



### The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

The Pharisees were an ancient and outstanding sect among the Jews known for their diligent observance of the outward matters of the Law. Although, according to the word of our Lord, they did their works to be seen of men" (Matt.23:5), and were hypocrites (*ibid.* 23:13, 14, 15, etc.), because of the apparent holiness of their lives they were thought by all to be righteous, and separate from others, which is what the name Pharisee means. On the other hand, Publicans, collectors of the royal taxes, committed many injustices and extortions for filthy lucre's sake, and all held them to be sinners and unjust. It was therefore according to common opinion that the Lord Jesus signified a virtuous person by a Pharisee, and a sinner by a publican, to teach His disciples the harm of pride and the profit of humblemindness.

Since the chief weapon for virtue is humility, and the greatest hindrance to it is pride, the divine Fathers have set these three weeks before the Forty-day Fast as a preparation for the spiritual struggles of virtue. This present week they have called the *Harbinger*, since it declares that the Fast is approaching; and they set humility as the foundation of all our spiritual labours by appointing that the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee be read today, even before the Fast begins, to teach, through the vaunting of the Pharisee, that the foul smoke of self-esteem and the stench of boasting drives away the grace of the Holy Spirit, strips man of all his virtue, and casts him into the pits of Hades; and, through the repentance and contrite prayer of the Publican, that humility confers upon the

sinner forgiveness of all his wicked deeds and raises him up to the greatest height.

All foods allowed the week that follows this Sunday.

*The Resurrection Dismissal Hymn and Kontakion of the Tone of the Week*

PLAGAL OF FOURTH TONE

*Dismissal Hymn*

**F**ROM on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One, to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, glory be to Thee.

*Kontakion*

**H**AVING risen from the tomb, Thou didst raise up the dead and didst resurrect Adam. Eve also doth dance for joy because of Thy Resurrection, and the ends of the world celebrate Thine arising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One.



MOTHER OF GOD OF MACEDONIA