine, to the rain - to everything needed to bring forth fruit.

Sermon preached by Metropolitan Anthony on 4th February 1990
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The Lenten Triodion

On Sunday February 13th, the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, we begin the services of the Lenten Triodion, the liturgical texts that cover not only the whole of Great Lent and Holy Week, but also the four Sundays whose Gospel readings prepare us for Great Lent – the Sundays of the Publican and Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, the Last Judgement and the Expulsion from Paradise. In his introduction to his and Mother Mary's English translation of the Triodion, Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) writes:

'One week* before the *Triodion* enters into use, there is a Sunday Gospel reading which looks forward directly to the coming fast, describing how Zacchaeus climbed a tree beside the road where Christ was to pass. In this reading we notice Zacchaeus' *sense of eager expectation, the intensity of his desire* to see our Lord, and we apply this to ourselves. If, as we prepare for Lent, there is real eagerness in our hearts, if we have an intense desire for a clearer vision of Christ, then our hopes will be fulfilled during the fast; indeed, we shall, like Zacchaeus, receive far more than we expect. But if there is within us no eager expectation and no sincere desire, we shall see and receive nothing. And so we ask ourselves: What is my state of mind and will as I prepare to embark on the Lenten journey?

On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and the two following Sundays, the theme is *repentance*. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting point of our journey to Pascha. And 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 to God and to 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 in him. The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a 'change of mind': he is self-dissatisfied, 'poor in spirit', and where there is this saving self-dissatisfaction there is room for God to act. Unless we learn the secret of the Publican's inward poverty, we shall not share in the Lenten springtime. The theme of the day can be summed up in a saying of the Desert Fathers: 'Better a man who has sinned, if he knows he has sinned and repents, than a man who has not sinned and thinks of himself as righteous.'

The Lenten Triodion, trans Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, Faber, 1978.

*Normally, but occasionally, as this year, two weeks before. Ed.

From the Triodion

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Lifegiver;
For my spirit rises early to pray towards Thy holy Temple,
bearing the temple of my body all defiled.
But in Thy compassion, purify me by the lovingkindness of Thy mercy.

Lead me on the paths of salvation, O Mother of God;
For I have profaned my soul with shameful sins, and have wasted my life in
laziness. But, by your intercessions, deliver me from all impurity.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great goodness, and according to
the multitude of Thy compassions, blot out my transgressions.

When I think of the many evil things I have done, wretch that I am, I tremble
at the fearful day of judgment. But trusting in thy lovingkindness, like David I
cry to Thee: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.

*We first hear this lovely hymn before the Canon at Matins on the Sunday of the Publican and the
Pharisee, and will hear it every Sunday from now throughout Lent.*

*The Lenten Triodion contains some of the most beautiful – as well as some of the most challenging –
texts of the Church. The translation we use in this parish – by Mother Mary and Archimandrite
Kallistos Ware, Faber & Faber - is sometimes available to order online. Otherwise, you can find the
texts of the day on various websites, including*

<http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/prayers/triodion>

or <https://www.oca.org/liturgics/service-texts>

while there is a useful Sunday-by-Sunday commentary on
[TRIODION \(londongreekcommunity.com\)](http://TRIODION.londongreekcommunity.com)

This Week We Celebrate

On Sunday February 6th: **Sunday of the Canaanite Woman** Gospel – Matthew 15: 21-28
The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

On Monday 7th: **Hieromartyr Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev** (1918)
Saints Emmelia, Nona and Anthousa, Mothers of the three Great Hierarchs (4thC)

On Tuesday 8th: **Great Martyr Theodor Stratelates** ('The General') (319)

On Wednesday 9th: New Martyrs **Fr Dimitri Klepinin** (1944), **Elias Fondaminsky** (1942) and
George (Yuri) Skobtsov (1944) Co-workers with Saint Maria of Paris

On Thursday 10th: **Hieromartyr Haralambos**, Bishop of Magnesia (202)

