

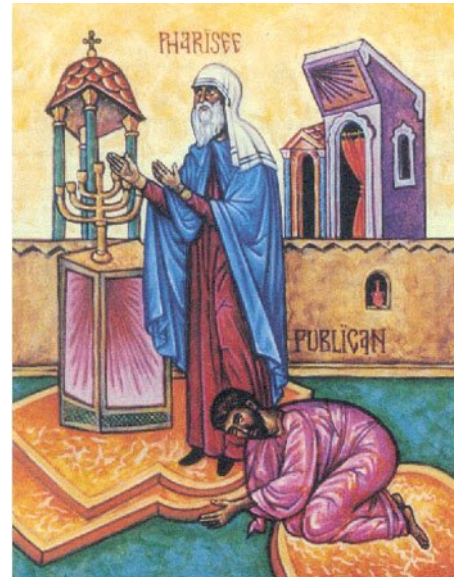
SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΤΟΥ ΤΕΛΩΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΑΡΙΣΑΙΟΥ

FEBRUARY 9 (1ST SUNDAY OF TRIODION)

NAME _____ GRADE _____

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

February 9
(1st Sunday of Triodion)



This Sunday is the beginning of Triodion. The next four Sundays prepare us for Great Lent (the 40 days before Easter). It is a time for us to get closer to God through worship, prayer, fasting, and doing good things.

Jesus told many parables. Some were told to His disciples. Others were told to the crowds that followed Him wherever He went. Still others were told to Pharisees. Pharisees were part of a group of people that made rules. They thought they were better than everyone else because they followed all the rules. They did not keep company with anyone who did anything wrong.

The Publicans were tax collectors. They were Jews who helped the Roman government to collect money from their own people. Jews hated the Romans. So they also hated the tax collectors who worked for the Roman government. The tax collectors usually collected extra money for themselves. So if they were supposed to collect 100 dollars, they would collect 150 dollars instead, and keep 50 dollars for themselves.

Both these men, the Publican and the Pharisee, went to pray in the temple. The Pharisee boasted about how "righteous" he was, and that God would be happy with him because he obeyed all the laws. He knew that he was better than everyone else, especially the tax collector. He was not greedy, not dishonest, fasted two days a week, and gave part of the money he earned to the temple.

On the other hand, there was the Publican, the tax collector. He hid his face down, ashamed. He knew all the wrong things he had done. He didn't pretend to be better than everyone else and he didn't try to hide it. He knew he could not be right with God on his own. He was a hopeless case. He knew only God could save him. So he beat his chest and said, "God have pity on me, a sinner."

Jesus told his disciples that it was the tax collector, not the Pharisee, who was the better person. He wanted the Pharisees to understand that their way of thinking took them far away from God. He also wanted them to know that it was possible to feel sorry for your sins and be part of God's kingdom. We all have to focus not just at what we say when we pray, but what we actually are thinking. What we feel in our hearts is more important.

Begin learning the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim with your family. Make it a daily practice as we approach the Lenten season. The prayer follows:

Prayer of St. Ephraim

Lord and Master of my life, do not give to me the spirit of laziness, idle curiosity, love of power, and vain talk.

But grant me, Your servant, the virtues of moderation, humility, patience, and love.

Yes, Lord and King, allow me to see my own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For you are blessed now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

<http://lent.goarch.org/family/thepublicanandpharisee.asp>
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<http://growingkidsingrace.blogspot.com/2011/11/pharisee-and-tax-collector.html>
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