

The Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican and the After-feast of the Presentation of Christ

The Martyr Agatha of Sicily, Polyteuktos, Patriarch of Constantinople; New-martyr Anthony of Athens; Venerable Theodosios of Scopelos; Repose of Theodosios, Archbishop of Chernigov

Sunday, February 05, 2012

Tone 1; Eothinon 1

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 1)

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

Apolytikion of the Presentation of Christ (Tone 1)

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee arose the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, lighting those who are in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous old man, carrying in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, Who granteth us Resurrection.

Apolytikion of our Patron the Archangel Michael (Tone 4)

O ye foremost of the heavenly hosts we beseech thee, though we are unworthy, pray that we may be encompassed with a shadow of Thy unearthly glory, preserving us who kneel and cry endlessly: deliver us from oppression since ye are the prince of the Highest Power.

Kontakion of the Presentation of Christ (Tone 1)

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for the Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican)

*Make your vows to the Lord your God, and perform them.
In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel.*

The Reading from St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy (3:10-15)

Timothy my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my sufferings; and what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What persecutions I endured; yet from them all, the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

THE GOSPEL (for the Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke (18:10-14)

The Lord spoke this parable: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The Synaxarion – February 5

On February 5 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we continue to celebrate the Presentation (Meeting) of our Lord in the Temple, and commemorate the holy and glorious Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily; Polyeuktos, patriarch of Constantinople; New-martyr Anthony of Athens; Venerable Theodosios of Scopelos; and Theodosios, archbishop of Chernigov.

On this day, we make remembrance of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, which occurs in the Holy Gospel according to Luke the Evangelist.

Verses

*If you resemble the Pharisee, run far away from the Temple;
For inside is Christ before Whom only the humble are acceptable.*

Verses for the Triodion

*O Creator of everything heavenly and earthly,
receive Thou from the Angels a Trinitarian song,
And from us men a noble and reverent Triodion.*

In the parable our Savior tells, Jesus uses a Pharisee, a leader of the synagogue, who was regarded in public opinion as virtuous; and a publican, a tax collector, who was regarded as oppressive, greedy and a sinner. In their prayers to God, we discover the real hearts of these two men. We thus learn of the harm that comes from pride and the good that comes from humility. The divine Church Fathers sought to alert prepare the Christ-loving clergy and laity for the upcoming period of the Great Fast. Therefore, on this Sunday we are reminded that humility is the greatest weapon against pride, as we imitate the humility of the publican to ascend to the divine heights.

Through the intercessions of the wonderworking Saints, O Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only* those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread is being offered this morning by Father Minas, Presbytera Nicole and Mary Sarchizian with prayers for the repose of the newly-departed servant of God, Usguhi Sarchizian (+9 January, 2012). Memory eternal.

Holy Bread is also being offered by Richard, Cindy and Tyler Tamoush for Samantha celebrating her 17th birthday today, and Ryan celebrating his 19th birthday on Tuesday. May God grant them many years!

Holy Bread and wheat* is being offered this morning by Joseph & Shatha Matni and family with prayers for the repose of the newly-departed servant of God, Genevieve Nehme Matni (+1 February, 2012). Memory eternal.

Holy Bread is also being offered this morning for the health, safety, long life and most abundant blessings for Minnie Tobey Lush, on the occasion of her birthday (February 7), precious mother and sito, with eternal gratitude to the Lord, by Robert & Nicole Webster, Gabrielle, Robert, Robert Joseph and Jonathan Camacho; Greg, Erin, Reed and Blake Nassir.

The coffee hour is being hosted this morning by the Meena, Abraham and Gascou families in honor of the birthdays of Don, Greg, Robert, Kelly and Abby. May God grant them many years!

Special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for Sasha Yazbek, celebrating her birthday today.

May God grant her many years!

for the repose of the newly-departed Brenda Signorino (+2 February, 2012), by Caren Kouri. Memory eternal.

