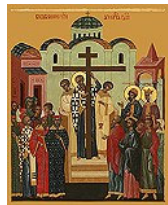


✠Bulletin✠

Week of January 25th to January 31, 2026



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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33rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 8

Sunday of Zacchaeus

New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

St. Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople (389)

St. Moses, Archbishop of Novgorod (1362). Martyrs Felicitas of Rome, and seven sons: Januarius, Felix, Philip, Silvanus, Alexander, Vitalis and Martial (ca. 164). Ven. Publius, Ascetic, of Syria (ca. 380). St. Mares the Singer, of Syria (ca. 430). Icons of the Mother of God, "ASSUAGE MY SORROW" (translation to Moscow in 1640), and "THE UNEXPECTED JOY". Saint Vetranton of Tomis (4th c.).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday January 25, 2026

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Friday January 30th

8:45 am – Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

**Synaxis of the Ecumenical Teachers and Hierarchs: Basil the Great,
Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom.**

Weekly Schedule

Sunday January 25th

- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Liturgy
- Choir Practice

Saint Zacchaeus the Apostle as a Model for our Lives

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

Saint Zacchaeus, as is known from the Gospel reading that is read every year in the sacred churches before the Triodion, is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke (19:1-10), that he was a chief publican and wealthy man who sought to see Christ. When he heard that the Lord was to pass through Jericho he climbed a sycamore tree, because he was of a small body stature, in order to see Him. Christ saw him and said: "Come down quickly, for I must stay at your house tonight." Indeed, He even called him out by name, even though he had never met Him nor seen Him before. Zacchaeus immediately came down and welcomed him with joy, while those present began to grumble and complain because the Lord went to stay in the house of a sinner, as if they were sinless. But Christ went to the house of Zacchaeus first because He visits, without discrimination, all those who want Him and desire to seek Him with faith, and secondly because He saw the heart of the chief publican inflamed with true repentance and the desire for correction. Indeed, Zacchaeus actively showed his repentance, when he publicly proclaimed that he would give half of his property to the poor and those he wronged he would give a return fourfold. For this reason, he was made worthy to hear from the mouth of Christ those most sweet words: "Today salvation has come to this house."

According to tradition, Zacchaeus, after the Ascension of Christ, followed the Apostle Peter, by whom he was ordained Bishop of Caesarea. His last days are unknown, but certainly his life was venerable, just as his life was venerable after his salvific meeting with Christ. Saint Gregory Palamas says that Zacchaeus "distributed his possessions among the poor, and he who was formerly a miser became charitable, even willingly poor, since some he gave away and others he repaid."

If someone sincerely desires to meet Christ, then they will find a way to fulfill their desire without much thought or logical processes. It is enough to have taken the courageous decision to deny one's sinful past and make a new start. When there is true repentance, then the desire for the meeting is like a raging river that drifts away everything before it. They will climb and descend and will not hesitate before any obstacle. Such a person has no problem being humbled, to give up his dignity, and does not care what others think. Zacchaeus did not think that perhaps others would make fun of him for climbing a tree like a small child, and he was not interested in it. When someone really wants to change their way of life and live the rest of their life "in peace and repentance", free from the burden of sin, they are not occupied

with what others want and what they are saying, but with what God wants and says.

Therefore, there is no other way to meet and get to know Christ other than through humility and active repentance. This meeting takes place within the heart, the spiritual heart, "which is the center of the spiritual work of man and the space in which God reveals Himself" (Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos). Purity of heart, which is the necessary condition for the knowledge of God, is achieved by humility, active repentance, the sacramental life and asceticism, namely the implementation of all the commandments of Christ.

Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus full of joy. And this is quite natural, for when the heart is humbled it softens, then the presence of God softens it even more and fills it with joy. On the other hand, pride hardens the heart with the result that it can't repent, which is why it can't endure the presence of God, causing it unbearable pain and grief and even more hardening. That is, the same thing takes place as with the sun, how with heat some objects harden and others soften, depending on the material which they are composed from. For example, when sunlight "falls" onto clay it hardens, whereas it softens and melts wax.

Zacchaeus tasted the sweetness of true liberty, since he was liberated from the passion of avarice, which is most tyrannical and does not allow a person a moment of respite. For "the love of money is the cause of all evil, with profiteering, misering, unkindness, misanthropy, abduction, injustice, greed, fraudulency, deception, lies, perjury, and all things like this" (Saint Gregory Palamas).

Material wealth has the habit of distancing people from God and stabilizes them in their wickedness. "That it (the Evangelist) testified to Zacchaeus not being just a publican, but the chief publican and wealthy, shows that he was distinguished for his wickedness" (Saint Gregory Palamas).

When one holds an important position in society or is wealthy in material goods, or even has a lust for wealth (because there are poor people who are also avaricious and try by any means to gather wealth), they need to have great spiritual courage in order to be humbled and have active repentance.

The Apostle Zacchaeus indicates the way by which communion with God is acquired, and therefore joy and freedom in its authentic form. Let us imitate him.

