

The power of selfless love that is in every person's reach.

Our Byzantine Church calendar was established centuries ago, in order to guide and support us, as Christians, in knowing Christ and living our lives according to His example. Our Ukrainian folk culture also has evolved in tandem with our liturgical cycles, together reflecting a universal experience of being human—in the natural world, and in society.

In the Christmas cycle, we've encountered the mystery of birth, the wonder of God's incarnation, and the meaning that Divine embodiment can have on my own understanding of my humanity—what it means to be human. As this season wanes, we look towards the next wondrous phase of the Liturgical Year.

We have meditated on the divine nature of our humanness, and now, together we contemplate how to live our humanity as Christians. The next 5 Sundays prepare us for the time of Great Lent with Gospel narratives that focus on our relationships with each other—how we act in the world. The parables can give us the courage to be as radical in our relationships as Christ was. This Sunday of Zacchaeus begins our foray of introspection into the mystery of our mortality—through Great Lent—through Pascha, when together we ponder the miracle of immortal life.

Although the same story of Zacchaeus is repeated each year, each year we can recognize fresh meaning.

Zacchaeus was the despised tax collector: rich, unscrupulous, and (as if that weren't enough) short. No one was going to give Zacchaeus a front seat, so he climbed a tree to glimpse this Jesus who was the talk of the town. Zacchaeus really wants to see Jesus but, as the story goes, Jesus sees him. He calls Zacchaeus by name and invites himself over to Zacchaeus's house for supper. Zacchaeus puts himself into the presence of Jesus, but in fact, Jesus already knows him by name. He, you, me, are called; what is my response?

Zacchaeus is delighted. His encounter with Jesus transforms him from one who accumulates personal wealth by taking from others to one who profits from giving to others. Zacchaeus demonstrates ecological conversion: seeing others through the eyes of Christ, he recognizes his own role in nurturing social justice. Zacchaeus doesn't just blame the system for economic disparity; he eagerly determines to share his wealth with those in need.

Zacchaeus lets himself be swept into the overflowing love of the Trinity.

This tale has more to show: the crowd that made no place for Zacchaeus were self-righteous and jealous. They might have rejoiced at Zacchaeus's good fortune and conversion. But no—they resented the attention Jesus gave to a sinner. They thought themselves more deserving. Where do I stand? Do I think of myself only or do I care for the common good? Currently crowds of people have amassed in Ottawa, demanding their own satisfaction in the name of rights and freedom, while they disrupt the lives of city residents and reject measures taken for the good of all who live in Canada.

The story of Zacchaeus demonstrates the power of selfless love that is in every person's reach. As we begin on the path towards Great Lent, may we find joy in actions for the good of our communities, rather than in angry crowds who yell the loudest. May we have the courage of Zacchaeus to hear Christ calling us by name.

Announcements:

- The Ukrainian Canadian Congress is organizing a "Stand with Ukraine" Sunday, Feb. 6 @ 2pm at the Russian Consulate, 60 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto;
- **SOLEMN HOLY COMMUNION and FIRST CONFESSION:** If your child or grandchild was born in 2014 or earlier this is the year for them to approach the sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation and Solemn Holy Communion. We will begin preparations soon, so please let Fr. Myroslaw know if you would like your child included in the class;
- During Great Lent we traditionally pray for all our deceased parishioners and loved ones during the Sorokousty service. The commemorative booklets with the names of your family and friends whom you wish to be commemorated are available by the icon at the back of the Church so that you may add any names necessary. Please take the booklet home and add the name(s) and return it to the basket on the table;
- Break for Jesus 2022 Day Camp (in Toronto), March 14-18, 2022; 9 am to 4 pm; Grades 3-8. For more information see the poster attached to the bulletin email.

PRAY FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE!

Today: panakhyda after Divine Liturgy (+Mykola Kryvenko)

Monday, Feb. 7 @ 6:00 p.m. Moleben for peace in Ukraine

Wednesday, Feb. 9 @ 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

11:30 p.m. Bible Study (ZOOM)

Saturday, Feb. 12—Three Holy Hierarchs: 11 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Birthday greetings to:

Melania Korostenski (6th), Margareta Kocan, Andrij Karpets, Olivia Ivanechko and Halyna Yaniv (11th).

MNOHAYA LITA!

Donations: Jan. 30: \$ 655.

Thank you for your continued support!

“Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.”

