



ST. GREGORY'S DIVINE SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, February 8

Postfeast of the Encounter/St. Theodore, Martyr

5:00 P.M. Vigil Divine Liturgy

Supplications will be offered for +Raymond Hast, given by Hast Family.

Sunday, February 9

**Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee
Leavetaking of the Encounter of Our Lord**

9:10 A.M. Third Hour

9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy

The Epistle Reading will be 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 and the Gospel reading will be Luke 18:10-14. Supplications will be offered for +Msgr Raymond Balta, given by Stephen and Helen Balta & Family. Following the Divine Liturgy, please join us in the Church hall for our Valentine's Day party.

Simeon, tell us, whom you bear in your arms, that you rejoice so greatly in the Temple? To whom do you shout and cry aloud: "Now I am set free, for I have seen my Savior?" This is He who was born of a Virgin; this is God the Word, Who came forth from God, Who, for our sakes, has taken flesh and has saved man. Let us worship Him! (Vespers for the Encounter of Our Lord)

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord was first observed in the Eastern Church as "The Encounter." In the sixth century, it began to be observed in the West: in Rome with a more penitential character and in Gaul (France) with solemn blessings and processions of candles, popularly known as "Candlemas." This feast day concludes the celebration of the Nativity and with the offerings of the Virgin Mother and the prophecy of Simeon, the events now point toward Easter-Pascha.

Zacchaeus

B O X Z V I Z Z R L F H L C F N Z
 T G G J W V X Q F P S O T O L C K
 H V L S F X P W O P O M G W H O O
 U M O Z J S I N K T I M E S Q Q C
 K H V G K L J K P A D U G P J L V
 X Y E O K R E R Q B F N R N X F W
 Z W F B U Y S Z H T S C P C W U B
 M H A J T L U P T A G P W O S B X
 A R K I N D S Y J X X N B L Y P P
 R H W V L B J Z E F P O M L C N Q
 Y E P G S P R N R O O Z H E A F T
 I E N I D U C L I U I G M C M P R
 V M O N E Y F N C R H C V T O N E
 L W D R E P A Y H I C I J O R K E
 Y C H C K H U U O E H X M R E Z R
 K D D Z A C C H A E U S I N P K Y
 V X Z U D C O X D B U W H D G X Z

collector	Zacchaeus	sycamore	Jericho
Jesus	money	repay	times
four	kind	love	tree
tax			

FOR CONSIDERATION

Water is finer than earth; fire is finer than water; air is finer than fire; electricity is finer than air. Nevertheless, air is a dense element in comparison to the spiritual world and electricity is a dense element in comparison to the spiritual world. Electricity is very fine, but the voice is finer than electricity; the thought finer than the voice; the spirit finer than thoughts. The air is fine, and it carries the voice over a great distance. Electricity is fine and it carries light over a great distance.

Nevertheless, how much more is every deed, every word and every thought of yours carried to all ends of the spiritual world. O how awesome it is to commit sinful deeds and to speak sinful words and to think insane thoughts! To what immeasurable distances are amassed from that on the waves of the spiritual sea! But do not go into the details of the unknown world. The main thing is that you know and that you measure how all of your deeds, words and thoughts unavoidably create an impression on all four sides: On God and the spiritual world, on nature, on men and on your soul. If you train yourself in this knowledge, you will attain a higher level of saving vigilance.

- From the Prologue of Ochrid

St. Gregory's Prayer List

Kindly remember in your prayers our parishioners and friends who struggle with sickness, pain, hardship, or any special need: Charles & Maureen Cerny, Theresa Lokes, Nancy Romza, Andy & Joan Sakmar, Rita Smochko, Michael Sirochman, and Agnes Yanchak.

If you would like to add your name or the name of a loved one to this list, please contact the parish office via phone or email. In the Church vestibule, you are invited to add the names of the sick and any other intentions you would like to be remembered in our Prayer Intention book.

15th COMEDY NIGHT AT ST. GREGORY'S: FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28TH

The 15th annual Comedy Night will take place on Friday February 28th. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30.00 each and include soft drinks, beer, and pizza at intermission. BYOB and snacks. Table reservations are being taken by contacting Mike Kiss in person or by phone at 412-818-1295 or email at MKISS@CALLEQUITY.NET. Tickets are available following the Divine Services.

Announcements

Today: Encounter of Our Lord

On this Sunday we celebrate Feast of the Encounter-Meeting of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For us this is the final Feast in the Christmas cycle that brings us back to the days after the Nativity of Christ, when Jesus was forty days old. As part of this celebration the blessing of candles will take place at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. If you wish to have your candles blessed, please place them on the Tetrapod in the center of our Church.

