

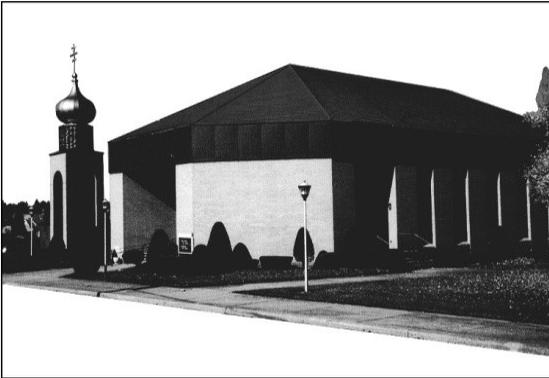
**SLAVA ISUSU CHRISTU!  
SLAVA VO V'IKI!**



**GLORY TO JESUS CHIRST!  
GLORY FOREVER!**

**January 17, 2016  
Sunday of the Publican and the**

**Pharisee**



## **st john the Baptist BYZANTINE catholic church**

**5 East 20th Street, Hazleton, Pennsylvania  
office/rectory: 570-454-1142  
hall/kitchen: 570-454-9075 (Bingo & food orders)**

**Fr Jerome Wolbert, ofm, Pastor  
jeromeofm@yahoo.com 570-401-8684 (cell)**

**Deacon Lawrence Foran  
sjohnbyz@ptd.net 570-956-1140 (cell)**

[www.facebook.com/stjohnbyz.hazleton](http://www.facebook.com/stjohnbyz.hazleton)

[plus.google.com/+StJohnsByzantineCatholicChurchHazleton](https://plus.google.com/+StJohnsByzantineCatholicChurchHazleton)

### **Sacramental Mysteries:**

**Confession (Repentance & Reconciliation) Saturday 3:30-4pm and by appointment.**

**Baptism, Chrismation, Becoming Byzantine Catholic: Please meet with Fr Jerome or Deacon Larry.**

**Holy Matrimony (Weddings): Planning must begin at least six months in advance.**

**No date can be set until all paperwork is in order. Pre-Cana classes held every Spring.**

**Please contact Fr Jerome or Deacon Larry to set up an initial meeting.**

**Holy Anointing for Healing: on request in church after Liturgy or call Fr Jerome.**

**Eucharist: for those unable to attend church, contact Deacon Larry for temporary or on-going visits.**

*Please remember in your prayers* those confined to home, nursing facility or hospital. *Please pray especially for Brother Gus, OFM, Barbara C., John S., Margaret, Tom, Deacon Richard, Hiromi, Tammy, Darren, Theresa, Bill, Bernice, Augustina, Fr. Greg, and Fr. Jody.* If you would like to add a name to the prayer list, please give a written note or email to Fr. Jerome or Deacon Larry. Communion calls are made on the week of the first Friday of each month. Please call the rectory if you or a family member wishes to be visited, either permanently or temporarily. Don't wait until there is a crisis to call. The sacraments should be brought to the sick on a regular basis.

***From the Pastor ...Gospel Reflection***



*“O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”*

The tax collector is the great spiritual example in today's Gospel. We might already be praying his prayer in one form or another. Indeed, the Jesus Prayer –

*“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”*

– has inspired reform and conversion in many lives and in the church. Pray this prayer a few times now, before you continue reading.

Now consider the fact that this prayer is from the heart of *a man who did an ordinary job*, nothing holy or church related. Indeed tax collectors were not even “professional” in the sense of kind and law-abiding people that we expect in any office job today. They were paid better if they could get more from people over and above their quota to hand in. *What can I squeeze out of the people today?*

But this tax collector was different – at least from this moment on – as he heard God speak in his heart. There is a better way to collect taxes. Perhaps he was startled to this conversion by the preaching of St John the Baptist:

Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He answered them, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.” (Luke 3:12-13)

Even an ordinary person in an ordinary job becomes extraordinary when that person lives simply by the rule of merciful and loving justice, like St John the Baptist urged the tax collectors. Then there is a change of heart. This is what St John meant when he said “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:2; see also Luke 3:3 and 8).

The word “repent” means to have a change of mind and heart, to turn toward God. We cling to what we know, but God wants us in faith to let go and find new ways to show loving mercy. Perhaps we start in the church by befriending someone we have never spoken to. Perhaps we follow the exhortation of St John and stop grasping at what isn't justly ours when we are at work. We stop, listen to God's word, and allow the Lord to change our heart.

Before Christ's preaching and ministry, throngs came to St John to be baptized in water, to repent, to allow God to change their hearts and minds in a way that bore good fruit in their lives. Certainly we who pray with the tax collector and partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord can find some way to turn yet more toward God, to listen with greater peace, and to

repent, trusting that in spite of all the “ordinary” still-the-same in this world, the kingdom of heaven truly is near, waiting for us to pull the curtain back and harvest its good fruit.

***Read it again: Luke 18:10-14 and Luke 3:1-20***

### ***From our Pope ...***

Pope Francis' advice for making a good confession is that the penitent “ought to reflect on the truth of his life, of what he feels and what he thinks before God. He ought to be able to look earnestly at himself and his sin. He ought to feel like a sinner, so that he can be amazed by God. In order to be filled with his gift of infinite mercy, we need to recognize our need, our emptiness, our wretchedness. We cannot be arrogant.”

