

# The Confessor's Tongue for February 13, A. D. 2011

## Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

In honor of St. Maximus the Confessor, whose tongue and right hand were cut off in an attempt by compromising authorities to silence his uncompromising confession of Christ's full humanity & divinity.

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### Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

On this day we commemorate the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, which occurs in the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

With God's blessing, we enter this day into the period of the *Triodion*.

The three festal Sundays, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, and the Last Judgment, were intended by the Holy Fathers to be a period of preparatory training and exhortation so that we might equip ourselves for the spiritual contests of the Fast by forsaking our habitual foul practices.

First of all, they present to us the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, calling the following week the "Week of Proclamation" because it heralds the approach of the Fast. It is like those who are going off to war: they learn from their generals when the war will occur so that they can clean and polish their swords, taking care of everything and thus removing every obstacle to defeating the enemy. Likewise, the divine Fathers also sound the bugle in advance, calling us to the coming Lenten battle against the demons so that we might purge our souls of any passion or ailment that has possessed us over the past year.

We must properly arm ourselves for the contests of Great Lent. The principal weapons for the maintenance of virtue are repentance and humility, and the greatest obstacles are arrogance and pride. The Holy Fathers have set forth the present trustworthy parable from the divine Gospel, exhorting us through the Pharisee to banish the passions of arrogance and presumption and through the Publican to strive to acquire the opposites of these passion, humility and repentance.

This parable demonstrates that no one should become prideful, even if he commits acts of kindness and righteousness, but one should always be humble and beg God's favor with all his soul. Even if he has fallen into the worst evils, he should never lose hope or courage, as he is never far from salvation.

So that we can learn to avoid the pride of the Pharisee by following our own self-imposed and self-directed fasting – instead of the moderate and time-tested fasting traditions of the Church – the following week is fast-free. *Adapted from the Synaxarion*

### Hymns for the Publican and Pharisee

The Church's teaching for everything important is found in the hymns of Her services. Read through these hymns and take them to heart!

#### For Vespers

Brethren, let us not pray as the Pharisee:  
for he who exalteth himself shall be humbled.

Let us humble ourselves before God,  
and with fasting cry aloud as the Publican:  
God be merciful to us sinners.

A Pharisee, overcome with vainglory,  
and a Publican bowed down in repentance,  
came to Thee, the only Master.  
The one boasted and was deprived of blessings,  
while the other kept silent and was counted worthy  
of gifts.

Confirm me, O Christ our God, in his cries of  
sorrow, for Thou lovest mankind.

Almighty Lord, I know how great is the power of  
tears.

For they led up Hezekiah from the gates of death;  
they delivered the sinful woman from the  
transgression of many years;  
they justified the Publican above the Pharisee.  
And with them I also pray: have mercy on me.

Understanding, O my soul,  
the difference between the Publican and the  
Pharisee,  
hate the proud words of the one,  
and eagerly imitate the contrite prayer of the other,  
crying aloud: God be merciful to me a sinner and  
have pity on me.

We sing thy praises, Virgin Theotokos,  
who dost intercede for the salvation of our kind:  
for thy Son and our God in the flesh He took from  
thee,  
accepted suffering on the Cross,  
and hath delivered us from corruption in His love for  
mankind.

Mine eyes are weighted down by my transgressions,  
and I cannot lift them up and see the height of  
heaven.  
But receive me, Savior in repentance as the Publican  
and have mercy on me.

Thou art temple and gate, palace and throne of the  
King, O Virgin all-revered.  
Through thee, my Deliverer Christ the Lord hath  
come  
to shine on those that sleep in darkness,  
for He is the Sun of Righteousness  
and it is His will to give light to His creatures formed  
in His own image by His hands.  
Therefore, Lady worthy of all praise,  
with a mother's boldness,  
ever intercede before Him for the salvation of our  
souls.

**For Matins**

Humility exalted the Publican,  
overcome with shame and sorrow at his evil deeds,  
when he cried to the Creator, "Be merciful":  
but exaltation brought down from righteousness the  
unhappy Pharisee who spoke in pride.  
Therefore let us earnestly desire the good things and  
avoid the bad.

