

## 33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—Tone 8

### Sunday of Zacchaeus.

Ven. Maximus the Confessor. Martyr Neophytus.

### Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

#### Resurrectional Troparion, Tone 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!// O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

#### Troparion, Tone 1 (St. Mark)

O blessed Mark, O voice of God. As an apostle of Christ you were taught by the chief apostle Peter – like the sun you brought light to the nations, enrichment of Alexandria. Liberator of Egypt from pagan delusions, as a pillar of light to the church you enlightened all by your evangelical teachings. Therefore we honor your memory with great festivity, pray to God the giver of the gospel that He will grant the forgiveness of sins.

#### Troparion, Tone 8 (St. Maximus)

Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship, enlightener of the universe and the adornment of hierarchs: all-wise Father Maximus, your teachings have gleamed with light upon all things.// Intercede before Christ God to save our souls!

#### Troparion, Tone 4 (Martyr Neophytus)

Your holy martyr Neophytus, O Lord, through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God. For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.// Through his intercessions save our souls!

#### Resurrectional 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!

### **Kontakion, Tone 2 (St. Mark)**

You received the grace of the Spirit from above most glorious Mark! And destroyed rhetorical snares, O Apostle. You captured all nations bringing them to your Master by the preaching of the Divine Gospel.

### **Kontakion, Tone 8 (St. Maximus)**

Let us the faithful fittingly praise the lover of the Trinity, the great Maximus who taught the God-inspired faith, that Christ is to be glorified in His two natures, wills and energies;// and let us cry to him: "Rejoice, herald of the faith."

### **Kontakion, Tone 4 (Martyr Neophytus)**

You shone forth from the mount like lightning, glorifying Christ through your struggles and death as a martyr.// Therefore, you have received an unfading crown, Great-martyr Neophytus.

### **Kontakion, Tone 6 (Steadfast Protectress)**

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, Constant Advocate before the Creator; despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

## **THE EPISTLE READING**

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

**Reader: And to your spirit!**

Deacon: Wisdom!

**Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 8<sup>th</sup> Tone. Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

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

**Reader: In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel!**

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

**Reader: Pray and make your vows**

Choir: before the Lord our God!

Deacon: Wisdom!

**Reader: The Reading from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to Timothy.**

Deacon: Let us attend!

**Reader: My son Timothy, <sup>9</sup>the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. <sup>10</sup>For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. <sup>11</sup>Command and teach these things. <sup>12</sup>Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. <sup>13</sup>Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. <sup>14</sup>Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. <sup>15</sup>Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. [(285-ctr) 1 Timothy 4:9-15 (RSV)]**

Priest: Peace be unto you, reader.

**Reader: And to your spirit. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, in the 8<sup>th</sup> Tone.**

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Reader: Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms!**

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

### **THE GOSPEL READING**

At that time, <sup>1</sup>Jesus [He] entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. <sup>3</sup>And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "*Zacchaeus, make haste*

*and come down; for I must stay at your house today.*” <sup>6</sup>So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. <sup>7</sup>And when they saw it they all murmured, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” <sup>8</sup>And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold.” <sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to him, *“Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.”* [(94) Luke 19:1-10 (RSV)]

**Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is also preceded by its own liturgical preparation. The first sign of the approach of Great Lent comes five Sundays before its beginning. On this Sunday the Gospel reading is **about Zacchaeus the tax-collector**. It tells how Christ brought salvation to the sinful man, and how his life was changed simply because he “sought to see who Jesus was” (Luke 19:3). The desire and effort to see Jesus begins the entire movement through Lent towards Pascha. It is the first movement of salvation.

Our lenten journey begins with a recognition of our own sinfulness, just as Zacchaeus recognized his. He promised to make restitution by giving half of his wealth to the poor, and by paying to those he had falsely accused four times as much as they had lost. In this, he went beyond the requirements of the Law (Ex. 22:3-12).

The example of Zacchaeus teaches us that we should turn away from our sins, and atone for them. The real proof of our sorrow and repentance is not just a verbal apology, but when we correct ourselves and try to make amends for the consequences of our evil actions.

We are also assured of God’s mercy and compassion by Christ’s words to Zacchaeus, “Today salvation is come to this house” (Luke 19:9). After the Great Doxology at Sunday Matins (when the Tone of the week is Tone 1, 3, 5, 7) we sing the Dismissal

Hymn of the Resurrection “Today salvation has come to the world,” which echoes the Lord’s words to Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was short, so he climbed a tree in order to see the Lord. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We are also short in our spiritual stature, therefore we must climb the ladder of the virtues. In other words, we must prepare for spiritual effort and growth.



**The Saint we commemorate today: St. Maximus the Confessor** was born in Constantinople around 580 and raised in a pious Christian family. He received an excellent education, studying philosophy, grammar, and rhetoric. He was well-read in the authors of antiquity and he also mastered philosophy and theology. When St Maximus entered into government service, he became first secretary (asekretis) and chief counselor to the emperor Heraclius (611-641), who was impressed by his knowledge and virtuous life.

St Maximus soon realized that the emperor and many others had been corrupted by the Monothelite heresy, which was spreading rapidly through the East. He resigned from his duties at court, and went to the Chrysopolis monastery (at Skutari on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus), where he received monastic tonsure. Because of his humility and wisdom, he soon won the love of the brethren and was chosen igumen of the monastery after a few years. Even in this position, he remained a simple monk.

In 638, the emperor Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius tried to minimize the importance of differences in belief, and they issued an edict, the "Ekthesis" ("Ekthesis tes pisteos" or "Exposition of Faith), which decreed that everyone must accept the teaching of one will in the two natures of the Savior. In defending Orthodoxy

against the "Ekthesis," St Maximus spoke to people in various occupations and positions, and these conversations were successful. Not only the clergy and the bishops, but also the people and the secular officials felt some sort of invisible attraction to him, as we read in his Life.