Tuesday: PAC & PFC Meeting

On Tuesday, February 4th, a joint meeting of the Parish Advisory Council and Parish Financial Council will take place in the Church hall at 6:30 p.m. This meeting is open to all the parishioners. For those who may have parish related questions or concerns, our Parish Financial Council and Parish Advisory Council members are available to help clarify matters for you and ensure your input is heard. We also are open to comments and suggestions and extend a warm invitation to everyone who may wish to attend our meetings.

Next Sunday: St. Valentine Party

Mark your calendars as we prepare to have a St. Valentine Party next Sunday, February 9th. This fun event will take place following the Sunday Divine Liturgy in the Church Hall. We will have refreshments, and you will get to enjoy making Valentine crafts, Valentine jewelry, Valentine cards, and more. Plan to be here!

Men's Club Meeting

The St. Gregory's Men's Club will meet on Sunday, February 16th after the 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy. All members or faithful who wish to become members are asked to attend this meeting to discuss and review this past year and map out the New Year ahead.

Collection- May God bless you...

The total for Sunday, January 26th, 2025, was \$5003.82 (Envelopes: \$2,346.00; Online: \$916.99; Loose: \$54.00; Children: \$8.00; Candle: \$116.00; Initial: \$30.00; Debt: \$682.32; All Souls: \$20.00; Comedy Night: \$810.00; Superbowl: \$20.51).

The QR code will take you to our donation portal. Your engagement, support and prayers are very much appreciated.



Sunday of Zacchaeus



At that time, Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; 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.

In the Eastern Church, the Gospel account of Zacchaeus is read on the last Sunday preceding the liturgical preparation for the Great Fast. We see two exegetical aspects: Jesus' call to Zacchaeus to come down from the tree (symbolizing the divine call to humility), and Zacchaeus' subsequent repentance.

The chief tax collector of Jericho Zacchaeus wanted nothing more than to be able to see Jesus from afar. He had no other expectations. What happened next was completely unexpected. Our Lord noticed the opening in Zacchaeus' heart and welcomed it as an invitation.

For a brief moment Zacchaeus stops worrying about the future and begins to live in the present moment. He is presented with a simple dilemma that propels him out of his dark fantasies of survival into the living light of the present moment. How can I lift myself high enough to see Jesus over the crowd...now? That is the operative word, NOW. Living in the present helps to soften the heart and open the walls of our cocoons for one simple reason: there is no salvation in the past or the future. The past is a memory, the future is a fantasy. Salvation can only be found in the present moment. The Lord is present with us in reality. Zacchaeus latches onto that necessary truth and discovers that the Kingdom of Heaven is truly at hand. The Kingdom of Heaven can only be found in the present because life is no where else but here and now.

“Hurry and come down, Zacchaeus, for I will dine at your house TODAY.” This is the word we proclaim together at the Great Blessing of the Water. TODAY! “Christ is in our midst”, NOW. “Christ is Risen”, not was. TODAY is the word that begins the Fifteen Antiphon on Holy Thursday. “TODAY is hung upon the Tree.” TODAY! NOW! St. Paul writes that TODAY is the day of salvation. The Church wants us to live in the present so that we can see the Kingdom of Heaven which is in the present. The past is a memory, the future is a fantasy. Salvation is always NOW.

Today we bless Candles...Why?

A candle is a small piece of light. Long ago candles and oil lamps were the only ways people could have light at night. They would bring these “bits of light” to the first Christian gatherings in the catacombs and other secret places. Soon the candles became a way of praying, of giving something back to God. The interpreter of the Liturgy, our venerable father Simeon of Thessalonica (XV century), said that pure wax symbolizes the purity and innocence of people offering it. The wax is offered as a sign of our repentance for our obstinacy and willfulness. The softness and malleability of the wax speak of our readiness to obey God. The flame of the candle shows the warmth of love to God.



Candles are used in all Eastern Churches. It is our practice that when we enter the Church, we are to stop to buy a candle. It's our sacrifice. When we light a candle before an Icon and say a prayer for someone, we tell God that we are praying for that person and as long as our candle burns our prayer will be there before God. We say to our friends who are sick or troubled that we will light a candle for them. We light candles for someone who has died. Sometimes we light a candle to say “thank you” to God. We should not put up a candle just for the sake of the ritual, with our hearts remaining cold. The outward action must be supported by a prayer, be it even a simple one expressed in your own words.

Even today when we have electric lights, we do not want to give up praying with those small “bits of living light”. They remind us that our souls should burn with love for God and our neighbor for we are called to be living candles. As we will bless the candles for the Feast of the Encounter of Our Lord remember that “You are like a light of the world. You are like a candle in a dark room. Don't hide your light. Let your light shine for everyone to see!” When we see so many candles everywhere, we know that Jesus is everywhere in the whole Church, our homes, and He is in us, too.

Now You shall dismiss your servant, O Lord, according to your word, in peace; because my eyes have seen your salvation which You prepared before the face of all people. a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of your people, Israel.

-Canticle of Simeon