On Friday 11th: **Hieromartyr Blaise**, Bishop of Sebaste (c316)
Empress Theodora, Restorer of the Icons (c867)

On Sunday 13th: **SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE – Beginning of the Triodion**
Gospel - Luke 18: 9-14

On Tuesday 15th: **Apostle Onesimos** of the Seventy
Saint Anthimos of Chios (1960)

On Thursday 17th: **Great Martyr Theodor the Recruit** (c306)
We wish **Bojidar P** and **Teodor B** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Friday 18th: **Saint Colman**, Bishop of Lindisfarne (676)

The 'Trial' of Fr Dimitri Klepinin

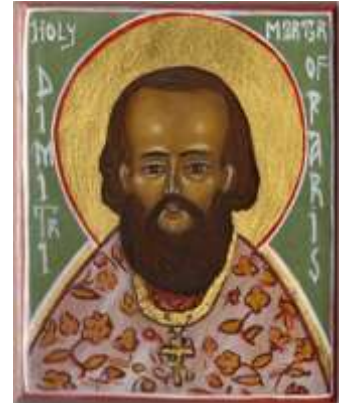
A German officer named Hoffman had collected a large amount of evidence on how Jews had been helped by Mother Maria and Fr. Dimitri. He was prepared to question the priest for a long time, and was astonished when Fr. Dimitri told him frankly about everything he had done.

Hoffman said curtly, "And if we release you, will you promise never again to aid Jews?" Dimitri answered, "I can say no such thing. I am a Christian, and must act as I must." Hoffman stared at him in disbelief for a moment, and then struck him across his face. "Jew lover!" he screamed. "How dare you talk of those pigs as being a Christian duty!" The frail Dimitri recovered his balance. Staying calm, he raised the Cross from his cassock and faced Hoffman with it. "Do you know this Jew?" he said quietly. The blow he received knocked him to the floor.

Fr. Dimitry's interrogation lasted another six hours. Finally, Hoffman took him back to Rue Lourmel, to pick up Mother Maria and finish the search. One of Hoffman's assistants told her, "Your priest has sentenced himself!"

Fr Dimitri died in 1944 at the Dora concentration camp, a satellite camp of Buchenwald. He was 39.

Source: Orthodox Wiki



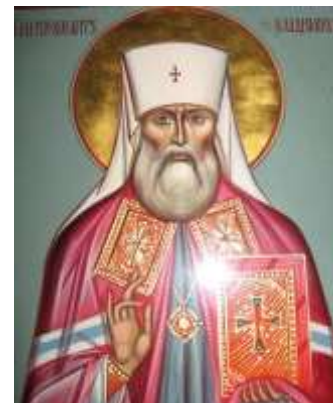
The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia were Orthodox faithful who suffered during the Soviet period (1917 to 1991) for their faith. Among the first new martyrs to be glorified were Hieromartyr Vladimir Metropolitan of Kiev, Hieromartyr the Archpriest Peter Skipetrov of Petrograd, Hieromartyr Peter Archbishop of Voronezh, the Holy Passionbearers Tsar Nicholas II, Tsarina Alexandra and their children, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia and Alexis, and the Venerable Martyr the Archduchess Elizabeth and the nun Barbara. The Russian Church celebrates the feast of the New Martyrs and Confessors on the Sunday nearest to January 25th (o.s.) / February 7th (n.s.) -- the date of Metropolitan Vladimir's martyrdom in 1918 (the first Hieromartyr of the Bolshevik Yoke).

Orthodox Wiki

Troparion in Tone 4

O ye holy hierarchs, royal passion-bearers and pastors,
monks and laymen, men, women and children,
ye countless new-martyrs, confessors,
flowers of the spiritual meadow of Russia,
who blossomed forth wondrously in time of grievous persecutions
bearing good fruit for Christ in your endurance:
Entreat Him, as the One that planted you,
that He deliver His people from godless and evil men,
and that the Church of Russia be made steadfast
through your blood and suffering,
unto the salvation of our souls.