When St Maximus saw what turmoil this heresy caused in Constantinople and in the East, he decided to leave his monastery and seek refuge in the West, where Monothelitism had been completely rejected.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council had condemned the Monophysite heresy, which falsely taught that in the Lord Jesus Christ there was only one nature (the divine). Influenced by this erroneous opinion, the Monothelite heretics said that in Christ there was only one divine will ("thelema") and only one divine energy ("energia"). Adherents of Monothelitism sought to return by another path to the repudiated Monophysite heresy. Monothelitism found numerous adherents in Armenia, Syria, Egypt. The heresy, fanned also by nationalistic animosities, became a serious threat to Church unity in the East. The struggle of Orthodoxy with heresy was particularly difficult because in the year 630, three of the patriarchal thrones in the Orthodox East were occupied by Monothelites: Constantinople by Sergius, Antioch by Athanasius, and Alexandria by Cyrus.

St Maximus traveled from Alexandria to Crete, where he began his preaching activity. He clashed there with a bishop, who adhered to the heretical opinions of Severus and Nestorius. The saint spent six years in Alexandria and the surrounding area.

Patriarch Sergius died at the end of 638, and the emperor Heraclius also died in 641. The imperial throne was eventually occupied by his grandson Constans II (642-668), an open adherent of the Monothelite heresy. The assaults of the heretics against Orthodoxy intensified. St Maximus went to Carthage and he preached there for about five years. When the Monothelite Pyrrhus, the successor of Patriarch Sergius, arrived there after fleeing from Constantinople because of court intrigues, he and St Maximus spent many hours in debate. As a result, Pyrrhus publicly acknowledged his error, and was permitted to retain the title of "Patriarch." He even wrote a book confessing the Orthodox Faith.

St Maximus and Pyrrhus traveled to Rome to visit Pope Theodore, who received Pyrrhus as the Patriarch of Constantinople.

In the year 647 St Maximus returned to Africa. There, at a council of bishops Monotheletism was condemned as a heresy. In 648, a new edict was issued, commissioned by Constans and compiled by Patriarch Paul of Constantinople: the "Typos" ("Typos tes pisteos" or "Pattern of the Faith"), which forbade any further disputes about one will or two wills in the Lord Jesus Christ. St Maximus then asked St Martin the Confessor (April 14), the successor of Pope Theodore, to examine the question of Monothelism at a Church Council. The Lateran Council was convened in October of 649. One hundred and fifty Western bishops and thirty-seven representatives from the Orthodox East were present, among them St Maximus the Confessor. The Council condemned Monothelism, and the Typos. The false teachings of Patriarchs Sergius, Paul and Pyrrhus of Constantinople, were also anathematized.

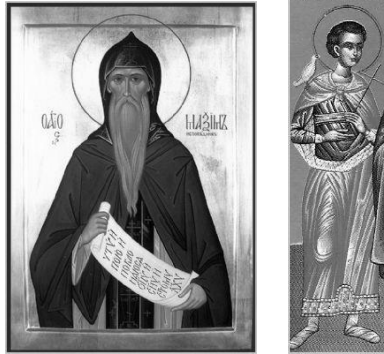
When Constans II received the decisions of the Council, he gave orders to arrest both Pope Martin and St Maximus. The emperor's order was fulfilled only in the year 654. St Maximus was accused of treason and locked up in prison. In 656 he was sent to Thrace, and was later brought back to a Constantinople prison.

The saint and two of his disciples were subjected to the cruelest torments. Each one's tongue was cut out, and his right hand was cut off. Then they were exiled to Skemarus in Scythia, enduring many sufferings and difficulties on the journey.

After three years, the Lord revealed to St Maximus the time of his death (August 13, 662). Three candles appeared over the grave of St Maximus and burned miraculously. This was a sign that St Maximus was a beacon of Orthodoxy during his lifetime, and continues to shine forth as an example of virtue for all. Many healings occurred at his tomb.

The theology of St Maximus the Confessor, based on the spiritual experience of the knowledge of the great Desert Fathers, and utilizing the skilled art of dialectics worked out by pre-Christian philosophy, was continued and developed in the works of St

Simeon the New Theologian (March 12), and St Gregory Palamas (November 14).



The **Holy Martyr Neophytus**, a native of the city of Nicea in Bithynia, was raised by his parents in strict Christian piety. For his virtue, temperance and unceasing prayer, it pleased God to glorify Saint Neophytus with the gift of wonderworking, while the saint was still just a child!

Like Moses, the holy youth brought forth water from a stone of the city wall and gave this water to those who were thirsty. In answer to the prayer of Saint Neophytus' mother, asking that God's will concerning her son might be revealed to her, a white dove miraculously appeared and told of the path he would follow. The saint was led forth from his parental home by this dove and brought to a cave on Mt. Olympus, which served as a lion's den. It is said that he chased the lion from the cave so that he could live there himself. The saint remained there from the age of nine until he was fifteen, leaving it only once to bury his parents and distribute their substance to the poor.

During the persecution by Diocletian (284-305), he went to Nicea and boldly began to denounce the impiety of the pagan faith. The enraged persecutors suspended the saint from a tree, they whipped him with ox thongs, and scraped his body with iron claws. Then they threw him into a red-hot oven, but the holy martyr remained unharmed, spending three days and three nights in it. The torturers, not knowing what else to do with him, decided to kill him. One of the pagans ran him through with a sword (some say it was a spear), and the saint departed to the Lord at the age of sixteen.