* The offering of wheat (*amha*) for memorial services is a practice that can be traced back to the middle of the fourth century. In earlier times, bread and wine with olives, cheese or rice were offered in charity, and those who partook of them would pray, "Blessed be his/her memory." The wheat is cooked sometimes with honey or sugar, mixed with figs, raisins, nuts and other sweets. The grain and fruit brought to the commemoration of the dead signifies that the dead will truly rise again from the grave, for both grain, which is sown in the earth, and fruit, which is laid on the earth, decays first and afterwards brings forth abundant ripe, whole fruit. The honey or sugar used with the wheat signifies that after the resurrection of the Orthodox and the righteous, there awaits a joyous and blessed life in the Heavenly Kingdom and not a bitter sorrowful one. The wheat prepared from grain expresses the faith of the living in the resurrection of the dead to a better life, just as that seed, having fallen upon the ground, although undergoing corruption, yet grows to attain a better appearance. (See I Corinthians 15:35-57)

for the continued protection and safety of Abbes, Mother Febronia and the community of the 6th century Patriarchal Monastery of the Nativity of our Lady of Saydnaya (17 miles north of Damascus), which was impacted by artillery fire on January 29, 2012.

Included in our prayers throughout the month of February are those celebrating their birthday: Mark Daftari (2/2), Margaret Saade (2/2), Gregory Meena (2/5), Mark Nasser (2/5), Sawsan-Barakat Rafidi (2/5), Samantha Marie Tamoush (2/5), Tanya Worotko (2/5), Ghenet Woldemichael (2/5), Sasha Yazbek (2/5), Michael Mallouk (2/6), Donald Meena (2/6), John Apostolou (2/7), Ryan Tamoush (2/7), Minnie Lush (2/7), Kaden Segovia (2/8), Andrew Wassef (2/8), Maureen Haddad (2/9), Ben Mike Azzam (2/10), Nicole Khoury (2/10), Katrina Tambouras (2/10), Claire Bassem Azzam (2/11), Carson George Hage (2/11), Katie Nassief (2/11), Nicholas Elias Azzam (2/13), Julia Theodora Botezatu (2/13), Anne Maria Bitar (2/13), Michael Saade (2/13), James Bishop (2/14), Frieda Kabbash (2/15), Colt Coury Resch (2/15), Andrew Wassef (2/15), Lisa Mittry (2/16), Ethan Michael Coury (2/17), Dana-Nasser Papp (2/17), Fred Yazbek (2/18), Lora Aftimos (2/19), Andrew Makhoul (2/19), Katherine-Slatko Foyle (1/19), Danielle Toomey (2/21), Andrew Hallak (2/24), Danice-Deeb Najjar (2/22), Phil Nassief (2/24), Evelyn Haddad (2/26), Amanda Monsue (2/26), Sophia Malouf (2/27), Joey Rafidi (2/27), Sana Sayegh (2/27), Kevin Barney (2/28), Christina Tortolano (2/28); and celebrating their wedding anniversary: Tony & Ghada Mansur (2/14), Joy & Jamie Farr (2/16), Stephen & Maureen Haddad (2/19), Andy & Bobbi Monsue (2/26), and Elias & Rana Azzam (2/27). May God grant them all many years!

Included in our prayers for the departed during the month of February are:

<i>George John Nichols +8 Feb. 1960</i>	<i>Nelly Thabit +6 Feb. 1999</i>
<i>George Issam +7 Feb. 1969</i>	<i>Louis Aboud +10 Feb. 1999</i>
<i>Raymond Barghash +14 Feb. 1972</i>	<i>Joseph Nasser +25 Feb. 1999</i>
<i>George N. Obresley +22 Feb. 1997</i>	<i>John Forrester +26 Feb. 2000</i>
<i>Samuel M. Nader +10 Feb. 1980</i>	<i>Stanley Kaady +29 Feb. 2000</i>
<i>Therese Cecile Wassef +20 Feb. 1982</i>	<i>Jessie Kence +19 Feb. 2003</i>
<i>Serge Markarian +27 Feb. 1984</i>	<i>Fakhira Esber +4 Feb. 2004</i>
<i>Laurice N. Hallak +5 Feb. 1984</i>	<i>Elizabeth Agamalian +6 Feb. 2004</i>

