



**Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**  
**714 Westmoreland Avenue**  
**PO Box 3**  
**Slickville, PA 15684-0003**

[www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org)

Very Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yurij, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yurij's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert

Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Marianne Mulroy, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Patrick

Felice [Melanie's husband], Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Cindy M., Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Andy Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Bill Boretsky, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR FEBRUARY BABIES: David Shirley on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Kevin Tkacik on the 6<sup>th</sup>, and Kyle James Weiser on the 12<sup>th</sup>! May God grant them all Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'nohaya Lita! God Bless them all!**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

**REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!**

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

**AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.**

### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 02 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM  
33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS; VENERABLE  
EUTYMIUS THE GREAT; MARTYRS INNA, PINNA, & RIMMA; MARTYRS BASSUS,  
EUSEBIUS, EUTYCHIUS, & BASILIDES AT NICOMEDIA; VENERABLE LAURENCE  
THE RECLUSE & EUTHYMIUS THE SILENT OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*Tone 8*

1 Timothy 4:9-15

Luke 19:1-10

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Milton G. Chicka, Daniel Pysh, Sara Chicka, Nickolai Pivtoraiko, Mary Lokie, Evelyn Burlack, Anne Cherepko Mazock, Roy Wyke, & Katherine Debick--Fr. Bob***

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 08 TO TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18—FAST FREE PERIOD!!!**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 09 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM  
SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN & PHARISEE; TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF  
SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM; VENERABLE PETER OF EGYPT; VENERABLE TITUS  
THE SOLDIER-MONK OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*Tone 1*

James 3:1-10; Hebrews 7:26-8:2

Mark 11:11-23; John 10:9-16

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM  
SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON; HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS SIMEON THE GOD-  
RECEIVER AND ANNA THE PROPHETESS; PROPHET AZARIAS; MARTYRS PAPIAS,  
DIODORUS, & CAUDIANUS; MARTYRS ADRIAN & EUBULUS; MARTYR BLAISE**

*Tone 2*

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Luke 15:11-32

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 02 FEBRUARY 2020**

**33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS;  
VENERABLE EUTYMIUS THE GREAT; MARTYRS INNA, PINNA, &  
RIMMA; MARTYRS BASSUS, EUSEBIUS, EUTYCHIUS, & BASILIDES AT  
NICOMEDIA; VENERABLE LAURENCE THE RECLUSE & EUTHYMIUS  
THE SILENT OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

### **TROPARION—TONE 8**

Thou didst descent from on high, O Merciful One!  
Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings!  
Our Lord, our Life and Resurrection, Glory to Thee!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,  
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **KONTAKION—TONE 8**

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!

### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 8**

**READER:** Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

**PEOPLE:** **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

**READER:** In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!

**PEOPLE:** **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

**READER:** Pray and make your vows.

**PEOPLE:** **Before the Lord our God!**

### **ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 8**

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms.

**"We must open the doors to all the poor and all those who are victims of disasters, whatever the causes may be, since we have been told to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep (Rom 12:12). And since we are human beings, we must pay our debt of goodness to our fellow human beings, whatever the cause of their plight: orphanhood, exile, cruelty of the master, rashness of those who govern, inhumanity of tax-collectors, brutality of blood-thirsty bandits, greediness of thieves, confiscation or shipwreck" St. Gregory the Theologian**

### **Candles**

Lighting candles is an expression of prayer for God's believers. Candles lit in God's Holy Church in faith reflect the deep belief of the believers. Candles are lit with the deepest of reverence and conviction.

God is ever-present. The lighting of candles is a way for believers to draw near in faith. The depths of the soul find expression as the believer comes to God to light a candle.

God's Holy Church is where believers find safety, comfort and hope in the living God. The Church is where believers feel the presence of God. A lit candle represents the Light of Christ.

Candles burning in the darkness of the Church center the mind on Christ. In times of stress or illness, the burning of candles gives comfort to the believer. Believers benefit when churches are open daily for the burning of candles.

Faith is strengthened and clearly expressed when believers know they have candles burning in the parish church or in a monastery. Candles burning in the church are to be treated with great care.

Festal celebrations are occasions for the burning of candles. Great feasts or the family Slava are occasions to burn candles in the family home. Having a candle burning before the icon of the family patronal saint or in the icon corner demonstrates faith.