In days of old humility exalted the Publican  
who cried aloud lamenting, "Be merciful",  
and he was justified.  
Let us all follow his example,  
for we have fallen down into the depths of evil.  
Let us cry to the Savior from the depths of our  
hearts:  
We have sinned, be merciful, O Thou who alone  
lovest mankind.

**Kontakion, tone 4**

Let us flee from the proud speaking of the Pharisee  
and learn the humility of the Publican,  
and with groaning let us cry unto the Savior:  
Be merciful to us,  
for Thou alone art ready to forgive.

**Second Kontakion, tone 3**

As the Publican let us bring cries of sorrow to the  
Lord,  
and let us fall before him as sinners at the Master's  
feet.  
For He desireth the salvation of all men;  
He granteth forgiveness unto all that repent,  
and He hath for our sake taken flesh,  
though He is God coeternal with the Father.

**Ikos** Let us all humble ourselves, brethren; groaning  
and lamenting, let us beat our conscience, that at the  
eternal judgement we may be numbered with the  
faithful and the righteous, receiving forgiveness. Let  
us pray to see the true peace of the Age to Come,  
where there is no more pain, no sorrow, no groaning  
from the depths, in the wondrous Eden fashioned by  
Christ, for He is God co-eternal with the Father.

Let us flee from the wicked boasting of the Pharisee  
and let us learn the noble humility of the Publican,  
that we may be exalted and cry aloud with him to  
God:  
Be merciful unto Thy servants,  
O Christ our Savior, born of a Virgin,  
Who hast of Thine own will endured the Cross  
and with Thyself raised up the world by Thy divine  
power.

Brethren. let us not pray as the Pharisee:  
for he who exalteth himself shall be humbled.  
Let us humble ourselves before God,  
and with fasting cry aloud as the Publican:  
God be merciful to us sinners.

A Pharisee, overcome with vainglory,  
and a Publican bowed down in repentance,  
came to Thee, the only Master.  
The one boasted and was deprived of blessings,  
while the other kept silent and was counted worthy  
of gifts.  
Confirm me, O Christ our God, in his cries of  
sorrow, for Thou lovest mankind.

Understanding, O my soul, the difference between  
the Publican and the Pharisee,  
hate the proud words of the one,  
and eagerly imitate the contrite prayer of the other,  
crying aloud: God be merciful to me a sinner and have  
pity on me.

O ye faithful, let us hate the boastful words of the  
Pharisee  
and emulate the contrite prayer of the Publican.  
Let us not think proud thoughts,  
but, humbling ourselves in contrition, let us cry:  
God be merciful to our sins.

O Lord, Thou hast condemned the Pharisee  
who justified himself by boasting of his works,  
and Thou hast justified the Publican who humbled  
himself  
and with cries of sorrow begged for mercy.  
For Thou dost reject proud-minded thoughts,  
'but Thou dost not despise a contrite heart.  
Therefore in abasement  
we fall down before Thee who hast suffered for our  
sake:  
grant us forgiveness and great mercy.

The Publican and the Pharisee ran the race of life  
together, but the one was overcome by foolish pride  
and brought to shameful shipwreck,  
while the other was saved by humility.

Changing to a righteous course of life,  
let us emulate the wisdom of the Publican  
and flee from the hateful conceit of the Pharisee;  
and so let us attain to life.

The Pharisee spent his life in virtue and the Publican  
in sin, but the one was foolishly abased through his  
pride, while the other in his humble-mindedness was  
raised on high.

**Upcoming Events 2011**

18-19 February DFW Festival of Orthodoxy, Friday  
in Fort Worth, Saturday in Dallas  
19 February Russian Divine Liturgy at St. Maximus  
25 February, Friday, 9:00 p.m. Hesychastic Vigil  
6 March: Sunday, 6:00 p.m. Forgiveness Vespers  
(everyone needs to plan on attending this service!)  
24 April: Holy Pascha: The Feast of Feasts!

**GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!**