



WEEKLY BULLETIN

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

*The 37th Sunday after Pentecost,
February 28th , Tone 5, Lu.15:11-31*

The Prodigal Son

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

Kontakion of Prodigal Son, Tone 3

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 Lenten Fast

The Lenten season is inaugurated in the Church with the words of the prophet Joel (Joel 2:15-17). The message is proclaimed in the midst of the congregation: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God; and cry to the Lord".

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

General Panichida— Friday, at 6PM. Due to our fundraiser, we will not serve the Memorial Saturday Liturgy, but will serve a couple of the Memorial Saturdays during Lent. In lieu of Saturday's Liturgy, we'll do a general panichida for our departed loved ones on Friday. I will have the list available for any additions you would like to make. Come a few minutes early, if you'd like to do so.

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

Back Indoors— up to 55 persons, masked and socially distanced. First-come, first-served. We will open the doors and employ the portico if numbers are too great.

Spring Fundraiser— next Saturday. We will need set-up and breakdown crews and those who can serve the food. Please see Luci for a job. We need you and your hands.

Pray for... **Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)**—battling cancer. **Natalia**—Olga's friend. Sunday's brother, **Joe**, ill. **Chance**— Kerri's nephew **Emory**—a young relative of Kirk and Kathy. **Linda**, Mary S.'s daughter. **Sarah**—the sister of John Deak who is battling cancer. **Theresa**, cancer, and husband **Ron**, the daughter-in-law and son of Linda D. Samir's friend, **Johnny**, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight. **Anna J.**, who is battling health issues related to her bone marrow transplant and battle with Lyme Disease. **Hanna**—a friend of April's who has a brain injury. **Darko**— who had surgery for cancer and has to undergo chemo. **Reposed Michael**, Brian R.'s cousin. **Barbara Ranjo**, cancer surgery and recovering. **David**, newly reposed. **Tony**, health and an upcoming surgery. **John**, health. **Dana and Era**, two young women who are battling health issues. **Carol**, **Mike Miller's friend**. **Julie**, a friend of Katherine M. **Michaela and family**— Heather's friend battling cancer. **George**— Sunday's husband who has been battling health issues. Mara's dad, **Ratp** who recently had surgery. **Fr. Paul Lazor**, sometime dean of St. Vladimir Seminary reposed. **Vera**— **Newly-Reposed**. **Linda D.** post surgery pain. **Nicole**, **Aiden and Kate**. **Zoya**, who lives in Russia and is suffering from the covid virus. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **Reposed Mel R.** faithful member and husband of Marianne. **Jerry**— the husband of Elise, Katie and Anna R. Who passed last Thursday. **Metropolitan Theodosius** newly reposed. **Reposed Darrel**, Kyle's father. **Diane F.** recovering from Surgery. **Erika and Family**. **And, finally**, all those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic (which has been growing in numbers across the country and in the world), wildfires, hurricanes, and civil unrest. **Jerry**— **Reposed**. **Don**, **Judy**, **Paul**, **Thomas**, **Marcella**, **Paul** **Reposed**, friends of **Karen and Scott T.**; **Donald**, reposed, a relative of Stephen and Luci F. **Archpriest Paul**—battling kidney problems. **Nicholas**—Reposed, a person known by Heather. **Macrina**— a friend of Mike L. **Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor.

From the Lives of the Saints... THE HIEROMARTYR [PRIESTLY-MARTYR] PROTERIUS

This saint was a presbyter in Alexandria at the same time Dioscorus the heretic was Patriarch of Alexandria. Dioscorus was one of the leaders of the Monophysite heresy, which taught that there is one nature in Christ [human] and not two natures [human and divine]. At that time Marcian and Pulcheria were on the imperial throne. This holy and devout man, Proterius, stood up against Dioscorus for which he endured much misery. Then the Fourth Ecumenical Council [Chalcedon, 451 A.D.] was convened, at which the Monophysite heresy was condemned. Dioscorus was removed from the patriarchal throne and exiled. Proterius, this right-believing man, was elected in his place. He governed the Church with zeal and love--as a true follower of Christ. However, the followers of Dioscorus did not cease to create a disturbance in Alexandria. At the time of one such bloody disturbance, Proterius left the city with the intention of staying away temporarily. Along the way, the Prophet Isaiah appeared to him in a vision and said: "Return to the city, I am waiting to take you." Proterius returned to Alexandria and entered the church. Upon learning of this, the enraged heretics rushed into the church, seized the patriarch and stabbed him all over with knives. Six other Christians were also slain with Proterius. Thus Proterius, this wonderful shepherd of Christ's flock, received a martyr's wreath for the truth of Orthodoxy, in the year 457 A.D.

SAINT BASIL THE CONFESSOR

Basil was a companion and fellow sufferer with St. Procopius of Decapolis. Basil faithfully followed his teacher Procopius, both in peaceful times and in times of persecution. He endured much torment from the iconoclasts. When the iconoclasts were defeated, Basil, according to God's providence, returned to his monastery together with Procopius. There he lived a long life of asceticism in fasting and prayer. He died peacefully in the year 747 A.D.

THE HIEROMARTYR [PRIEST-MARTYR] NESTOR

Nestor was the bishop of Magydos [in Pamphylia]. He was distinguished by his great meekness. During the reign of Decius, he was brought to trial and cruelly tortured for Christ. Before his death, he saw in a vision a sacrificial lamb, which he interpreted as a sign of his impending sacrifice. He was tortured by the Eparch Publius and in the end was crucified in Perga [the capital of the province] in the year 250 A.D.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"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)