A single candle burning in a dark church makes a difference. Candles reflecting on and illumining the holy icons affects the attentive believer. The Light of Christ shared at Paschal Matins spreading to all signifies the greatest joy.

Believers feel a connecting bond when lighting a candle for a departed loved one. Lighting a candle helps to relieve feelings of despair and gives rise to hope. God is attentive to believers drawing near in faith.

The makers of candles for God's Holy Church provide an important service. Conscientious servants in the parish church assigned to care for and make available candles contribute to the strength and health of the parish.

Candles as expressions of joy are appropriately lit for thanksgiving to God.

God's goodness is immeasurable and always existing. God through lighting a candle is always timely.

Thank God for parish churches and monasteries being available at all times for believers to approach in prayer to light or to request for the lighting of a candle. Thank God for the abundant existence of candles.

I lovingly remember one former prisoner of war who deeply and firmly cherished the opportunity to burn and care for candles in God's Holy Church. He took his responsibilities seriously and made a lasting difference in the lives of others.

Let us take seriously the opportunity to burn candles in the Church. May each day be a day to thank God for the blessings we receive. May the Light of Christ burn brightly in our heart mind, and soul.

*Martyr Polyeuctus. January 9/22, 2020, Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*

## **OUR DESIRE FOR GOD – OUR RISKS FOR GOD**

Fr Luke A. Veronis

"I don't have time to go to church." "I can't find the time to pray, or to read the Bible every day." "I don't have time to visit the nursing homes, to help some family in need, or to visit someone in the hospital. I just don't have time!"

How often do we say, or at least think, such things? And yet, how rare it is for us to say, "I don't have time to watch TV. I don't have time to read my emails or look at Facebook. I don't have time to meet a friend or go to the mall."

Do we, or do we not have time? Why does looking on the internet come naturally each morning, while reading the Bible seem like an unbearable chore? Why does going to the casino, or the mall, or the coffee shop seem so normal, while going to Church, or doing a good deed in a nursing home, or visiting someone in need take such an effort?

When we evaluate these scenarios, we begin to realize that the issue isn't whether we have time or not, but the real issue is whether we have a desire or not. If we really want something, we find the time for it, we arrange our schedule to fit our desire! A student who wants good grades finds time to study. If someone wants a promotion and move up the ladder in their work, they put in extra time and effort at the office. If our passion is a hobby, or a sports team, or some other form of entertainment, we find the time and place to fulfill our desires. You see, we each have the same 24 hours in every day, and we typically find time for those things that we most desire.

Well, today's Gospel reading draws our attention to evaluating our sincere desires and passions of life. In the story of Zacchaeus, we hear about a man who had such a strong desire to see Christ, that nothing could hinder him from fulfilling his aspiration. In order to properly understand the context of the Gospel reading, though, we need to fully picture what type of person Zacchaeus was. He was a chief tax-collector the Bible says, which meant not only that he was a chief-thief who collected taxes for the Romans, but also implied that he pocketed a good portion of his collections for himself. Thus, he was very rich. Just as bad, though, was the fact that every tax-collector worked for the Romans, who subjugated the Jews in their own land. Jews considered any tax-collector a traitor to his own people. The Jews despised tax-collectors to such a degree that they placed them in the same category as robbers and murderers, and all three were forbidden to enter into the Jewish house of worship, the synagogue.

Despite his wealth and position, Zacchaeus seems to not only have heard about this famous prophet Jesus, but he sincerely longed to see Him. Zacchaeus must have heard many stories about Jesus—maybe even how Jesus offered the worst of sinners an opportunity for a new life of salvation. So, Zacchaeus musters up his courage and ventures out into the midst of a crowd that surely despised him. Yet as he goes out, he quickly realizes that his small stature doesn't allow him to see Jesus, and the large crowd won't ever allow him to get close to Christ.

Zacchaeus faces a dilemma, and isn't sure how to proceed. One virtue, though, that we clearly see in Zacchaeus is his strong DESIRE to meet Christ. He won't allow his small stature, or the imposing crowd, or anything else hinder his desire to see and meet Jesus. So, he comes up

with a plan to run ahead of the crowd, and climb into a sycamore tree and wait for Jesus to walk by his way.