Hieromartyr Vladimir of Kiev

Kontakion in Tone 2

O ye new passion-bearers of Russia,
who have with your confession finished the course of this earth,
receiving boldness through your sufferings:
Beseech Christ Who strengthened you,
that we also, whenever the hour of trial may find us
may receive the gift of courage from God.
For ye are a witness to us who venerate your struggle,
that neither tribulation, prison, nor death
can separate us from the love of God.



Holy Martyrs Elizabeth and Barbara

Noticeboard

Services:

Saturday February 5th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm
Sunday 6th: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am
Followed by Blessing of Candles. (*It is traditional at the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord --
Candlemass – to bring candles to church to be blessed for domestic use.*)
Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

Saturday 12th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

PAC meeting after the Liturgy

Sunday 13th: **Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee – Beginning of the Lenten Triodion**

Matins Saint Anne's 10.30am

Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) Saint Stephen's, Exeter High Street 9am

The following week – 14th to 19th February – is Fast-free.

Saturday 19th: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 20th: **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** Matins and Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am

Saturday 26th: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am

Sunday 27th: **Sunday of the Last Judgement** Matins Saint Anne's 10.30am

Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) Saint Stephen's, Exeter High Street 9am

Please note that Covid infection rates in Devon are still relatively high, and that the current advice both from Father Patrick and from the Archdiocese is that we continue for the time being to take precautions. In the confined space of Saint Anne's, these include the wearing of masks and keeping doors open.

Fr Sergei Bulgakov Anniversary Publication

2021 marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Father Sergei Bulgakov, one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century. The Orthodox journal *The Wheel* honours Bulgakov with a special double issue guest-edited by Nikolaos Asproulis. We offer our readers "Bulgakov A to Z" with the essays by Rowan Williams, Brandon Gallaher, Katerina Braun, Andrew Louth, Teresa Obolevitch, Aristotle Papanikolaou, Robert Arida, and many others.

You can subscribe to *The Wheel* at [The Wheel \(wheeljournal.com\)](http://TheWheel(wheeljournal.com))

Exeter Foodbank - Appeal from CTaX (Churches Together across Exeter)

The Exeter Food Bank needs in-date donations, particularly of the following:

Sponge puddings, Fray Bentos Pies, Tinned Meat, Sugar, Custard, Coffee (small jars), Long Life Milk and Fruit Juice.

Collection Points include - Co-Op (Heavitree/St Thomas); Sainsbury's (Alphington/Pinhoe/Guildhall); Tesco (Exe Vale); Waitrose (Gladstone Rd) and many churches.

You can also donate money online, here: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1016975>

The Food Bank at present feeds about 200 people a week

Editor's note: Foodbanks everywhere are reporting a drop in donations recently as shoppers find their own food purchases getting more expensive. Please be generous.

Deanery Conference (See p6)

Our Deanery is now taking bookings for Conference 2022, Friday 27th to Monday 30th May. The theme will be 'How to be the Church: Learning from our Past, Discerning our Future.'

This will be a really important event for the Deanery. Not only will it enable us to regroup and draw strength from one another after two years of separation due to Covid; it will also be an opportunity for us to get to know Archbishop Nikitas, and for him to get to know us. Do attend if you can. The full residential cost is £240, or for day visitors £50 per day. If you can't afford the full cost, generous bursaries are available if you book early. You can find full details at

[Conference | Deanery \(thyateira-deanery.uk\)](http://Conference|Deanery(thyateira-deanery.uk)) or by ringing 01223 234428

Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain
Deanery

Conference & Festival
27 to 30 May 2022
High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts



HOW TO BE THE CHURCH: LEARNING FROM OUR PAST, DISCERNING OUR CALLING

For more information please visit
thyateira-deanery.uk/conference

If you have no access to the internet,
please ring 01223 234 248 for information