Jamele Haick +10 Feb. 1984
Love N. Elias +24 Feb. 1987
Denise A. Razook +16 Feb. 1990
Naheele Sadd +14 Feb. 1992
Ralph McCarron +4 Feb. 1993
Katherine Kneizeh +11 Feb. 1996
Frances Cole +1 Feb. 1997
Youseff Hashem +2 Feb. 1977
Kenny Soffa + Feb. 1998
Rasmieh Thabet +22 Feb. 1998

Lorana Johnson +22 Feb. 2005
Elizabeth Skaff +6 Feb. 2006
Isabel Toomey +30 Feb. 2006
Nicholas Barakat +23 Feb. 2007
Eddie Fadel +25 Feb. 2007
Miriam M. Haddad +14 Feb. 2008
Maxie Elsner +15 Feb. 2008
John Cushner +17 Feb. 2008
George R. Kalil +9 Feb. 2009

Memory Eternal!

Please phone the Church Office if there are any omissions or corrections to the above listing. Please bear in mind that some have chosen not to be included in our announcement. Pardon any errors.

NOTE

At the end of the Liturgy during the veneration of the cross, please refrain from speaking loudly and keep all conversation to a minimum in order that the prayers read after Holy Communion may be heard by everyone in the church. Thank you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parish Work Day – next Sunday, February 12

Our parish home requires our personal attention. Your availability in affording some time to help us with our parish clean-up day would be greatly appreciated and will help to save us some needless fees. "Home is where the heart is," and as Valentine's Day rapidly approaches, the personal care of our parish home is a vital part of our Christian stewardship. Sunday, February 12, 2012 has been scheduled for our first day of cleaning. Bring a change of clothes, if necessary, to participate in an afternoon of fellowship following Liturgy. A list of various odd jobs will be made available on that day. Should you have any questions, please see Don Meena. Note: If your teen son or daughter has the need for "community service" school credit, this is an excellent opportunity to have them sign-up with Father Timothy.

Church School Pancake Breakfast Postponed

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Church School Pancake Breakfast originally scheduled for Sunday, February 19 has been scheduled until after Easter: Sunday, May 20, 2012.

Camp Scholarships

March 1, 2012 is the deadline for all summer camp scholarship applications for any young person in our parish, provided by the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Please contact Father Timothy for more information. Camp registration will begin soon. This year's Program includes: Session 1 (July 15-21), Session 2 (Teen Week: July 22-28), Session 3 (July 29 – August 4).

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

[Note: There is no fasting from February 5-12]

Leave-taking of the Presentation of Christ (February 9th)

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Saturday, February 11th – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, February 12th – Orthros, 8:45 a.m.,

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Archbishop JOSEPH, 10 a.m.

Good News!

Good news! Escrow has closed, and St. Michael Church is now the owner of the home at the adjacent lot: 6827 DeCelis Street. First and foremost, our thanks go out to Sondra and Emile for their generous gift, and also to the parishioners of our church who willingly stepped up to the plate and offered additional financial donations toward the purchase. We are indeed grateful and blessed! The total required funds paid by St. Michael were \$141,758.88, of which \$45,000 was donated by Sondra Love, and \$18,500 in donations from parishioners; leaving a balance of \$78,258.88 paid from our Building Fund. We must also thank Minnie Lush and Marcia

Terry for handling the details of the purchase, for their time and expertise, and for Marcia's own donation towards the closing costs. The purchase of this home is a major step for our parish, and we thank God for the opportunity it provides. May God continue to bless us all. May we discover a renewed desire to push forward on our new home, in God's time.

