



## *Weekly Bulletin*

# **Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**

### ***The Parable of the Prodigal Son***

#### ***Troparion of the Resurrec- tion, Tone 6***

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb. The guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure Body. Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting Life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee!

#### ***Troparion of Annunciation, Tone 4***

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

#### ***Kontakion of the Prodigal Son Tone 8***

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father; and among sinners I have scattered the riches which thou gavest me. And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal: I have sinned before Thee, O merciful Father; receive me a penitent and make me as one of Thy hired servants.

### ***The Second Pre-Lenten Sunday, Tone 6, March 3rd, Lu. 15:11-32***

Of all the gospel parables, that of the prodigal son (Lu.15:11-31) is perhaps the best known and the most familiar. It is certainly one of the most touching. Possibly we do not always realize where the center of the parable lies. Is it in the change of heart experienced by the young man who has left his father, squandered his inheritance in the life of debauchery, suffered such hunger that he envied the pigs who had husks to eat, and then decided to leave and return to his father? Certainly the young man's words: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son" — indeed, these words are a deeply moving expression of repentance. The prodigal son's decision, "I will arise and go to my father," throws a clear light on the importance of vigorous action, of an act of will (one cannot go to the Father without first getting up and setting off).

All the same, the repentant young man is not the most attractive figure in the parable. His repentance is neither the result of a totally disinterested change of heart, nor is it free from all self-interest: the prodigal son wants to escape from misery, and he chooses the only way open to him. The central figure in the parable is, rather, the person of the Father. Here we are in the presence of a completely unselfish and freely given expression of tenderness. A tenderness which has waited and kept watch, which is on the look-out for the return of the prodigal, and which, when seeing him still far off, can no longer wait or restrain itself. The father, overwhelmed with compassion, runs out to meet his child, falls on his neck and kisses him warmly. (In the east, such behavior would be considered most unsuitable to the dignity of an old man), And then the father, without voicing any reproach to the prodigal, gives orders that a ring be put on his finger (the sign of an heir), and shoes on his feet (the sign of a free man as distinct from a slave), and for the fatted calf to be killed, and a feast prepared. He has the "best robe" brought and put on his son: we notice that it is not the best from among the robes that the prodigal might have possessed before his departure, but the best robe to be found in the house. God does not simply restore a repentant sinner to the grace he might have possessed before sinning: he bestows on him the greatest grace he could receive, a maximum of grace.

Taken from the *Year of Grace of the Lord*, by A Monk of the Eastern Church

## **Announcements and Activities**

**Memorial Liturgy**— Saturday, March 9, at 9AM

**Great Vespers**— Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

**Divine Liturgy**— Sunday, at 10AM.

**Coffee Hour**— This week's Coffee is being sponsored by Mike Me. And Luci F. Next week's Coffee Hour will be our Mini-Potluck. Bring your favorite dish. .

**Church School/Adult Ed**— March 10th, at 9AM.

**Lent**— As I have a little space in the Announcements section, please allow me to note that Lent is fast approaching. Today, there are just two more Sundays before Lent and next Sunday will be the last Sunday on which meat can be served. Please be sure to make every effort of mark your calendars for the Services of the first week of Lent: March 18-23. This year, our parish Feast, the Annunciation falls early. The Sunday of the first week of Lent will be the Vigil of Annunciation, at 6. Because it replaces the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers we usually serve in Santa Barbara, several local priests in our clergy brotherhood will join us. Archbishop BENJAMIN will be with us for the celebration The Vigil will be at 6PM, on Sunday the 24th, and the Vespers Divine Liturgy at 5PM on Monday the 25th, followed by the festal banquet. Please remember to also LOCK-IN Holy Week, April 29th—PASCHA on May 5th

**Children's Play on the American Saints**— Again, thank you for a wonderful presentation. Thanks, kids, for all your hard work in learning your lines. Both you and your adult counterparts did fantastic.

**Pray for...** Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy— who are ill. Jonathan— ill. Reposed Barbara Ranjo. . Laure— battling Cancer. Paul— ill Ralph—ill Archpriest Lawrence**, from Canada, progressive eye disease. **Tsige Roman**— our beloved Tsige reposed on December 3rd. Please keep praying for her homeland of Ethiopia. **Brian— ill. Jonathan— ill. Katia— sister of Shkbarra's . Patrick**, reposed. **Heather Mary**— uncommon fatigue Dr. Joseph— personal needs. **Lance**— special request for prayers. **Christian**— prayers for upcoming surgery. Mike Meko's Mother-in-law, Larissa's newly-reposed husband **Raphael**. Departed **Matushka Priscilla** and **Newly-departed, George. Luci F. recovering from surgery. Newly- Departed Marylyn; ill, Diane, ill, Colin. John Truman**— lightheadedness and a recent fall. **Daniel** reposed, Tom and Amy, who lost their son. **Nicholas, the father of a friend. Rose Marie— Rachel's mother, cancer. Barbara H.**— recovering from a fall. **Claude (Moses)**- in need of housing. **Eleni**—suffering from the aftermath of a stroke. **Sharon. Baby Archie. Phil**— covid.

## **From the Lives of the Saints... THE HOLY MARTYRS EUTROPIUS, CLEONICUS AND BASILISCUS**

They were companions of St. Theodore the Tyro. When the righteous Theodore had gloriously reposed, they remained behind in prison. For a long time they were not sentenced, due to the replacement of the emperor's governor in the city of Amasea. When the new governor arrived, more inhuman than his predecessor, he ordered that these three be brought before him. All three were youths. Eutropius and Cleonicus were brothers, and Basiliscus was a kinsman of St. Theodore. All three were like blood brothers in their fraternal love. As such, they said before the governor: "As the Holy Trinity is undivided, so also are we undivided in our faith and inseparable in our love." In vain was all the flattery on the part of the governor, and in vain were his attempts to bribe Eutropius. First of all, the governor invited Eutropius to dine with him. Eutropius refused, quoting from the Psalms: Blessed is the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked (Psalm 1:1). After that, the governor offered him a large amount of money--150 litres of silver--which Eutropius also refused, reminding the governor that because of silver Judas lost his soul. After all attempts at interrogation and torture had failed, the first two were sentenced to be crucified, and Basiliscus was sentenced to be beheaded. And so it was, two brothers were crucified on two crosses, for which they gave thanks to Christ that He had made them worthy of the same death to which He Himself submitted. The third, Basiliscus, was beheaded. They all entered the Kingdom of Joy where St. Theodore, their commander, awaited them, having been glorified before them by Christ the Lord and Victor. They suffered honorably in the year 308 A.D.

## **SAINT PIAMA THE EGYPTIAN**

For the sake of Christ, Piama did not wish to marry; she dedicated herself to a life of asceticism in the home of her mother. She ate very little food, and that only every other day. She spent most of her time in prayer and contemplation. Piama possessed the gift of clairvoyance. She died peacefully, wedding her soul to the Lord, in about the year 377 A.D.

## **THE UNKNOWN MAIDEN**

Coming from a wealthy home in Alexandria, she had a good father who suffered much and had a difficult death, and an evil mother who had an easy life, died peacefully and was buried with honor. Perplexed as to whether she should live according to the example of her father or her mother, this maiden had a vision which revealed to her the conditions of both her parents in the other world. She saw her father in the Kingdom of God and her mother in darkness and in torment. This vision helped the maiden to decide that she would dedicate her whole life to God. Like her father, she would adhere to the commandments of God, without considering all the adversities and the misfortunes which she would have to endure. She was faithful to the will of God to the end and, with the help of God, was made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, where she was reunited with her God-loving father.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, Compiled and written by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

*“There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives” (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)*