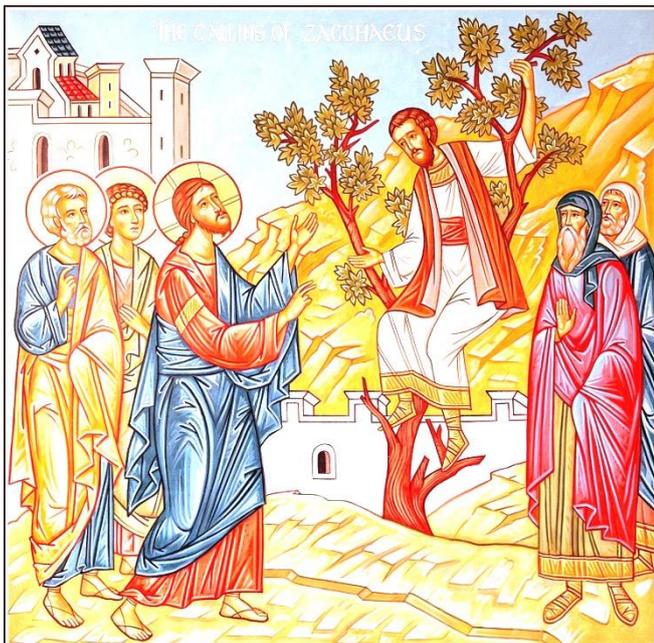




PARISH BULLETIN

HOLY ARCHANGHEL MICHAEL'S ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

No. 192/26 January 2020



**Thirty-Second Sunday after
Pentecost (Zacchaeus Sunday)**

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Grave Mode.

*By Thy Cross Thou didst abolish death;
to the thief Thou didst open Paradise;
Thou didst transform the myrrh-
bearers' lamentation, and didst order
Thine Apostles to preach that Thou art
risen, O Christ our God, bestowing great
mercy upon the world.*

Seasonal Kontakion. Mode 1.

*Thou Who didst sanctify the Virgin's
womb by Thy birth, and didst bless*

*Symeon's hands as was meet, by
anticipation hast even now saved us, O
Christ God. But grant peace in the midst
of wars unto Thy commonwealth and
strengthen the hierarchs whom Thou
hast loved, O only Friend of man.*

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2. Psalm 31.11,1

**Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous.
Verse: Blessed are they whose
transgressions have been forgiven.**

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to
Timothy 4:9-15

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure
and worthy of full acceptance. For to
this end we toil and suffer reproach,
because we have our hope set on the
living God, who is the Savior of all
men, especially of those who believe.
Command and teach these things.
Let no one despise your youth, but
set the believers an example in
speech and conduct, in love, in faith,
in purity. Till I come, attend to the
public reading of scripture, to
preaching, to teaching. Do not
neglect the gift you have, which was
given you by prophetic utterance

when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.



The Gospel According to Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaios; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaios, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaios stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

Word of the week – Reflection Holy Three Hierarchs (Jan. 30th)

What we see in the lives of the Three Hierarchs is a basic element of the spiritual life: the experience of a crisis that leads to spiritual growth. This may be a dramatic, once-in-a-lifetime event; a disordering, disrupting experience that calls into question our taken-for-granted world, resulting in a change of values and interests. The specific form that such an experience takes will vary according to the circumstances of our lives. Not too many of us are at risk of shipwreck on the high seas, but there are other kinds of storms, such as a crisis in adolescence or mid-life; and there are other kinds of shipwrecks, such as the perception that one's life is not what it should be, that one has reached a dead end, is trapped in a pattern of self-destructive behavior, and that some sort of change is necessary.

In addition to these extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, there's also a sense in which every moment of life is a kind of crisis, or at least has the potential to be one, in the sense of being a turning point in which we are called on to make a critical choice. xxvii In his Letter to the Young, *On How they Might Derive Profit from Greek Literature*, St. Basil compares this situation to the famous story of "Herakles standing at the Crossroads": one road leads to virtue, the other to vice, and Herakles must decide which way to go. And this, Basil says, is an image of each and every one of us,

since we are called on continually to make a choice between God and the selfish desires of our ego.

In this way, Basil aligns Greek letters with the spirit of Christ, who said: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross every day and follow me, for whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it" (Lk 9:23-24). This means that in order to follow Christ, we must experience a kind of death. For something new to be born, something old has to die, but no one dies right away; it takes a long time to die, and so our whole life should be an ongoing conversion, an ongoing taking up of the cross, an ongoing surrender to God.

We often think that God is going to come into our life by means of some pleasant experience that will require little or no change on our part. However, God is more likely to enter our lives through a crisis, like a serious illness, or some other affliction, for these are the signs, not of God's absence but of His active presence. As we saw in the lives of the Three Hierarchs, God comes to us in the eye of the storm, in the midst of our difficulties, in the midst of our confusion, our pain, and our suffering. Recall the words of Gregory, who learned by experience that God is both "the source of affliction" and "the gentle healer." Affliction alone can tear us away from our isolated, individual existence and transform us into something much more whole and open.

The self-consoling dreams and delusions of the ego make it hard for us to perceive the reality of God. But when all the illusions are swept away by some affliction, then I begin to call and cry out to God, like the psalmist who said: "In my affliction I cried out to the Lord, and He heard me" (Ps 18:5).

Every crisis is an opportunity for spiritual growth, and it was the experience of crisis and conversion that enabled the Three Hierarchs to become instruments of God's grace. In finding God, in allowing God to find them, they found themselves. In finding their own voice, we find in them a universal voice. In fulfilling the task of their own time, they produced work valid for all time, and though they lived more than a thousand years ago, we continue to honor their life and work. But in the midst of our celebrations, we ought not to forget the words of St. John Chrysostom: "The honor of a saint is imitating the saint."

God speaks to all of us, but we don't always listen, and if we do listen we don't always do what He says, or if we do, we get tired easily and give up. But the Three Hierarchs, like all the saints, heard, acted, and never wavered in their resolution to live for God. And in giving their lives to God, they lost nothing; on the contrary, in losing their life they found it (cf. Mt 10:39), and whatever they gave to God was returned to them a hundredfold and they have inherited eternal life (cf. Mt 19:29).

- *Fr. Maximos (Constas)*



Liturgical Schedule for this week

Wednesday <i>January 29</i>	6:00 pm	Vespers, Litia, & Matins – Holy Three Hierarchs
Thursday <i>January 30</i>	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy – Holy Three Hierarchs
Saturday <i>February 1</i>	9:00 am	Divine Liturgy & Memorial – St. Trypho the Martyr
	5:00 pm	Vespers & Litia – Presentation of the Lord
Sunday <i>February 2</i>	9:00 am	Matins
	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy – Presentation of the Lord

Announcements:

- **Happy name day** to Fr. John, John DeAngeli, Yannis Mironidis, Yannis Pena, and Ioanna Pitsillides (St. John Chrysostom – Jan. 30th) and Gregory Downie (St. Gregory the Theologian – Jan. 30th).
- **Happy birthday** to Mary Andrea and Mary Haddad (Jan. 29th) and Natalie Collazo (Jan. 31st).
- **House blessings** – Please contact Fr. John to schedule a time.
- **General Assembly** – Today after the Divine Liturgy.
- **Stewardship forms** were mailed last week. Please fill them out and return them to the church by mail or in the tray on a Sunday.
- **Coffee hour** is sponsored by the parish.