Wednesday Night Lenten Service and Dinners

Great Lent will begin on Monday February 27, 2012, and our first Pre-sanctified Vespereal Liturgy is scheduled for Wednesday, February 29. Each Wednesday night Liturgy will be followed by a parish Lenten dinner hosted by a few families of our parish. If you are interested in joining a team in hosting one of the dinners, please speak with Rima Hage. At each service, Father Timothy will be speaking on the topic of prayer, including: Devotional Prayer, Corporate (Liturgical) Prayer, Prayer for the Departed, and What is a Personal "Prayer Rule?"

Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.

Holy Bread Offering List

Feb 12 – The Sarchizian family
Feb 19 – The Sarchizian family
Feb 26 – open
Mar 04 – The Kabbash and Ruff family
Mar 11 – open

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Feb 12 – The Soffa and Nassief families
Feb 19 – The Sarchizian family
Feb 26 – open (Cheese Fare)
Mar 04 – open
Mar 11 – The Nasr and Mulry families

Please contact Father Timothy (818/219-3761; pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread for any of the open upcoming Sundays. Contact Frieda Kabbash (818)707-6478; frieda702@aol.com to host the Coffee Hour.

Now You Can Learn a Simple Method of Making Holy Bread

That's right! We now have five cast iron Teflon bread pans for making Holy Bread and it's very simple. It includes instructions with the prayers to be said. The process takes approximately two hours. Just speak with Father Timothy to borrow a pan.

2012 Parish Life Conference – July 5-8, 2012

This year's Conference is being hosted by The Church of the Redeemer (Los Altos Hills, California) and is being held at the Santa Clara Marriott (\$109/night). You may now register at the Conference website on-line at: <www.antiochianevents.org/65>.

Parish Council Meeting – Monday, February 13th, 7:30 p.m.

GoodSearch – What is it?

GoodSearch is an on-line search site that is not unlike Google that helps you locate websites and on-line information. Good dining can also be utilized to find restaurant discounts that, when used, earns us money as well. Each time you use these services, St. Michael church can gain a contribution at no cost to you! Natalie Malouf, our Webmaster is available to answer any questions you may have.

Pastor's Sermon

The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig

February 5, 2012

Today is “The Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican,” signals the approach of the season of repentance. Great Lent in our church begins with a two-week introduction starting with Meat Fare Sunday on February 19th, and the Sunday of Cheese Fare (February 26th), followed by the first day of the fast, Monday, February 27th. The Church prescribes no fasting for the upcoming week, prior to the Sunday of the Prodigal Son (February 6-12).

Today's Gospel lesson sets before us the scene of two men who go to the Temple to pray, and of whom our Lord said, one is justified because of his humility and sincere contrition. It is among the shortest of lessons, but is among the most potent in content.

In the verse just prior to the beginning of the reading of today's Gospel lesson (v. 9) we hear who Jesus addressed this parable: “To some who were confident of

their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else Jesus told this parable..." Why? It is a spiritual problem. It isolates and insulates and disassociates: none of which characterizes life in God's Kingdom. Consequently, it behooves each of us to take note of our own understanding of what it truly means to be a member of God's Kingdom.

You've heard me say before: all sins are rooted in pride. If pride is the "father of all sins," humility is the mother of all virtues. If there is any virtue in being proud we can only speak of having pride in what we are thankful for and in our gratitude: glorify God. Humility is selfless.

Notice: The Pharisee's own words: "God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men..." The Pharisee's thankfulness is self-centered. It focuses inward. He characterizes the sins of others: "extortionists, unjust, adulterers..." But it does not end there. He goes on to personally judge the publican who he sees praying in the Temple. (In one commentary it is said that the Pharisee may have had a personal relationship to the Publican.)

His personal judgment of the publican, however, is only the beginning. In the same breath he proceeds to enumerate his personal accomplishments and names them: "I fast twice a week," "I give tithes of all I get" – Notice: deeds pertaining to his fulfillment of his religious practice and discipline.

