

****IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION****

Until further notice, we will continue celebrating the Divine Services up to no more 33 parishioners in attendance. With this in mind, if single parish members or parish member households - UP TO 33 PEOPLE IN CHURCH AT EACH DIVINE LITURGY - would like to attend the Divine Liturgy on a Sunday please refer to the following signup link <https://signup.com/go/AqSQSmX> ** (Slots 1-33 in the Church and 34-50 in the Parish Fellowship Hall)! **PLEASE SIGN-UP BY 6:00 PM ON SATURDAY NIGHT AS WELL AS ANSWER THE COVID QUESTIONNAIRE!!

Regarding Holy Communion:

- If anyone would like to come and receive Holy Communion or if you would like Fr. Jason to come and bring Holy Communion to your home, please contact him to make arrangements:
jvansuch@hotmail.com/609.851.3811/716.875.4222

Regarding Holy Confession:

Taking into consideration the spiritual and mental healing that comes through the Sacrament of Confession, His Eminence blesses, for all priests and communities in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, that for this period:

- Confession may continue to be held over the telephone or by live video communication; it may also be done in person with social distancing kept between the priest and the penitent (6 feet), and with face masks worn by both. The Prayer of Absolution can be given by video or phone and especially in person.
- When Confession is heard over the telephone or by live video, the priest must read the Prayer of Absolution before ending the phone call or video communication, in the hearing of the penitent.
 - If anyone would like to have Confession, please contact Fr. Jason to make arrangements:
jvansuch@hotmail.com/609.851.3811/716.875.4222

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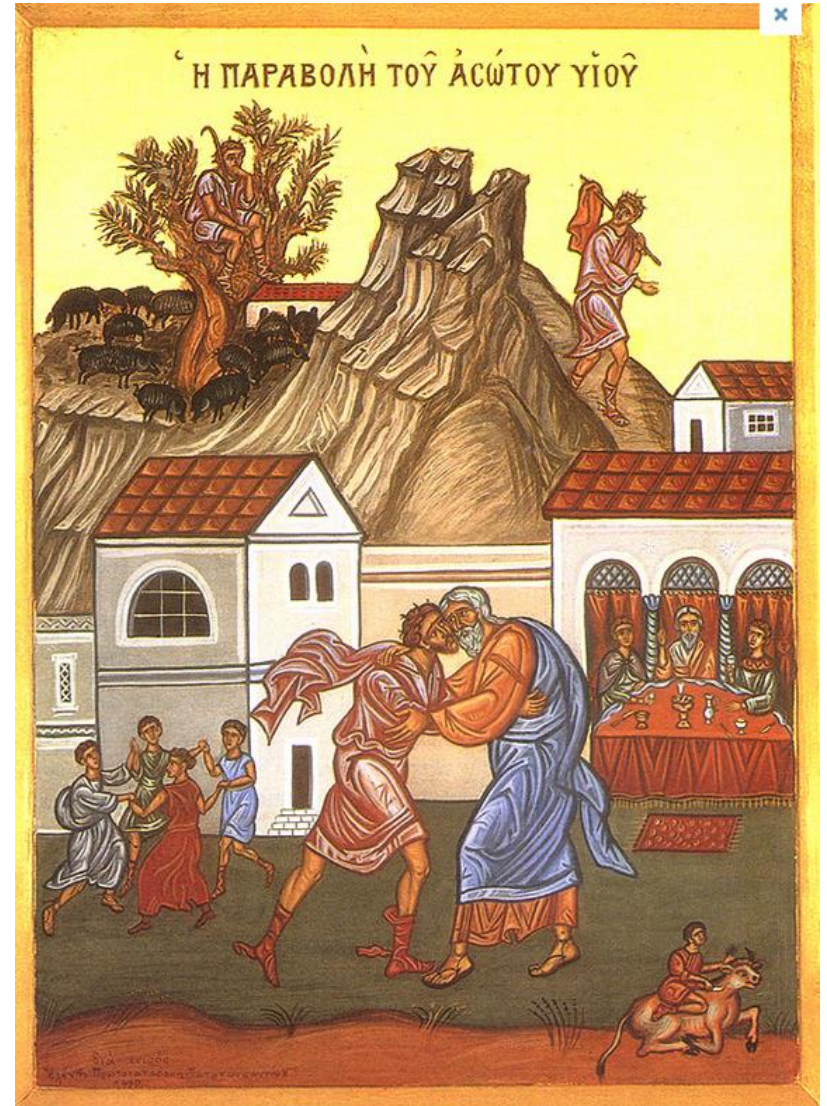
Please look up the below weblink for the Digital Edition of The Jacobs Well:
<https://issuu.com/jacobswell/docs/jacobs-well-fall-2019-nk>

