

Furthermore, the publican-like prayer “signs our spiritual bankruptcy” in other words, it humbles us: the person understand that whatsoever gift and whatsoever blessing comes from Christ, whereas whatsoever sin (which means missing the mark) and failure, has us, ourselves, as the source. Thus we relate in spirit with the Publican of today’s gospel passage, which is also what is sought. Thus, my beloved brethren, we make an entrance in the court of repentance and we feel the consolation of Christ in our heart as publicans who have received mercy.

Archim. E. T.

THE BEGINNING OF THE COMPUNCTIONATE TRIODION

Every year the believer of the Eastern Orthodox Church, awaits the awe inspiring Triodion with a special joy and nostalgia. Fasting, abstinence, repentance and spiritual joy-sadness, are life experiences of the Orthodox person, which are kindled and renewed with the liturgical cycle of the feasts of the Triodion. We feel the roots of our Tradition nourish us and water us with compunction and sanctity, much more during this period. The Triodion comprises a ladder for the believer, whose last step brings us into the bright atmosphere of the light-bearing Resurrection, of our Savior and God.

From the work of the emeritus professor, P. V. Paschou, Eros of Orthodoxy, 5th Ed. Improved, by the publications of the Apostolic Ministry.

SUNDAY February 9, 2014 Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today, Leavetaking of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple, Nicephoros the Martyr of Antioch, Markellos, Philagrios, & Pankratios the Hieromartyrs
Tone Plagial Fourth, Eothinon Eleventh, - Epistle St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15, Gospel Luke 18:10-14
NEXT SUNDAY February 16, 2014 Sunday of the Prodigal Son, Pamphilus the Martyr & his Companions, Flavianos, Patriarch of Constantinople, Romanos the Younger.
Epistle St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20, Gospel Luke 15:11-32



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GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER

The Triodion, beloved brethren, is the beginning of a period of intense preparation, with fasting, with asceticism, with prayer, so that we can receive the Resurrected Christ in our hearts. It begins with today’s Sunday where our Church brings us before our responsibilities through a peculiar comparison: of the Pharisee and the Publican.

They “went up” the passage says “to pray”. That they “went up” denotes not so much the height of the Temple of Solomon from the ground, as the spiritual ascent which is given from above, but which we must also strive for with prayer. In the Church we must forget every type of distraction: “let us cast away every earthly care”.

The language of the body

Many times-not always, the kinesiology of someone’s body denotes the dispositions of the soul. The Pharisee was standing up, with his head high and probably in a notable spot, he (“stood”). This arrogant stance denotes a proud train of thought. Instead of furthermore in his prayer thinking of his sins and crying, wailing to God for his desperate condition, he begins enumerating his virtues and his good works. The result was that his prayer was an incessant chatter,

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE THE GOSPEL OF 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."

a "scenario" full of fantasies which were addressed to his own self " to himself". Between him and God his own idol invaded and in the end he was deceived. Not only this, but furthermore he falls into condemning all the other people around him and especially the Publican. He makes himself the hero, because he is the only good one, since all the others are evil and consequently he forbears them.

The Publican, on the other hand, stood somewhere afar off, with his body bent down, and did not even want to lift his eyes up. He had a realization of the burden of his sins and his passions. He was hitting, beating his chest sensorially, why not also noetically with an internal mourning, muttering the extremely necessary things: 'God, be merciful to me and have mercy on me'. Neither fantasies, nor descriptions, or vain words, reminding of Paul's "I would rather speak five words through my mind...than a myriad of words with the tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19).

Justified

The sacred Evangelist says that the Publican went down from the Temple justified and not the Pharisee. The grace of repentance visited the Publican and he felt God close. God touched his heart because He found room. He welcomed God in his heart. The Pharisee, on the contrary, remained alone, lost in his illusion, invalid, unable to make room in him for God to descend, consequently invalid in order to be able to fit the other people also, so that the forgiveness (i.e. fitting together of) and the stillness of the heart could exist. How many of us, I wonder, aren't resting, each one, in the area of his personal mythology?

How many deliriums of superiority daily don't we construct within us? How many unbreachable walls don't we erect towards our (suffering) fellow man? How many times don't we doubly bar our heart not allowing the Lord to enter in, whereas he is already knocking?

Answer: The publican-like prayer

Before all these difficulties which come from our own self, the answer is the publican-like prayer with "a strong cry and tears". Prayer shakes the walls of egotism and tears them down, it wipes out depression, it wipes out also the good and the evil fantasy, it pours out joy in the heart, it grants patience, it tames the passions, it becomes a cause of health of the soul, it unites all the virtues "in one". "Capture the mother and she will offer you her children" says Saint Isaac the Syrian, meaning prayer and the virtues which come from it.

Furthermore, prayer is an excellent weapon and medicine against guilts. No matter how much and how a person sins, he should not despair, but hasten to the infinite divine mercy with publican-like prayer. The rains of tears and the thunders of sighs aid which literally "erase" every type of harm of soul and hardship of man. It delivers in time even from psychological problems.