The Pharisee had a great deal to be proud of. He was disciplined. He had a sense of accomplishment from what he knew to do that was right. But like the rich young man who Jesus once met, there was something still lacking. Saddest of all, the Pharisee was totally unaware of his shortcomings and did not even care. He is what we call today a person who is "full of himself." We could say that he was not lacking any self-esteem.

On this, St. Silouan of Mt. Athos said: "The proud man thinks he can comprehend everything with his mind. The Lord does not grant this... The Lord does not manifest Himself to the proud soul. Pride is difficult to detect in oneself, but the Lord leaves the proud to be tormented by their impotence until they humble themselves."

In the second half of the lesson, Jesus describes the publican. He is called “the tax collector;” a job that people in Jesus’ day associated with dishonesty and extortion, just as we heard in the Gospel lesson of Zaccheus two weeks ago. We can think of a few professions that have the caricatures of wrong doings. They are often associated with people who are intelligent, possibly wealthy, and perhaps powerful. Today, however, we must also recognize that this parable has already made the word “Pharisee” a derogatory term without recognizing that what the Pharisee prided himself with were good things: fasting, he did not neglect tithing. He was a man of discipline, obviously well learned.

And what about the publican? Somebody had to collect taxes. Who is to say that the man singled out by the Pharisee was in fact a crook? There is nothing within the parable that tells us that this was true, except for what is implied by insinuation by the Pharisee’s comments. (It’s called prejudice.)

And what do we hear described in the lesson about this “sinful tax collector?” First, it says “he stood at a distance.” Second, “He would not even look up to heaven,” Third, it says “beat his chest and said, ‘God, have mercy upon me, a sinner.’” [This Lent, if you need to learn a prayer that would be the most helpful then this short prayer is what the Fathers of the church consider the most powerful prayer – one that embodies the Gospel. It is the root of what is commonly called, The Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner.”]

The lesson concludes with Jesus’ commentary: “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” {Remember the Gospel lesson of the Good Samaritan? The priests who chose not to touch the “unclean” man on the side of the road were “justified” by the Law, while the lesson clearly teaches that the mercy of the Samaritan was what mattered.}

We see in the publican something more than a good attitude. He not only confesses his sin and positions himself humbly before God. The heart of the publican’s prayer is an appeal, filled with trust, to the goodness and tenderness of God. He says, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” (the first words of the penitent 51st Psalm of David.) Our Lord chooses to place these words in the mouth of the publican for a reason. In doing so he provides us with a model of prayer for repentance. He asks of a penitent complete trust in the tender mercy of God.

We all need gratification. We all need attention. We all need love. And we all probably need to begin to recognize and acknowledge the many in our lives that have not received, and often do not get enough thanks for their sacrifices and virtues as models and examples. However, just as “tooting our own horn,” is not a Christian virtue, neither is burning with envy and jealousy which is rooted in pride. The temptation of pride is avoided when one maintains a healthy prayer life and an honest relationship with God.

In conclusion, one can say that the discipline of Great Lent is to break till the soil of a hard heart and a proud mind. In the end, the goal of Christianity is not making us proud, or even helping us to feel good or bad about ourselves. The goal of the Christian life is humility with contrition. The spiritual fathers of the Church speak of this as the descent of the mind into the heart.

Prayer

O Lord our God who didst reproach the Pharisee with justifying himself and taking pride in his actions and didst justify the publican when he approached Thee humbly, seeking with groans forgiveness for his sins – for Thou dost not draw near to arrogant thoughts or turn away contrite hearts. We also kneel our heart and soul before Thee, O Thou who didst suffer for our sakes. Grant us forgiveness and Great Mercy.