Schedule of Weekly Services

Saturday February 14th

4:30 pm - Great Vespers

Sunday February 22nd

Following Divine Liturgy, Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

Monday February 23rd

5:30 pm - Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

Wednesday February 25th

5:30 pm – Presanctified Liturgy

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

tithe.ly

Another way to "donate". This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Prayer Requests

Rose Gala

Heather (Helen) Auld

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

James Clark – Parishioner of St. Herman's

Carolyn – Robert & Debra's Forster's daughter

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 8 Troparion (Resurrection)

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!

Tone 4 Troparion (New Martyrs)

Today the Church of Russia forms a chorus in joy,
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.

Tone 1 Troparion (St. Gregory)

The sweet-sounding shepherd's pipe of thy theology
overpowered the trumpeting of the orators;
for eloquence was also bestowed on thee
as on one searching the depths of the Spirit.
Pray to Christ our God, O Father Gregory,//
that our souls may be saved!

Tone 8 Kontakion (Resurrection)

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!

Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Gregory)

By words of theology thou didst unravel the complex webs of the orators,
O glorious Gregory,
and didst adorn the Church with the robe of Orthodoxy woven from on
high.
Wearing it, she cries out with us, her children://
"Rejoice, O Father, supreme mind of theology!"

Tone 3 Kontakion (New Martyrs) (Today the Virgin)

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."

Tone 6 (Steadfast Protectress....)

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,
constant Advocate before the Creator:
do not despise the cry of us sinners,
but in your goodness come speedily to help us
who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us,
O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (Ps. 75:12a)

V. In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (New Martyrs)

God is our refuge and strength, / a help in afflictions that severely
befall us. (Ps. 45:2)

1 Timothy 4:9-15 (Epistle)

Brethren: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps. 94:1)

V. Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! (Ps. 94:2)

Tone 4

V. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them and delivered them out of all their troubles. (Ps. 33:17)

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."

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading Luke 19:1-10

By Blessed Theophylact
Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

Luke 19:1-10. The Lord seizes the mightiest of the devil's vessels and destroys his cities. See how the Lord not only makes publicans His disciples, but He even takes prisoner, in order to save him, the chief of publicans, Zacchaeus. Publicans derived their living from no other source than the tears of the poor. But even this chief publican is not despised by the Lord. In return only for showing eagerness to see Jesus he receives salvation. He desired to see Jesus, which is why he climbed up into the sycamore tree, but before he had caught sight of Jesus, the Lord had already seen him. In the same manner, the Lord always anticipates us if only He sees that we are willing and eager.

When the Lord sees Zacchaeus, He urges him to come down quickly, for He intends to stay at his house. And Zacchaeus was not slow to obey-for when Christ commands anything, we must not hesitate-but *he came down and received Him joyfully*, even though many people murmured. Let us see how Zacchaeus reaped the benefit of Christ's entrance into his house. He says, *The half of my goods I give to the poor*. Do you see his fervor? He began to disburse without stint, not giving just a little, but all that he had. Even what he held back, he held back so that he could give to those whom he had wronged. See what Zacchaeus does with this money: if he defrauded anyone, he restores to him fourfold, thus remedying the harm he had done to each man he defrauded. This is true almsgiving. He not only remedies the harm, but he does so with increase. This is in accordance with the law, which commanded that the thief make fourfold restitution. If we consider this well, we see that nothing at all remained of Zacchaeus' money. Half he gave to the poor, and of the half that remained to him, he gave fourfold to those whom he had wronged. From this we see that his thinking goes beyond the prescription of the law, for he had become a disciple of the Gospel, and he loved his neighbor more than himself. Christ proclaims to him the good tidings of his salvation; saying, "Today you give, today salvation is come to this house." By saying, *to this house*, the Lord indicates that Zacchaeus himself has received salvation. By *this house* He means Zacchaeus, for the Lord would not call a building without a soul *a son of Abraham*.

To silence those who were complaining that the Lord went to be the guest of a sinful man, He says, *The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*. This is the explanation of the literal words; but it is easy to understand these things in another sense as well, for moral benefit. Anyone who is *chief* among many in wickedness is little in spiritual stature, for the flesh and the spirit are opposites to one another, and for this reason he cannot see Jesus *for the crowd*. Crowded in by a multitude of passions and worldly affairs, he is not able to see Jesus acting, moving, and walking about. Such a man as this cannot recognize Christian acts for what they are, namely, Christ acting and moving in us. But such a man who never sees Jesus passing by and cannot perceive Christ in Christian acts, will sometimes change from negligence and come to his senses. Then he will climb up to the top of the sycamore-fig, passing by every pleasure and sweetness, as signified by the figs, and counting them as foolish and dead. Becoming higher than he was and making *ascents in his heart*, he is seen by Jesus and can see Jesus, and the Lord says to him, *Make haste, and come down*, which means, "Through repentance you have ascended to a higher life; come down now through humility lest pride and high mindedness make you fall. Make haste and

humble yourself. If you humble yourself, I must abide at your house, for it is necessary that I abide in the house of a humble man. *Upon whom shall I look if not upon him who is humble and meek, who trembles at My words?"*
(Is. 66:2)

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just! *(Ps. 32:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!