Please look up the below weblink for the website of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey:

<https://www.nynjoca.org>

Please look up the below weblink for the newly-updated Diocesan Directives of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey for the Gradual Approach of Re-Opening of our Parishes:

<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/covid-19/Diocesan-Directives-on-the-Gradual-Re-Opening-of-Diocesan-Churches-2020-05-08-For-Distribution.pdf>



St. George Orthodox Church
2 Nottingham Terrace - Buffalo, NY 14216
(716) 875-4222
www.stgeorgebuffalo.com

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Published weekly in the interest of the parishioners and friends of Saint George Orthodox Church, Buffalo, NY a parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey and The Orthodox Church in America

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

2 Nottingham Terrace Buffalo, NY 14216

V. Rev. Jason Vansuch, Parish Priest

2 Nottingham Terrace 716-875-4222 Buffalo, NY 14216

Cell Phone: 609-851-3811 Email: jvansuch@hotmail.com

Presbyter Andreja Damjanovski, Attached Rev. Peter Irfan, Attached
Reader John Kirwan, Choir Director
Mr. Paul Shosho, Parish Council President
Home: 716-544-7358 Email: pshosho@me.com

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 5. Ven. Basil the Confessor, Companion of Ven. Procopius at Decapolis (750). Bl. Nikolai, Fool-for-Christ at Pskov (1576). Hieromartyr Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria (457). Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos in Pamphylia (250). Ven. Marina (Marana), Cyra (Kyra) and Domnica (Domnina), of Syria (ca. 450). Venerable Domnica (ca. 450). John Cassian the Roman (435). Devpeteruv Icon of the Mother of God (14th c.).

EPISTLE:
1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

GOSPEL:
Luke 15:11-32

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

GLORY FOREVER!

****FLOWERS FOR THIS WEEK****

In front of the Icon of Our Lord, In front of the Icon of The Theotokos, and on the Center Icon Table are donated by Patricia Fiden

Altar Vigil Candles are offered by Anthony DelNuovo in Loving Memory of Thy Servants of God – Marion Rose, William, and George. May their memory be eternal.

TODAY'S WEEKLY MESSENGER IS SPONSORED BY:

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

WELCOME TO ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

We welcome all of you to the Divine Liturgy this morning, especially those who are visiting with us here at St. George Orthodox Church. Everyone is invited to the Parish Fellowship Hall following the Divine Liturgy for Christian Fellowship. It is our prayer that your experience this morning was spiritually uplifting and you will return very soon to pray with our parish family. In the Orthodox Church, we do not practice open Communion. However we do invite everyone to come and participate in the Divine Liturgy. Hence only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves through prayer and fasting may receive Holy Communion. May the Lord bless you with many years of good health and happiness.

THE SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2021

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The Hours – 9:10 AM Divine Liturgy– 9:30 AM

Social Distant Coffee Hour Fellowship in Pariah Fellowship Hall Following Divine Liturgy

Church School Class via Google Classroom - 12:30 to 1:15 PM

MONDAY MARCH 1, 2021

St. George Book Club via Zoom –6:30 to 8:00 PM

TUESDAY MARCH 2, 2021

Daily Matins – 9:00 AM

WEDNESDAY MARCH 3, 2021

Little Compline – 6:00 PM Adult Education Class – 6:30 to 8:00 PM (via Zoom)
TOPIC – The Cycles of Life for an Orthodox Christian

THURSDAY MARCH 4, 2021

Akathist Service to Our Lord – 9:00 AM

SATURDAY MARCH 6, 2021

Memorial Saturday

Full Pankhyda Memorial Prayer Service – 3:30 PM

Great Vespers– 4:00 PM

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2021

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT/MEATFARE SUNDAY

The Hours – 9:10 AM Divine Liturgy– 9:30 AM

Social Distant Meatfare Sunday Luncheon Fellowship in Pariah Fellowship Hall Following Divine Liturgy