Arabic Translation of hymns and readings

SUNDAY OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN AFTER-FEAST OF PRESENTATION (MEETING) OF CHRIST

MARTYR AGATHA OF SICILY; POLYEUKTOS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE;
NEW-MARTYR ANTHONY OF ATHENS; VENERABLE THEODOSIOS OF SCOPELOS;
REPOSE OF THEODOSIOS, ARCHBISHOP OF CHERNIGOV

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الأول

إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ لَمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، وَجَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الْجَنْدِ، قُمْتَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّلَاثِ أَيَّهَا
الْمَخْلُصُ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الْحَيَاةَ. فَلِذَلِكَ قَوَاتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ هَتَفُوا إِلَيْكَ يَا وَاهَبَ الْحَيَاةَ: الْمَجْدُ
لِقِيَامَتِكَ أَيَّهَا الْمَسِيحُ، الْمَجْدُ لِمَلَايِكِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِتَدْبِيرِكَ يَا مُحِبَّ الْبَشَرِ وَحَدَاكَ.

طروبارية الدخول على اللحن الأول

افرحي يا والدة الإله العذراء الممتلئة نعمة، لأنه منك أشرق شمس البر، المسيح إلهنا، منيراً للذين في الظلام، سرّاً وابتهج أنت أيها الشيخ الصديق، حاملاً على ذراعيك المعتق نفوسنا والمانح إيانا القيامة.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسل إليكم نحن غير المستحقين، حتى أنكم بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظل أجنحة مجدكم غير الهولي، حافظين إيانا نحن الجائين والصارخين بغير فتور، أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القوات العلوية.

قنداق التقدمة على اللحن الأول

اليوم ظهرت وخلصتنا أيها المسيح الإله، يا من بمولدك قدست المستودع البتولي. وباركت يدي سمعان كما يليق. احفظ رعينك بسلام في الحروب، وأيد عبيدك الذين أحببتهم، أيها المحب البشر وحدك.

الرسالة

صلوا وأوفوا الرب إلهنا، الله معروف في أرض يهوذا.

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول الثانية إلى تيموثاوس

يا ولدي تيموثاوس، إنك تبعني في تعليمي وسيرتي ومقاصدي

وإيماني وصبري ومحبي وثباتي، واحتمالي الاضطهاد والعذاب وما أصابني

في إنطاكية وايقونية ولسترة. وكم من اضطهاد احتملت وقد

أُنقِذني الرَّبُّ من جميعِها. فجميعُ الذين يُريدونَ أن يَحْيُوا حياةَ التَّقوى في
المسيحِ يسوعِ يُصيبُهُم الاضطهادُ. أما الأشرارُ والدَّجالونَ فيزدادونَ شرًّا
وهم خادعونَ مخدوعونَ. فاثبتْ أنتِ على ما تعلَّمتهِ علمَ
اليقينِ عالماً ممَّن تعلَّمتهِ. وإنكِ منذ طفولتِكِ تعرفُ الكتبَ المقدَّسةَ القادرةَ
على أن تُصيرَكَ حكيماً وتَهديكَ إلى الخلاصِ في الإيمانِ بالمسيحِ يسوعِ .

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ لوقا

قال الرَّبُّ هذا المثل: صعدَ رجلانِ إلى الهيكلِ ليصليا, واحدٌ
فرسي والآخَرُ عشار. فوقفَ الفرسي يصلي في نفسه فيقول: اللهم, إني
أشكركَ, لأنِّي لست مثل سائرِ الناسِ الطامعينِ الظالمينِ الفاسقينِ, ولا
مثل هذا العشار! فأنا أصوم في الأسبوعِ مرتين, وأوفي عشرَ دخلي كلِّه.
وأما العشارُ, فوقفَ بعيداً لا يجرؤُ أن يرفعَ عينيه نحو السماءِ, بل كان
يقرعُ صدره قائلاً: ارحمني, يا الله, أنا الخاطيءُ! أقول لكم إن هذا نزلَ
إلى بيته مبروراً دونَ ذاك. لأن من رفعَ نفسه وُضعَ ومن وُضعَ نفسه
رُفِعَ .