

SUNDAY OF ZACCHÆUS

To prepare us for Great Lent, the Orthodox Church starts announcing its approach a full month before it actually begins. How difficult it is for a person to understand that besides devotion to life's other innumerable preoccupations, there is also care for the soul, for our inner world. If we were a bit more serious, we would see just how important, essential and fundamental care of the soul really is. We would then understand the slow and mysterious rhythm of church life. We know, of course, the meaning food has in our life. Some foods are good and nutritious, others are unhealthy; this one's too heavy, be careful of that one. We take great pains to ensure that the food we eat is good for us. And it is far more than pious rhetoric when we say that the soul also needs to be fed, that "man shall not live by bread alone" (Mt 4:4). Each of us knows we need time for reading, for thinking, for conversation, for leisure. Yet even to these we give very little genuine care, attention, or even the most basic hygiene. We look for light reading, for banter but not conversation, for amusement but not nourishment. We don't understand that the soul gets constipated much more easily than our digestive system, and that the consequences of a constipated soul are much more harmful. So much time is devoted to externals, and so little to the inner life. But we are now approaching that time of year when the Church calls us to remember the existence of that inner person and to be horrified by our forgetfulness, by the meaningless nonsense in which we are immersed, by the waste of precious time given to us so sparingly, by the unkempt and petty confusion in which we live.

Lent is a time of repentance, and repentance is a re-examination, a re-appraisal, a deepening, a shaking upside down. Repentance is the sorrowful uncovering of one's neglected, forgotten, soiled "inner" person. The first announcement of Lent, the first reminder, comes through a short gospel story about an entirely unremarkable man, "small of stature," whose occupation as a tax collector marked him, in that time and society, as greedy, cruel and dishonest.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Christ; he wanted this so much that his desire attracted the attention of Jesus. Desire is the beginning of everything. As the gospel says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). Everything in our life begins with desire, since what we desire is also what we love, what draws us from within, what we surrender to. We know that Zacchaeus loved money, and by his own admission we know that to get it he had no scruples about defrauding others. Zacchaeus was rich and he loved riches, but within himself he discovered another desire, he wanted something else, and this desire became the pivotal moment of his life.

This gospel story poses a question to each of us: what do you love, what do you desire—not superficially, but deeply? There is no mysterious teacher walking through your town, down your street, surrounded by crowds of people. But is that really so? Isn't there some mysterious calling walking by your life every moment; and somewhere in the depths of your soul, don't you sometimes feel a longing for something other than what now fills your life from morning till night? Stop for moment, pay attention, enter your heart, listen to your own inner person, and you will find within yourself the very same strange and wonderful desire Zacchaeus encountered, which no human being can live without, yet which almost everyone fears and suppresses with the noise and vanity of everything external. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," the New Testament says (Rev 3:20). Do you hear this quiet knock? This is the first invitation of the Church, of the gospel, and of Christ: desire something other, take a deep breath of something other, remember something other. And the very moment we stop to listen to that call is as if a pure and joyful wind blows into the stale air of our joyless lives, and the slow return begins.

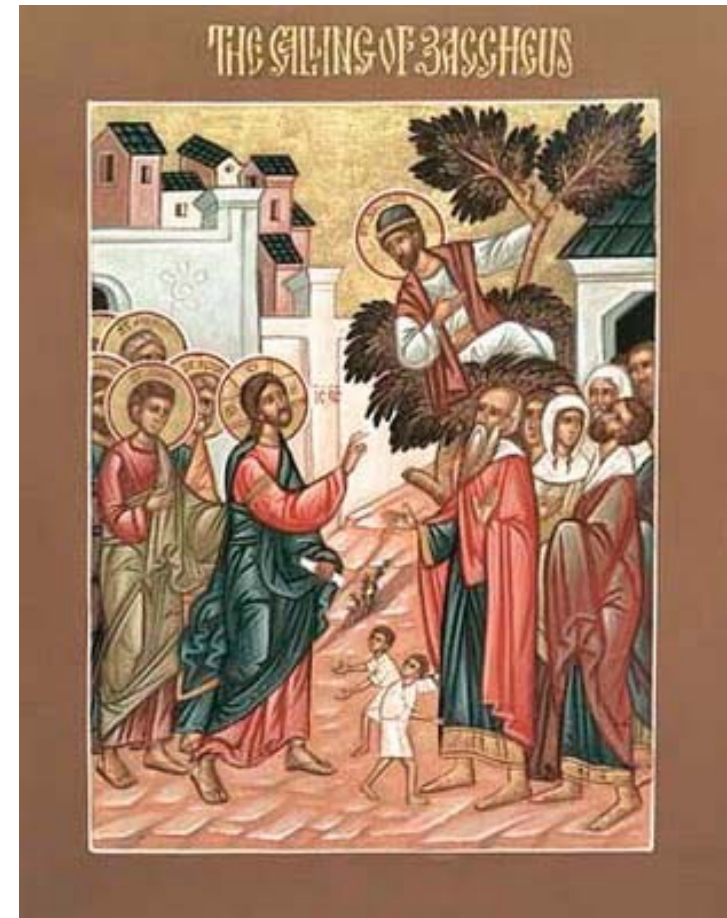
Desire. The soul taking a deep breath. Everything becomes—has already become—different, new, boundlessly meaningful. The little man, with his eyes to the ground focusing on earthly desires, now ceases to be little as his victory over himself begins. Here is the start, the first step from exterior to interior, toward that mysterious homeland which all human beings, unknown often to themselves, long for and desire.

– **V.Rev. Alexander Schmemmann**



ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Port Townsend, WA



Sunday, January 29th, 2012
33rd Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday of Zacchæus

New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia;
Translation of the Relics of Hieromartyr
Ignatius the Godbearer, Bishop of Antioch

St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church

Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of the West

1407 30th Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368

Fr. Nicholas Kime, Rector

(360) 385-0585

www.orthodoxporttownsend.com

Sunday, January 29th, 2012

33rd Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday of Zacchæus

New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia; Translation of the Relics of

Hieromartyr Ignatius the Godbearer, Bishop of Antioch

Tone 8

Schedule

Hours & Divine Liturgy: 9:30 am

Coffee hour, children's class, and teenager class follow the Divine

Liturgy

7:00 pm

Great Vespers

Readings

Epistle: 1 Timothy 4:9-15

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION – TONE 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: glory to Thee!

TROPARION – TONE 4

Today the Church of Russia joyfully forms a chorus, praising her new martyrs and confessors; hierarchs and priests, royal passion-bearers, right-believing princes and princesses, venerable men and women, and all Orthodox Christians. Having laid down their life for faith in Christ during the days of godless persecution, they preserved the truth by the shedding of blood. By their protection, O long-suffering Lord, preserve our land in Orthodoxy till the end of the age.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION – TONE 8

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam. Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, and the world celebrates Thy Rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

KONTAKION – TONE 3

Today the new martyrs of Rus' stand in white robes before the Lamb of God, and with the angels they sing to God the hymn of victory: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and praise, and honor, and power, and strength be to our God unto the ages of ages. Amen."

This Week at St. Herman's

Monday, January 30th – *Three Hierarchs*

Tuesday, January 31st

7:00 pm Great Vespers

Wednesday, February 1st– *St. Brigid of Ireland*

7:00 pm Vigil

**Thursday, February 2nd – Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ
in the Temple**

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 4th

Snow-shoeing trip to Hurricane Ridge

7:00 am Great Vespers

Announcements