Now, before we continue the story, we should note one very important point. Not only does Zacchaeus display his strong **DESIRE** to meet Jesus, but he also shows how he is willing to take a **RISK** to fulfill his desire. By leaving the safety of his house and going out among a large crowd of people that despised him, he risked his very life. Imagine being in the middle of a crowd of people who hated you. Anyone might attack you, abuse you, or hurt you. And no one would respond to your pleas for help because others would probably take delight in your misfortune. Thus, Zacchaeus exemplifies both the desire and the willingness to risk one's life in order to meet Jesus.

As Zacchaeus runs ahead of the crowd, he decides to climb up into a tree. Now, imagine for a moment a grown man, a prosperous man of clout, climbing into a tree in front of a crowd. The people probably laughed, and even ridiculed this behavior of a grown man. This reveals a third important characteristic of Zacchaeus in the Gospel, which is his **HUMILITY**. Zacchaeus' strong desire to meet Christ gives him the humility to ignore the opinion of others and focus on only one thing—encountering Jesus.

And his **DESIRE**, **RISK**, and **HUMILITY** all point to one other virtue hiding in the heart of Zacchaeus—**HOPE**. Although Zacchaeus was a terrible sinner, a thief, and a traitor, he still held on to some hope that this man Jesus would view him in a different manner than the rest. Maybe from all that he had heard about Christ, he believed that Jesus would treat him as a person, instead of as a despised enemy.

These four characteristics of Zacchaeus are important traits for each one of us to cultivate within our own spiritual journey toward Christ. Do we have a passion and strong desire to truly meet Jesus in our own lives? The devil fills up our lives with countless worldly, superficial distractions which pull us away from God. If we allow our life to be controlled by what is urgent or pleasurable, we will never get around to what is truly essential.

And to follow a strong desire for Christ implies taking risks, doing whatever is necessary to cultivate an intimate relationship with Him? Far too many people prefer a comfortable, secure life, far from risks, and thus, far from an intimate relationship with God. Jesus asks us to give up everything, including all our false securities, and face God naked, with only our true, sinful self. Yet too many of us are afraid to do this!

Of course, we can never meet Jesus if we do not have humility. When our pride and ego control our actions, we will always be more concerned with the opinions of others, than of God. Our pride deceives us into thinking that we deserve to meet God, while our humility teaches us that



we deserve nothing. Everything is a gift from God, and thus meeting Him is the greatest privilege.

The Gospel story concludes as Zacchaeus sits in the tree and Jesus passes by, looking up. Our Lord surely realizes the strong desire, the willingness to risk, and the humility of sitting in a tree, and thus sees something which most others don't see. Christ does not see a sinful thief and traitor, but instead sees a hurting person looking for healing. He sees a lost child longing to be found! And here lies the crux of the story—Jesus never sees us only as we appear—hurting, sinful, unworthy—but he sees the greatness that lies within each person. He remembers that every person on earth is created in the image and likeness of God, and even people like Zacchaeus have the potential to become saints.

So Jesus looks up at Zacchaeus and says with great joy, "Zacchaeus, come down from that tree, for I will come to your house today."

We see once again a common pattern throughout history. God always takes the initiative to fallen humanity. Our Lord desires all people to be saved, and reaches out to us, offering an opportunity for us to respond. We have this beautiful image when Christ says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me." Christ is knocking on the door of every heart, giving us the opportunity to open the door and welcome Him in!

In response to Christ's openness and love, Zacchaeus follows through with his desire and passion by not only accepting Jesus into his home with joy, but by radically changing his life and becoming a new person! Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus leads him to say, "Lord, I will give half my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay them back fourfold." Zacchaeus' transformation is not in word alone, but in radical action! As my former professor, Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos, used to say, "It costs nothing to become a Christian, but once you become one, then it costs you everything!" Zacchaeus was willing to give up everything, in order to possess Christ!

So today, let us reflect on the Gospel by meditating on the lessons that Zacchaeus teaches us. First of all, do we possess a sincere DESIRE to meet Jesus and to allow nothing to hinder this meeting? Of course, such a desire implies taking certain RISKS that will rattle our comfortable and secure lives. Will we take these risks? And underlying this desire and risk for Christ must be the HUMILITY to approach Him in our stark nakedness and sinfulness. IF we approach our Lord in this manner, then we may always maintain a sure HOPE that Jesus will lovingly enter our domain and embrace us. This is the type of encounter that transforms lives.

