

Holy Scripture Lessons for the Day

Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Second Epistle 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 Lesson: Gospel According to St. 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."

Bookstore News. Roger & Angie Dunlap visited St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery located in Florence, Arizona last week. In 1995 this Monastery was established in the middle of Sonoran Desert near Phoenix by 6 monks from Philotheou Monastery, Mt. Athos, Greece. The Monastery falls under the jurisdiction of the Metropolis of San Francisco of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and is truly an "oasis in the desert" both literally and spiritually. Orthodox Christians from all over the Country congregate and even stay there to restore themselves spiritually. While there is no substitute for being there, Roger and Angie were able to bring back some Orthodox literature and souvenirs. A small selection of books, booklets, incense (originally from Mt. Athos) and a few very colorful embroidered fabrics are now available at our Church bookstore. Stop by our bookstore to see what we've brought back for you. Also you may visit the monastery website at: www.stanthonysonastery.org.

Volunteer Opportunity. The Father Fred Foundation is in need of an individual to volunteer in materials management. There is a huge warehouse of food, another large area for furniture and a van for picking up donations of all kinds. For all three departments the Foundation needs assistance in coordinating projects—food, furniture and donations. This would be a great opportunity for able bodied individuals who have basic abilities and who like to be physically busy and productive. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Fr. Iakovos for more information.

Devote yourself to stillness and know that I am God - Psalm 45:10 (LXX)

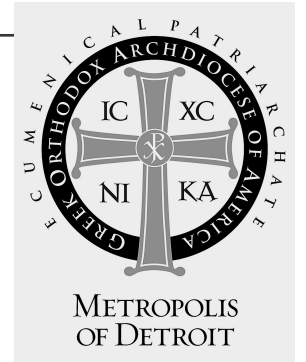
Traverse City Orthodox Mission Church

Traditional Worship for Modern Life

Volume III Number 6 - Sunday, 8 February 2009

PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, 8 February	Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Triodion Begins. 9 am Orthros 10 am Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos 11:30 am Fellowship Hour
Monday, 9 February	Apodosis of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple.
Tuesday, 10 February	St. Haralamvos, the Martyr.
Wednesday, 11 February	St. Vlassios the Martyr of Sevastia. Fast Free Day—No Fast 5:00 PM Strategic Planning Pre-Meeting Council 5:30 PM Monthly Parish Council Meeting
Thursday, 12 February	St. Meletios, Archbishop of Antioch.
Friday, 13 February	St. Martinianos the Righteous. Fast Free Day—No Fast
Saturday, 14 February	St. Kyrill, Equal to the Apostles and Teacher of the Slavs 4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers 5:30 PM Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, 15 February	Sunday of the Prodigal Son. St. Onesimos of the 70. 9 am Orthros 10 am Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos 11:30 am Fellowship Hour Noon All Parish Strategic Planning Meeting



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Save This Date For Strategic Planning. The parish will begin its strategic planning process with a meeting next Sunday, 15 February following the fellowship hour. Stephanie Long and Holly Olszewski will be heading up our strategic planning exercise which will challenge us to create a vision and mission statement for our particular parish. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this important event. The strategic plan will be used to help us make decisions about allocation of resources, acquisition of capital goods and focusing in on our core competency as a community ministry. In order to come up with a plan that makes sense it is important that everyone participate. Please make it a point to join us on the 15th for this important meeting.

Monthly Parish Council Meeting This Wednesday. Our parish council will have their regular monthly meeting at 5:30 PM this Wednesday in the church community center. Council members should have received all of their documentation by e-Mail by this time. Members that still require this information are asked to speak with Karen Kain or Judy Weston. Those with portfolio assignments are asked to make their written reports to the council available as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

Immediately preceding this regular monthly meeting will be a special meeting convened at 5 PM which will deal with council assignments in our upcoming strategic planning exercise. All council members are asked to participate in this very important meeting.

Steelers Take the Day! Our Super Sunday Bible Quiz Bowl was a huge success as close to twenty people participated in the fun and activities that ultimately lead to the Pittsburgh Steeler victory. While a close game that went into a tie breaker question, it truly was a fun event that tested our people's knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Thanks to everyone that participated and we look forward to having a "World Series" event during the baseball season!

Parish Honours Frostbite Food Drive Volunteers. Once again our parish was instrumental in supporting this annual food drive event that addresses the needs of our hard-pressed friends and neighbors. This past Thursday and Friday the following people were involved in representing us to the community: John Batsakis, Bob Dalbo, Tina and Doug Partlo, Tom Sebestyen, Pam and Steve Bemis, Helen Knapp, Karen Kain, Martha and Ray Ealy, Angie and Roger Dunlap, Nikki Sobkowski, Presvytera Joleen Elisabet. Thank you to those who donated their time and energy to this worthwhile cause.

Congratulations Dr. Bethea: The work of Dr. Chuck Bethea of our parish was recently highlighted in the periodical, Traverse City Business News. The article, *Counseling for loss of job, wealth may yield a silver lining*, talks about his work in counseling persons who find themselves on the receiving end of the economic one-two punch that has really sent Michiganders into a tailspin. The article is on display in our community center. Congratulations, Chuck, on the great work you are doing.

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. On the eve of this day, at Vespers, the liturgical book called the Triodion makes its first appearance and texts from it are added to the usual hymns and prayers of the weekly Resurrection service. They develop the next major aspect of repentance: humility.

Today's Gospel lesson pictures a man who is always pleased with himself and who thinks that he complies with all the requirements of religion. He has reduced it to external observations and he measures his piety by the amount of money he contributes to the temple. As for the Publican, he humbles himself and his humility justifies him before God. If there is a moral quality almost disregarded and even denied today, it is indeed humility. The culture in which we live constantly instills in us the sense of pride, of self-glorification, and of self-righteousness. It is built on the assumption that man can achieve anything by himself and it even pictures God as the One who all the time "gives credit" for man's achievements and good deeds. Humility—be it individual or corporate, ethnic or national—is viewed as a sign of weakness, as something unbecoming a real man.

But what is humility? The answer to this question may seem a paradoxical one for it is rooted in a strange affirmation: *God himself is humble!* Yet to anyone who knows God, who contemplates Him in His creation and in His saving acts, it is evident that humility is truly a Divine quality, the very content and the radiance of that glory which, as we sing during the Divine Liturgy, fills heaven and earth. In our human mentality we tend to oppose "glory" and "humility"—the latter being for us the indication of a flaw or deficiency. For us it is our ignorance or incompetence that makes or ought to make us feel humble. It is almost impossible to "put across" to the modern man, fed on publicity, self-affirmation, and endless self-praise, that all that which is genuinely perfect, beautiful and good is at the same time naturally humble; for precisely because of its perfection, it does not need "publicity," external glory, or "showing off" of any kind. God is humble because He is perfect; His humility is His glory and the source of all true beauty, perfection, and goodness, and everyone who approaches God and knows Him immediately partakes of the Divine humility and is beautified by it.

The lenten season begins then by a quest, a prayer for humility which is the beginning of true repentance. For repentance, above everything else, is a return to the genuine order of things, the restoration of right vision. It is therefore rooted in humility, and humility—the divine and beautiful humility—is its fruit and end. We are at the gates of repentance and at the most solemn moment of the Sunday Vigil; after the Resurrection and the appearance of Christ have been announced we sing for the first of many times the troparia which will accompany us throughout the entire Lent:

Open unto me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life,

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 loving kindness of Thy mercy...

Lead me on the paths of salvation, O Theotokos,

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.

*Adapted from the book **Great Lent** by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*