Quoted in a Catholic News Agency article online at <http://tinyurl.com/zkzfgew>

In conjunction with the **100th Anniversary celebration of Holy Rosary Parish**, we are chancing off a ticket for a



**Trip to Italy or \$3,000.00 cash.** The trip is a 9-day pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, Florence & Venice with Fr. Brian Clarke and members of Holy Rosary Parish. The date is May 8<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and includes transportation, lodging & meals. The donation is \$100.00 per ticket and only 100 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

For more information or to purchase a ticket, please contact Holy Rosary Office at [570-454-6693](tel:570-454-6693), Monday – Friday, 9 am to 4 pm.

***Pirohi Making Sessions*** are held on Monday mornings beginning at 9:00 AM. New volunteers are always welcome to assist in this valuable parish fund raiser. Please consider being a volunteer. Thank You.

***St. John Bingo*** is held every Tuesday night in the church hall. Doors open at 4:30 PM and bingo begins at 6:00 PM. Please patronize our parish bingo and bring a friend!

***Please pick up your 2016 envelopes*** in the church vestibule. We ask that you now use these 2016 envelopes. Please do not submit any 2015 envelopes. Envelope numbers have been changed for 2016 so in order to be assured proper credit for your donations, only use the 2016 envelopes.

***Area GCU Lodge*** will hold its first quarter meeting in our church hall on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 PM. All members are asked to attend. Activities for the year will be discussed and delegates will be elected for the upcoming GCU Convention in June.

### ***Parish Calendar***

***Prayer for Christian Unity Sunday January 24 at 3pm in our church***

An opportunity to gather with other Christians to pray for what Jesus prayed for: that we would all be one, as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). The theme of this year's prayer is "Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord" (see 1 Peter 2:9). The event is sponsored by the Greater Hazleton Ministerium. This is a wonderful opportunity to show good will to our brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches and ecclesial communities. There will be a social following in the hall. Please tell Fr. Jerome or Deacon Larry if you can help serve or bring refreshments.

***Prophora Baking for Divine Liturgy Saturday January 30*** after the All-Souls Liturgy (around 10:30am).

***GCU Greater Hazleton Lodge meets Sunday January 31 at 1pm in the Parish Hall***

***Parish Council meeting at 2pm Sunday January 31 in the Rectory Conference Room***  
Fr Jerome will distribute an agenda by January 17.

***Forgiveness Vespers Sunday February 7 at 3pm***

Prepare for the Great Fast by praying to God for the grace to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. Reconcile with others. **Join us for a pot-luck in the parish hall after vespers.**

***Moleben to Mary at 7pm on Thursday February 11, at St Mary's Byzantine Church,***  
Hazleton, in celebration of the jubilee year of mercy. The side door to St Mary's Church has been marked as a special door of mercy for our region.

***Prayer Without Words***

I had been going through some stinkin', rotten, horrible, no-good days and was at the absolute end of knowing what to pray. I'd slipped into a habit of praying ... where I'd list every problem and ask God to please fix them. I even made suggestions for solutions in case my input could be useful. But nothing changed. Except my waistline and the amount of chocolate life suddenly required. – Lysa TerKeurst, *Made to Crave Devotional*

*But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance. In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will. (Romans 8:25-27)*

***Blessed is the Kingdom ...Anointing for Healing***

Among the moral exhortations St James gives us in his universal letter is the encouragement to ask for the presbyters of the church – that is, the priests – to anoint the one who is ill. St James does not tell us to wait for the one who is ill to be at death's door – just the opposite, for the anointing will bring healing.



Even when our faith is weak, we can turn to God and ask for the grace to trust better. And we can exercise that trust by asking the church to pray for us. When we are struggling with illness, what better way than to ask for holy anointing that both our body and our spirit will be healed.

A friend of mine was distressed when her cancer returned. It had gone into remission when she became Catholic, and she took this as a sign of the truth of the Catholic faith. She had a nurse coming to her home until she finally succumbed to Sister Death. But there was healing of her relationships with her ex-husband and troubled adult son who both helped care for her. And after the anointing, she also found some peace with God in the face of death. To her friends, these signs were as strong as any miraculous healing that our merciful God is at work even in the face of death.

Perhaps you know someone who has been healed through anointing, in body or in spirit. We understand that this healing is not magic (to think God must do this because we've made the right incantation). In the sacramental mysteries of the church, God asks us to use physical things prayerfully in a certain way, through the ministry of the church, as a way for God to reach us, helping us to open our hearts and all of our being to the mystery of God able to work in us.

**Next time ...** *Confession: a sacramental mystery of healing*



***House Blessings 2016:*** Forms are in the vestibule to sign up to have your house blessed. Fr Jerome and Deacon Larry have a special gift for each family that requests a house blessing. Sign up today! ***Census and House Blessing forms may be returned in the collection.***

***Aluminum Cans*** – We are still collecting aluminum cans to help in raising funds for the parish. You can bring the cans in whenever the church is open for Divine Liturgy, or call the

rectory to make other arrangements for dropping off cans. Please remember: *aluminum cans only* and please be sure all liquids have been removed.

*Please remember to return your parish census forms as soon as possible. You may return the forms by placing them in the collection basket. Thank You!*