

**Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the
British Isles and Ireland
Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East**

Charity number: 1192469

Sunday 1 February 2026. Issue 14.

Tone 1.

**Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican; Forefeast of the
Presentation (Meeting) of Christ**

**Epistle Reading
Timothy (3:10-15)**

Prokeimenon in Tone I

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have put our hope in Thee.

Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise becometh the just.

My child Timothy, you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings, what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Indeed all who would live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But people who are wicked and deceivers will proceed from worse to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and how from infancy you have known the sacred temple writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Alleluia.

Verse 1: It is God who avengeth me, and who subdueth the peoples under me.

Verse 2: He magnifieth the salvations of the King and shows mercy unto his anointed, unto David and his seed for evermore.

Gospel Reading

Luke (18:10-14)

Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a Publican. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed like this: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, dishonest, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I earn.’ But the tax collector, standing far aside, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven. Instead, he beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man, rather than the other, went down to his house justified. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

Troparion of the Resurrection. Tone 1.

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body; Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

Forefeast of the Presentation of Christ

Troparion

The celestial choir of heavenly angels bends down to the earth and see the First-born of all creation being carried into the Temple as a babe by a Mother who has not known man, and in amazement sings with us a prefestal hymn.

St Martin the Merciful

Troparion

In signs and in miracles thou wast renowned throughout the land of Gaul. By grace thou art a light for the world, O Martin, Bishop blessed of God. Deeds of mercy and compassion filled thy life with their splendours, teaching and wise counsel were thy riches and treasures, which still thou dost dispense freely to those who honour thee.

St Helen Troparion

We behold thee, glorious Helen, with thy God-inspired son, in the joys of the kingdom of Heaven, and we magnify Christ, for he hath revealed to us thine honoured festival, giving light more brilliant than the sun. Therefore we cry in faith: O People, exalt Christ above all forever!

Forefeast of the Presentation of Christ Kontakion

On this day doth Symeon receive with gladness God, the Giver of the Law; and he doth cry to him in fear. Let me depart now, O Master Christ, for I have seen thee, the Glory of Israel.

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee begins the Lenten Triodion, the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent. It is the Sunday after the Sunday of Zacchaeus and Sunday before Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This is the pre-Lenten start of the Easter cycle of worship in the Orthodox Church.

The focus this Sunday is on the Gospel of Luke 18:10-14, in which two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, an externally decent and righteous man of religion, and the other was a publican, a sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people.

Though the Pharisee was genuinely righteous under the Law, he boasted before God and was condemned. The publican, although he was truly sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God.

On this Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent, Orthodox Christians are to see that they have not the religious piety of the Pharisee, but the repentance of the publican. They are called to think about themselves, in the light of Christ's teaching, as they really are and to beg for mercy. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:14)

The Lenten Triodion

The Lenten Triodion is the service book of the Orthodox Church that provides the texts for the divine services for the pre-Lenten weeks of preparation, Great Lent, and Holy Week. It is called the triodion because the canons appointed for Matins during this period are composed of three odes each.

The weeks of preparation, and especially the Sunday gospel readings, serve to exercise the mind, whereas the fasting of Great Lent focuses on the body, and Holy Week's services exercise the spirit.

The three weeks that commence on the fourth Sunday prior to Great Lent constitute the weeks of preparation. Each has its own distinct theme which is expressed in the Gospels readings appointed for the Divine Liturgies on these days: (i) Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14), (ii) Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), (iii) Sunday of the Last Judgment (also called Meatfare Sunday; Matt 25:31-46), and (iv) Sunday of Forgiveness (also called Cheesefare Sunday; the expulsion of Adam from Eden is also a theme of this day; Matt 6:14-21).

The Church eases us into the Lenten fasting discipline during this period. The week following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee is fast-free. The week following the Prodigal Son is a normal week – we fast as usual on Wednesday and Friday. In the week following Meatfare Sunday, no meat is eaten; eggs, fish, and dairy are permitted on any day.

Forgiveness Sunday brings the period of preparation to an end. The next day, Clean Monday, begins Great Lent. The Vespers service served on the evening of Forgiveness Sunday includes the Rite of Mutual Forgiveness and is the first service of Great Lent.

Great Lent

Great Lent begins on the Monday following Forgiveness Sunday (also called Cheesefare Sunday) with each Sunday highlighted as follows: (i) Sunday of Orthodoxy, (ii) Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, (iii) Sunday of the Holy Cross, (iv) Sunday of St. John Climacus, and (v) Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt.

Holy Week

Great Lent is followed by Holy Week, the week beginning with Palm Sunday and preceding Pascha.

Source: Orthodox Wiki

Liturgy this week

Monday 2 February, 8:15am

Presentation (Meeting) of Christ in the Temple.

Hours and Holy Liturgy.

St Helen's Chapel.