We can make a lot of excuses when we don't want to do something. Yet, if we truly desire an encounter with Christ, union with God, then we are

willing to take a risk, approach in humility and believe in hope. When we joyfully accept Jesus Christ into the home of our hearts, then we will have the courage, like Zacchaeus, to give all we have to God. Then we will hear Him say to us also, "Today salvation has come into this house."

In Christ Service,

Fr. George L. Livanos, Proistamenos

### **Sunday after Theophany Matthew 4:12-17**

*Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.<sup>7</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (KJV)*

Today we celebrate the Sunday after Theophany in God's Holy Church. This Gospel reading is prescribed each year. The Church wants believers to learn from this reading.

Each reading of the Gospel is new. Each reading occurs in a different moment of time. The person's life experience changes with each proclamation of the Holy Gospel.

Each person changes at every moment of life. The time of earthly life comes only once. Life is a blessing to be cherished and used wisely, God is due continuous appreciation for giving life and the time of life.

The current Gospel mentions the Holy Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's words are to be taken to heart and thoroughly considered. Not only Isaiah but also the other Holy Prophets are to be carefully viewed.

We learn from Abraham the value of the Holy Prophets on the Sunday of Lazarus and the Rich Man. The Gospel for the Sunday of Lazarus and the Rich Man deals with the topic of repentance.

Abraham tells the suffering rich man the value of heeding Moses and the prophets. Abraham made it clear: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."  
(Lk.16:29-31)

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of repentance in the current Gospel. Repentance is necessary throughout the Christian life. Believers always think, say, and do things that are abhorrent to God. At times sinful actions are unintentional. Too often they are intentional.

Repentance is of value when the believer is sincerely sorry for the sins and desires forgiveness and reunification with Christ. We do not know when our last moment of life will occur.

We do not know the moment Christ will return and judge the living and the dead. Every moment is a blessed opportunity to repent and be united with Christ.

Every moment is a gift from God to repent and seek forgiveness.

While a believer has faculty of mind and life in the body, the wise action is to repent of sins. The wise action is to always heed the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to repent.

Jesus Christ speaks of repentance in this Gospel lesson. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, John the Baptist speaks of repentance. Both John and Jesus say to repent for the Kingdom is at hand. (Mt.3:1-2; Mt.4:17)

Isaiah the Prophet is mentioned not only in the current Gospel reading but also earlier in the Gospel of St. Matthew. The Prophet Isaiah is mentioned when St. John was speaking of repentance.

The Christian life has the expectation of life-long learning. Attentiveness to the Holy Prophets is beneficial for the Christian life as is attentiveness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We come to know Christ and understand Christ to a greater degree when we look carefully to the Holy Prophets. Christians are expected to actively learn during the time of life.

A way of showing appreciation to the Lord is to continue to learn more. When we learn more about God, we better understand God's expectations for us. When repenting, we seek God's help to live in ways more pleasing to Him.

God's Holy Church is where to learn. The Church provides the healthy environment and the opportunity for continuous learning. Seekers of the Lord never exhaust the opportunities to learn in the Church.

Repentance is a continuous process throughout life. Believers as they grow in Christ realize the many sins committed each day. The need for God's mercy and forgiveness becomes more apparent.

Love of God increases as a believer appreciates God's forgiveness and love for the believer. Appreciation for God's love is best manifested by the believer in love of God and love of neighbor.

Love is the unifier in the Christian life. Love identifies the Christian. St. John's Epistle states: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (1 Jn 4:7)

We are blessed today in God's Holy Church to hear and learn from the Holy Gospel. We are blessed to learn from the Holy Prophet Isaiah, John the Forerunner and Baptist and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us make the best use of the learning opportunities in God's Holy Church. May each moment of life be treated as a precious gift from the Lord. Let us repent and be joyful in giving glory and thanksgiving to God.

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The Sunday after Theophany. Holy Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus. Apodosis of Theophany. January 13/26, 2020. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

**"Not to every one, my friends, does it belong to philosophize about God; not to every one; the Subject is not so cheap and low; and I will add, not before every audience, nor at all times, nor on all points; but on certain occasions, and before certain persons, and within certain limits." -St. Gregory Nazianzen Oration 27.3**

