Scripture Readings

EPISTLE Romans 8:28-39 Reader: Theo N. Margas

Brethren, we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL 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."

Gospel Reflection

How familiar is the parable of the Lord spoken in today's Gospel passage. The contrast between the prayers of the two figures, the Publican and the Pharisee, is stark. One stands with back unbent and justifies himself as righteous. The other, afraid even to raise his eyes towards heaven bends his back and can only utter "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Our attitudes in prayer often reflect our attitudes in life. The Pharisee came filled with ego, with a sense that he had kept the law and done what God asked him to do. The Publican came with genuine humility, with an honest assessment of himself as deeply in need of the mercy of God. Developing that attitude of humility in prayer and in life is a challenge. We seem more comfortable justifying ourselves—often in comparison to others we may know. The Publican's prayer, the first expression of the Jesus Prayer in the New Testament, reflects a candid confessional prayer, a prayer that says "God I need you, I can't do it on my own." Developing that attitude of humility is one of the many pre-Lenten lessons we can learn. We have no need to impress God! He knows us inside out. Coming before Him as vulnerable and wounded tells Him that we need Him, we need His strength, and we need His mercy. We have but to be like the Publican — and only ask.

The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple: the Old Becomes New

The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (also called the Presentation) is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on February 2 and February 15 (according to Old Calendarists), using the Gregorian Calendar, Julian Calendar, and Revised Julian Calendar. In Eastern tradition, it is often called The Meeting of Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, because the hymns emphasize the incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ, meeting with his people, Israel, in the persons of the Prophet Simeon and the Prophetess Anna. In the Gospel of Luke 2:22-5, Mary and Joseph took the infant Christ to the Temple in Jerusalem. He was received in the arms of the elder Simeon, who then prayed, "Now let Thy servant depart in peace... for I have seen Thy salvation." This was one of the things that Mary "pondered in her heart"—the fact that others recognized that her Son was the Messiah. The Gospel reading is taken from Luke 2:22-40 telling of the Most Holy Virgin, who had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement, humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law. It tells of St. Simeon who receives Christ, and his words: Lord, now let Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. The theme of the Feast tells of the changing from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the old law becomes something new. The Son of God, giver of the law, now himself fulfills the law, being carried in Simeon's arms as a human child.

For the Repose of the Servants of God

Dimitri Antzoulatos, (40 Days), offered by his family;

Nikolaos and Evangelos Ploussiou, (40 Days), offered by their families;

Emanuel Alahouzos (2 Years), offered by the Alahouzos and Joy families; Altar flowers donated today in his memory.

William Djinis (2 Years), offered by Djinis family;

Miltidis Stefadouros (3 Years); offered by his family

Divine Services This Week

Sun. Feb. 1: Great Vespers of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, 5PM-6PM;

Mon. Feb 2: Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Orthros 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM

Thurs. Feb. 5: Service of Holy Unction 6:30 PM

Fri. Feb. 6: Feast of St. Photios the Great, Orthros 8:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM

40 Day Blessings

Alyssa Podares, daughter of Anne and Mark Podares;

George Malone, son of Evi and Matthew Malone. God grant them many years!

For Their Health and Salvation

His Eminence Metropolitan +Panteleimon, His Eminence Archbishop +Pavlos of Aleppo, and His Eminence Mar +Gregorios Ioanna of Aleppo, who were kidnapped; Rev. Fr. Peter Thornberg; Cris Gaillott, Gus Geckos, Stratos Inglesis, John Karas; Constantina Speris; Andrew Katson; Bruce Plomasen; the child Seraphina Marie Vasilatos; Alexandra Aposporos; Lynne; Maria Papida; Maher, Washwa, Thomas Khalil, and Maria Vasilion, Chris Gaillott and family. For members of the Armed Forces, please contact the Church Office to have military relatives placed on the prayer list.

