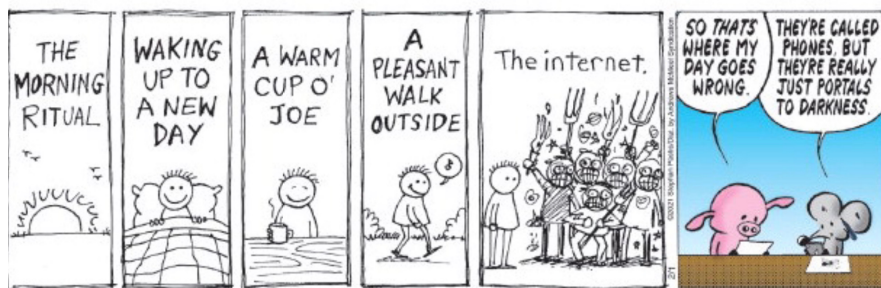


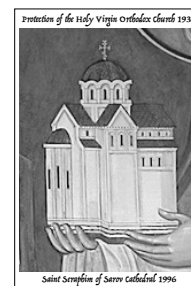
• A WORD TO OUR YOUTH:

Do you ever stand in church and all of a sudden have no idea how it's already at a certain part in the service? You find yourself zoned out, and thinking about other things, like, oh say, lunch. You're not the only one. Whether you're a teenager or a senior, it's totally normal to think about many things, and often at the same time, especially when maybe we don't fully understand what's happening in the service! During the Liturgy we simply want to be present, there, where we are, not *thinking* about this or that. What to do? Try this: for that one-hour and a half, engage in a battle of will. In other words, force yourself/oppose yourself. Fight inclinations to give in to distraction, not aggressively, but gently and without frustration, bringing your attention back to the words being sung or chanted. Hang on to your attention as you would keep ahold in a boat going down a river of white-water rapids. If you find your mind has wandered, don't give in to it, but instead, say the Jesus Prayer a few times. Yes, there may be those around us that distract us. But we allow that to happen. Make every effort to constantly come back to the silent, inner peace that is found in the services of the Church, and over time, with practice, you will cultivate a different way of being while in Church. The cartoon below also illustrates for us a modern problem: our use of the cell phone, checking this or that app/site, depletes our attention, fragments it, tires it out and at the same time, addicts the mind to those short bursts of distraction from the here-and-now. We stop paying attention to the breath in the body, the feet on the ground, our feelings, the sky and often others. Ultimately, our use of social media—judging from my own experience and listening to others—makes praying much harder, and sometimes impossible. Be watchful of what's inside of you. —Fr L



ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



February 14, 2021

Sunday of Zacchaeus



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord hath shown strength with His arm; He hath trampled down death by death; He hath become the first-born of the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of hell, and hath granted the world great mercy.

• KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the prophets and patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

• TROPARION OF ST. AUXENTIUS, Tone One:

Thou didst prove to be a citizen of the desert, an angel in the flesh, and a wonderworker, O Auxentius, our God-bearing Father. By fasting, vigil, and prayer thou didst obtain heavenly gifts, and thou healest the sick and the souls of them that have recourse to thee with faith. Glory to Him that hath

given thee strength. Glory to Him that hath crowned thee. Glory to Him that worketh healings for all through thee.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Feb. 12: 11:30–1 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Feb. 13: 9 AM–Noon, Parish Work Party (if no rain)
5 PM, Vigil and Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 14: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday, Feb. 17: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy/Feast of St. Theodore the Recruit
5 PM, Vespers
7 PM, online study of *The Lord's Prayer*
- Thursday, Feb. 18: 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting — Zoom
- Friday, Feb. 19: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Feb. 20: 5 PM, Vigil and Confessions

• NEW INDOOR ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES:

Archbishop Benjamin has blessed us to increase our inside attendance. While legally we may have 25% of capacity (that would be 50+), the Parish Council and I decided to increase indoor attendance incrementally to 30, not counting those in the Altar. Our ushers, sacristans and Subdeacon will keep track of numbers and monitor the various health protocols. Face masks, social distancing and other requirements remain. See the directives in my email to our Groups forum, [here](#).

• SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK / SUMMER CAMP:

Although things are still very tentative, we are making plans for our St. Seraphim Week for Kids from June 14–18, circumstances allowing. More information to follow. Visit the Deanery Summer Camp website for information on the upcoming Camp Week (circumstances allowing) [HERE](#).

• ZACCHAEUS SUNDAY:

On the fifth Sunday prior to Great Lent we read the Gospel account by St. Luke about the Lord Jesus Christ meeting [Zacchaeus in Jericho](#). This Sunday is therefore often called “Zacchaeus Sunday.” The account directs our

attention very clearly to “desire,” as Father Alexander Schmemmann says, in his book [Great Lent](#). The essential reading for Lent can be purchased in our Parish Bookstore. *Desire* to see God, and to know Him, leads to repentance. Next Sunday, February 21, is the *Sunday of the Publican (Tax Collector) and the Pharisee* so called because of the Gospel read that day, from [Luke 18](#). On that day we also begin to sing from the great Lenten book of hymns called the [Lenten Triodion](#), called that because it has many hymns of Three-Odes. Rather than giving an outline of the themes of each week leading up the Great Lent, I'd like to offer a “big picture” of the whole season in the short meditation below.

• THREE MONTHS:

The keeping of Great Lent and the celebration of Christ's Pascha in the Orthodox Christian Church has many similarities to the keeping of the Mosaic Jewish celebration of Passover (Pascha is the Greek word for Passover). But there are two essential differences, which Fr. John Takahashi succinctly points out in an essay. He wrote that for the catechumens— those who are preparing for baptism by fasting, prayer, alms, repentance, confession, worship, study and participation in Church life—Lent is the final period of “downloading” Christian life into themselves through the grace of God. For the faithful, who also fast, pray, give alms and all the other activities, it is a period of “recovering, upgrading, or renewal” of the Grace given at Holy Baptism. It is a renewal of the resolve to walk not according to sinful inclinations but according to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1). It is a joyful occasion to begin the Christian life again. This life, Fr. John reminds us, is known as Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God. Our day-to-day lives get complicated and we sometimes (often) lose the sense of God's presence, of repentance and Christian joy in Christ the Lord Who destroyed death by His death. So the Church sets aside a time for us to recover our initial repentance and joy in Christ, to recover our baptismal “vestment” so to say. Fr. John writes that “the celebration of Christ's Pascha with Great Lent and Great Feast is the time to download or recover our Christian life. It takes approximately three months including preparatory weeks.” With the Gospel reading about Zacchaeus in Jericho, we now enter into the preparatory weeks. Use the time in these days wisely by thinking about, meditating on and living the great teachings of the Gospel of these weeks. —

reprinted from last year