

The Publican and the Pharisee



The Children's Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian young people. Copyright 2025 Alexandra Houck.
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The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

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Cleaning up



Imagine your parents telling you to clean up your room. What would you do? Would you put everything back into its right spot? Would you hang up your clothes and put your toys away? Or...would you think about hiding the mess? You could stuff your things in the closet so your room would look good on the outside...and maybe your parents wouldn't even notice!

In today's Gospel reading, we hear a story about two men who were doing a different kind of cleaning—cleaning the heart and soul! These two men went to go pray. One of them tried to show off, telling God all the great things he had done. The other one asked God, "Be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Now, which one of these two men do you think was really trying to clean his heart? Which one really wanted to be right with God? The second one, right? This one was honest with God. The first man wasn't really cleaning his heart. He just wanted to look good on the outside...and maybe he thought other people (or even God!) wouldn't notice.

Let's remember: God always notices how we pray. When we pray like the humble man in the story, then we're really cleaning our hearts...not just hiding it in the closet!

WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

Heart
Humility
Martyr
Pharisee
Prayer
Publican
Rome
Secret
Temple
Valentine

E	O	K	M	N	O	W	X	B	H	R	R	W	V	J
Y	M	A	G	A	E	E	C	E	X	U	E	Y	O	B
L	U	O	G	C	G	O	A	W	R	E	M	V	G	U
S	Q	R	R	I	X	R	Q	W	S	V	T	E	V	M
B	T	A	Y	L	T	A	P	I	N	M	X	A	S	K
D	F	T	U	B	G	P	R	W	J	K	L	F	E	Y
R	S	C	X	U	W	A	Y	F	J	E	M	O	C	P
W	N	P	F	P	H	V	M	W	N	F	Z	H	R	W
B	H	H	H	P	J	P	E	T	D	M	I	F	E	K
H	V	Z	Y	P	G	F	I	S	J	N	S	V	T	V
A	W	U	W	A	R	N	E	L	P	M	E	T	J	R
Q	O	B	V	T	E	A	W	T	R	Y	T	R	A	M
H	U	M	I	L	I	T	Y	G	V	Q	U	C	M	A
L	V	Y	N	L	H	G	N	E	F	Y	S	I	Q	M
M	G	Q	K	C	O	B	J	K	R	T	D	Q	T	O

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

Here is an icon of St. Valentine of Rome, the saint we celebrate in July!

You can see he is holding the Gospel. He is holding a cross too—that shows he was a martyr. He died for his Christian faith!



VALENTINE'S DAY IN JULY?

ST. VALENTINE OF ROME



This week, you'll probably have lots of heart-shaped candy, flowers, and balloons, but did you know Valentine's Day is a feastday in our Orthodox Church? You and your school class will have your parties on February 14th, but our church celebrates this great saint on July 6th!

Who is St. Valentine, and why do we think of hearts and flowers and cards and love when we hear his name? Well, St. Valentine lived hundreds of years ago, in the 3rd century, in the city of Rome. We don't know a lot about him, but here is one story about the saint.

Valentine lived during a time when many people lived as secret Christians. They had to hide their faith because if they didn't, they would be hurt or killed by the emperor. One emperor, Emperor Claudius, made a rule that said that soldiers could not be married. He wanted the soldiers to be loyal to him, not to their wives and children.

St. Valentine, who was a priest, did not think that was fair. He secretly performed marriages for young Christians who wanted to get married. When Emperor Claudius found out about all this, he was furious! Before long, this evil emperor sentenced Valentine to die. St. Valentine was a great Christian, who knew what true love really is. He was happy that he would finally be with Christ in Heaven.

We celebrate St. Valentine in July, but we can remember him this week too!