Parish Activities

BIBLE STUDY: Offered every Thursday at 10:30 AM and 7:30 PM. Exploring the Acts of the Apostles.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DISCUSSION: Offered every Sunday following the Divine Liturgy from 11:20 AM until 12 noon. Join us to learn more about a wide variety of aspects of the Orthodox Faith.

GREEK PRE-SCHOOL: 2015-2016 school year registration will take place Feb. 1-14. For more information, please contact Eleni Kretikos at stgeorgegreekpreschool@gmail.com

PHILOPTOCHOS: Feb. 1, Coffee /Tea Hour. 2015 Philoptochos Membership Drive begins. Come learn about our vibrant parish organization and the many charities supported by the St. George Ladies Philoptochos.

GREEK PRE-SCHOOL: Feb. 7 fundraising auction. To donate auction items or services, please contact stgeorgegreekpreschool@gmail.com

GODPARENT/GODCHILD LUNCHEON: Feb. 8, to benefit St. George and the Bediani Orphanage in the Republic of Georgia. Reservations can be made during coffee hour. There is also a silent auction for jewelry and toy raffle. For more information, please contact Kathy Phipps at StGeorgeSundaySchoolBethesda@gmail.com

50 PLUS: Feb. 11, 11:30 AM. Valentine's Day Luncheon at Normandie Farm Restaurant, 10710 Falls Road in Potomac. $26.50 including dessert/tip. For reservations and lunch selections, please call Maria at (240) 421-9909. Please note "50+ Valentine Luncheon" and entrée choice of crabmeat tilapia or chicken marsala on check, made payable to St. George and "c/o 50+ Club" on envelope. For reservations or questions, call Maria at (240) 421-9909 by February 1.

GOYA EVENTS: Jan.31-Feb.1: Richmond basketball tournament; Feb. 6: Youth Night at Skyzone ($20 per person) at 8PM.-GOYANS must contact Aleka Kaloudelis if they are going; Feb. 13: Movie Night at Saint George

APOKRIATIKO GLENDI-Join the Greek School for our annual Apokriatiko Glendi, Friday, Feb. 20 at 6:30 PM. Fun for the whole family? Adults and children. Children come dressed in your favorite costume. Costume parade for the children at 8:30 PM. Dinner, soft drink, cash bar. $20/adult;$15 children 15 and under. Tickets sold every Sunday, online, or email stgeorgegreekschoolbethesda@gmail.com.

AHEPA/DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE SCHOLARSHIP applications for graduating high school seniors are now available. Emphasis is given to academic, athletic, and extracurricular excellence, Greek language, and involvement in Orthodox Church and Hellenic heritage activities. Submission deadline is Apr. 3. For more information, please contact Eirini Iatrou (eirini.iatrou@gmail.com), Athena Kranias (akranias@hotmail.com) or Elisavet Vrahopoulou (epvraho@aol.com).

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Brethren, let us not offer prayer as did the Pharisee, for he who exalts himself will be brought to humility. Let us humble ourselves in the presence of God, as did the Publican, and through fasting cry to Him, "God, be merciful to us sinners." *(From The Triodion)*

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

Liturgical Hymns Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

Forefeast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

Apolytikion Tone 1

Though the stone of Thy Tomb was sealed by the Judeans, and while the soldiers Thy sacred body were guarding. On the third day, O Saviour, Thou didst rise granting to the world the gift of life. Wherefore Thou o giver of Life, the Hosts of heaven did laud Thee. Glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ; Glory to Thy Kingdom; Glory to Thy Providence; Thou alone art friend of man.

Apolytikion to St. George

O Trophy-Bearer, Great Martyr George, who freed captives, supported the poor, healed the sick, was a champion of kings, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved!

Ἀπολυτίκιον

Ὡς τῶν αἰχμαλώτων ἐλευθερωτής, καὶ τῶν πτωχῶν ὑπερασπιστής, ἀσθενούντων ἰατρός, βασιλέων ὑπέρμαχος,Τροπαιοφόρε Μεγαλομάρτυς Γεώργιε, πρέσβευε Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, σωθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.