



**St George the Great Martyr
Orthodox Church - Weekly Bulletin**

Sunday, February 10 2019

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10 TONE 4 37th Sunday after
Pentecost/ Sunday of Zacchæus Hieromartyr Haralambos,
Bishop of Magnesia**

Tone 4 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the an-
gel the joyous message of thy Resurrection, / they cast away
the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the apostles: / “Death
is overthrown! / Christ God is risen, // granting the world great
mercy!”

Tone 4 Troparion (*Hieromartyr Haralambos*)

Thou didst become a firm pillar in the Church of Christ, wise
Haralambos; / a lamp of everlasting light to the world: / well
known to the world through thy martyrdom, / thou didst dis-
pell the dark night of idolatry. // Boldly intercede with Christ
God that He may save our souls!

Tone 4 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

My Savior and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and
delivered the earth-born from their chains. / He has shattered
the gates of hell, / and as Master, // He has risen on the third
day!

Tone 4 Kontakion (*Hieromartyr Haralambos*)

Thou didst rise from the East like a star, Hieromartyr Haralambos,
/ and didst enlighten the faithful with the brightness of
thy miracles. // Therefore we honor thy holy contest.

Luke 19:1-10 (*Gospel*)

Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

A Zacchaeus Moment

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" [Luke 19:10].

At this Sunday's eucharistic Liturgy, we will hear the story of the towering figure of Zacchaeus the publican [Luke 19:1-10]. This is one of the many wonderful paradoxes of the spiritual life that characterize the Holy Scriptures. The paradox is found in the fact that the "towering" figure of Zacchaeus was actually "small of stature" [verse 3]. And if indeed he had defrauded his neighbors as he alluded to [verse 8], then he was "small" in even more essential matters. Through repentance, conversion, and right action Zacchaeus grew in stature right before the eyes of those who with faith could "see" this transformation. Zacchaeus personifies the type of change that is possible through hearing the Good News and embracing it in thought, word and deed. This passage, unique to the Gospel according to Saint Luke, is thus perfectly placed as the first announcement of the approach of Great Lent, for in the Orthodox Church, this is always the prescribed Gospel reading for the fifth Sunday before the start of Great Lent. The four pre-lenten Gospel readings to follow will then guide us to Monday, March 11, the first day of the lenten journey that will lead us to Holy Week and then Pascha on April 28. Returning to the Gospel passage, we find the story of Zacchaeus evenly divided into two parts—an outdoor scene [verses 1-5] and an indoor scene [verses 6-10]. Outdoors, and in full view of the gathered inhabitants of ancient Jericho, the despised "chief tax collector," the rich Zacchaeus, risks the humiliation of being laughed at because he makes the socially unconventional choice of climbing up into a "sycamore tree" in order "see who Jesus was." What may have been acceptable behavior among children, would only have drawn the surprised and scornful stares of Zacchaeus' over-taxed neighbors. I always remember that in a meditation on Zacchaeus, the late Metropolitan Anthony Bloom wrote that the equivalent act today would be that of a renowned corporate executive scrambling up a light pole in a downtown area in order to see someone passing by. (For those with a "boss" that you may not be too fond of, perhaps there may be minor consolation in fantasizing such a scenario and its reaction in your own mind). There then occurs that life-changing encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus. For Jesus looks up at the strange figure of this man "small of stature" eagerly looking down upon Him, and says to him in response: "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today" [verse 5].

The transition to the indoor setting is now made when Zacchaeus “made haste and came down, and received him joyfully” [verse 6]. Yet one can sense the oriental custom of a crowd hovering at the entrance or even coming and going with a certain freedom. The raised eyebrows and clucking tongues of an undescribed “they” who look on and articulate their stern disapproval—“He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” [verse 7]—is a reaction encountered elsewhere in the Gospels when Jesus freely chose to sit at table with sinners and tax collectors [cf. Mark 3:15-17]. This disapprobation on the part of the scribes and Pharisees then evoked his memorable (and ironic?) saying: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” [Mark 3:17]. The Messiah is not bound by religiously sanctioned social convention that divides people into the convenient categories of the “righteous” and “sinners,” “saved” and “lost,” the “pure” and “impure.” Or rather, by making clear that He has come to bring salvation to everyone, beginning with the marginalized and distressed members of His own society, Jesus reveals the inclusive love of God that tears down all such former barriers. Zacchaeus is a striking and personalized example of this inclusive love of God for **“the lost.”** Never a distributor of “cheap grace” though, Jesus demands repentance and conversion. And this comes dramatically from Zacchaeus when he publicly declares: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it four-fold” [verse 8]. In this, Zacchaeus goes beyond what the Law required for such an act of restitution [Exodus 21:37; Numbers 5:5-7]. The Lord then signifies or “seals” the truth of this conversion when He solemnly pronounces the joyful declaration: “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” [verses 9-10]. It is interesting to note that the blessing of Jesus is given to the entire household. The household of Zacchaeus, in turn, becomes a microcosm of the entire design of salvation: The Son of Man came to seek and save the entire cosmos groaning inwardly and subject to futility as it awaits redemption [cf. Romans 8:19-23]. In this, we and our households resemble that of Zacchaeus, regardless of how “righteous” we may consider ourselves, as we will hear in two weeks in the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee! We can never afford to allow our supposed familiarity with a Gospel passage to blunt its sharp edge. It is that sharp edge that cuts through our many defensive layers of evasions and self-deception. Otherwise, the passage “softens” into a didactic story about a bad man changing his life and becoming “nice.” However, I believe that no matter how well we know the story about Zacchaeus, the only familiarity that we could claim with him is the familiarity of having an equally profound *“Zacchaeus moment”* in our own lives. Such a “moment” would initially be characterized by an equal desire to “see Jesus”—above all else. Then we would need to be willing to overcome our own “smallness of stature” by perhaps first overcoming the tyranny of social convention and respectability before we get to our actual sinfulness. This may mean going beyond our own conventional patterns of church going and the “safety” of keeping the demanding call of Christ at a safe distance so that it cannot overly impinge upon our lives. There may yet be a sycamore tree that we need to climb.

Calendar of Events – Starting today: February 10

Sunday	02/10	9:10am - Hours; 9:30am - Divine Liturgy
Monday	02/11	
Tuesday	02/12	
Wednesday	02/13	2:00-5:00pm Office Hours
Thursday	02/14	
Friday	02/15	
Saturday	02/16	6:00pm - NO Great Vespers
Sunday	02/17	9:10am - Hours; 9:30am - Divine Liturgy Church School

Weekly announcements, looking ahead:

- ◆ **Thank You Deacon George for draining** our own St George lake so many times this year!! We would be swimming in water otherwise.
- ◆ 2:00-5:00pm Office Hours this Wednesday.
- ◆ Our parish meeting has been **postponed until the 24th of February. Please plan on attending.**
- ◆ If you would like to Father bless your home this year, there is still time. Please sign up at coffee hour.
- ◆ **Great Lent is fast approaching!** Meat-fare is March 3rd, and the Great Fast begins on March 11th. Now is the time to ask for time off if needed to attend services during that first week, and for Holy Week (April 22).
- ◆ There will be NO Vespers this week. Father will be attending services at that LA Cathedral.

Please keep our brothers and sisters in your prayers this week:

For good health and healing: Souraya, Alice, Basil, Christina, Eddie, Juan, Ruth, Nicholas, Mary, Dragosh, Sonia, Doreen, Peter, Denise, Mary-Nellie, Jordan, Zayden, Traci and the Child to be born of her. Matushka Joan.

Memory Eternal: Newly Departed Vasilos.