

# *Holy Cross Orthodox Church*

2365 South Olga Drive  
Fort Myers, Florida  
Very Rev. Leonid Palceski - (239) 540-0618  
Website & Directory Information.  
[www.HolyCrossFtMyers.Org](http://www.HolyCrossFtMyers.Org)

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**33<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF PENTECOST -Tone 8. The Meeting Of Our Lord And Savior, Jesus Christ, In The Temple.**  
Sunday of Zacchaeus.(5<sup>th</sup> c.).

Heb. 7:7-17    Luke 2:22-40

## **Announcements**

### **Liturgical Schedule:**

**Divine Liturgy Sundays: 9:30 am – Great Vespers – Saturdays: 4:00pm**

**On Sunday, Feb. 23 Father will speak on the understanding the Divine Liturgy after coffee hour.**

**Choir Rehearsal Saturday 3:30pm prior to Great Vespers.**

**Church School and Fellowship following Divine Liturgy on Sundays.**

**Votive Candles: There is a sponsor for the month of February.**

**Baby Shower for Samantha Wilcox next Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Right Prayer Versus Wrong Prayer**

"In prayer man enters into communion with God, and he lives in God. Prayer is the test of everything; prayer is also the source of everything; prayer is the driving force of everything; prayer is also the director of everything. If prayer is right, then everything is right. For right prayer will not allow anything to go wrong." [St.Theophan the Recluse]

Our spiritual fathers saw prayer as the central most important activity of the Christian life. They lived a life of prayer. They recognized prayer as the essential mode of living in communion with God. Why then is it that prayer is so neglected by Christians?

They also knew that there is a right way and a wrong way of praying. Their experience of praying revealed this distinction. And so they caution us against deluding ourselves with the wrong kind of prayer. Why then is it that when we do pray, we usually pray the wrong way? Here follows three directives to help us discern if our prayer is right:

True Prayer:

(By John Chrysostom)

"Many people go into Church, and there they recite endless prayers. But then they leave without ever really being aware of what they said. Their lips moved, but their minds perceived nothing. They went through the motions, but their understanding absorbed nothing. If you do not pay attention to your own prayers, do think that God will?

"You say: But I knelt down and prayed. Yes, but your mind went wandering off. Your body was in Church, but your mind was somewhere outside. Your lips recited prayers, but your thoughts were occupied with business and trade and other things. You were kneeling down in the form of prayer, but your devotion was actually given over to something else.

"Sometimes while we are speaking with another person, we are so absorbed in the conversation that we are not aware of anything else around us. Our mind is so attentive that we are only aware of the one person with whom we are speaking. Should we not be like this during our prayer in the Presence of God? Should we not be so intent upon our prayer that our thoughts do not wander here and there? If the tongue speaks the prayer while the mind wanders off, thinking about what is going on at home or in the market place, then we are not really praying.

"If your body is bowed down and your mouth babbles idly on, while your mind wanders here and there throughout the town, how can you say that you have prayed before the face of God? He truly prays who inertly withdraws from all that is earthbound and lays aside every worldly thought and reflection, and raises his mind and soul on high to heaven.

"Prayer must be made with a fervent soul and an attentive mind. There is not so much a need of the voice but a use of the mind; not so much a stretching forth of the hands but a striving of the soul; not so much an outward condition but an inward reality. For the true prayer that alone is acceptable to God depends upon the fervent elevation of the soul and the attentive recollection of the mind."

### **COMPLETE PRAYER:**

[by St. Basil the Great]

"Prayer must have a primary place in our life; it must take precedence over all other things. When you pray, enter into the Presence of God alone and leave yourself behind; leave your wife also, and your children, and everyone else. Let go of the earth and rise up to heaven. Let go of every creature, both visible and invisible, and do not let your mind wander about here and there. Stand in awe and trembling before God alone, having your whole mind focused on Him only and on nothing else whatsoever.

"Prayer is not made complete by uttering syllables, brethren, but by the purposeful intent of the soul and by the righteous actions of our daily life. Nor are we to think that God needs the reminder of our spoken words. Rather He knows our need whether we ask or not. He can see by the movements of our soul what it is we yearn for. It was through the yearnings of the spirit within him that Moses prayed, even though he uttered no words, and he was heard by the Lord. Thus the words of prayer that are simply spoken are of no avail unless they come from a fervent, loving soul and a virtuous life.

"The truly sublime prayer is that prayer which brings to the soul a clear realization of God. For through such prayer comes the indwelling of God; which consists of having God abiding within you through the mind recollected within. By such prayer the mind is alone with itself and with God, and we become the temple of God, so long as the mind turns completely to God and its recollection is not broken by earthly thoughts. "Be mindful then of God always, O man, keeping the Presence of God always within your heart and mind, and uniting yourself to all men in the communion of prayer. For great indeed is the power of prayer to commune with God. And as we journey in this life, prayer will always be a powerful force and an enduring help on the way to eternity with God. Therefore, place your trust in the goodness of God, knowing full well that as we move in prayer to Him, He will say to us: 'Here I am'."