Church School Class via Google Classroom - 12:30 to 1:15 PM

*** * * * * PRAYERFUL REMEMBRANCE * * * * ***

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP IN OUR DAILY PRAYERS
FOR THE HEALTH OF THY SERVANTS:**

HIERARCHS

Metropolitan HERMAN Bishop DANIEL Archbishop ALEJO

CLERGY

Archpriest Herman, Matushka Cynthia and George *(Schick)* Archpriest James and Mat. Patricia *(Mason)*
 Archpriest Alexey and his family *(Kargut)* Archpriest Vladimir and Matushka Jeanne
 Archpriest Timothy/Mat. Michelle Archpriest Michael and Mat. Valerie *(Hatrak)*
 Archpriest Ken and Matushka Natalie *(Starevsky)* Dn. Sean and Mat. Heather *(McNulty)*
 Archpriest Gregory and Mat. Diane *(Winsky)* Priest Peter and Mat. Mary *(Irfan)*
 Archpriest Leonid Archpriest David *(Mezinski)* Presbyter John and Presbytera Nancy
MATUSHKI Presbyter Andreja, Popadija Anica and Family
 Mat. Katia Mat. Paraskeva Mat. Joanna Popadija Vicki Mat. Christine Mat. Patricia *(Severeno)*
 Mat. Gloria *(Martin)*

Family/Friends/Parishioners of St. George Orthodox Church

Catherine Ivan/Marina/Inna Bonnie *(Dan)* Coard Karen Aliscia *(Nick Rostko)* Walter, Paul
 Edwina Irene Luba Silvu Dan, Jr. Jim, Darren, Marsha *(Relatives of Elaine M.)*
 Serena Lillian Reader Victor Nicholas, Andrew *(Wityk)* Frank *(Barb. K brother-in-law)*
 Sarah Oscar Albert *(Fadell)* Frank Boris *(Kuvshinoff)* Marilyn *(Linda cousin)*
 Xenia, Justin, Danielle *(Friends of Fr. Jason)* Larry Joseph *(Rocco Father in Law)* Ronald, Candice *(Masset)*
 Victor *(Tita Nephew)* Catherine *(Tony)* Susan *(Kirwan)* June *(Pavlov)*
 Evelyn *(Friend of Julie)* Billy *(William – Mat. Christine’s cousin)* Clyde Allison *(school)*
 Robert *(Phillips)* Rebecca *(Relative of Mat. Christine)* Svetlana *(Family friend of Fr. Jason/Mat. Katia)*
 Jeanne *(Mat. Christine’s Friend)* Angela, Jason, Michelle *(Relatives of Dn. Mark)* Linda Justin *(Slaiman)*
 Carol *(Mailman’s sister-in-law)* Joseph, John, Margaret, Thomas, Victoria *(Ewing)* Ashley *(Friend from Roswell)*
 Melody Lee *(Beth’s brother)* Lee, Bridget *(John Kirwan friend)* Paul *(Shosho)* Brain *(Brother of Matthew Just)*
 Kelly, Robert, Boris, Zaeb, Tirza, Sabas Sada Thlisinitsa, Gemmal, Geesa, and Patric *(Fr. Peter)* Child Senit
 Anne *(Mariami Grandmother)* Jeremy Stewart *(nephew of Bill George)* Susan *(Zumba)* Juliana *(Matusiak)*
 Susan *(Deeb)* Justin *(Cmunt)* Louis *(cousin of Barbara)* Yuri/Elena Alex *(Valieff)* John, Kevin Irene Sean
 Jaime *(Zumba)* Rosemary Harry *(neighbor of Tom and MaryAnne Slaiman)* Anthony *(DelNuova)*
 Aspasia *(Dean’s Mother)* Charles Seraphim Emma/Alexander *(relatives of Natalie Huett)*
 Olga *(Friend of Fr. Jason/Mat. Katia)* Vadym Iryna Yuriy Anastasia Noah *(McEntee)* Elias, John, Joseph
 Mary, Hal, Autumn, Ariana, and Amber Judithann *(Friend of Barbara)* Steven *(Uncle of Dean)*
 Barbara *(Rdr. John’s Sister in Law)* William *(Friend of Judge Family)* John, Helen *(Parents of Tanya Cmunt)*
 Brian John, Roberta, Barbara *(Family of Dana and Annette)* John, Michael John Matthew *(Bashira)*
 Rdr Nicholas, Judithann, Michael, Mary, Cate, Michael, Gary, Damian, Olga, Clara *(Bethlehem)*
 Jeffry, Dominic, Rachel *(Family of Andrea)* Lee, Benjamin, Harry Patrick *(Relatives of Beth Mellas)*

Diocese of NY&NJ Prayer List

Protopresbyter Leonid *(Kishkovsky)* Archpriest Samuel *(Kedela)* Mitred Archpriest Joseph Lickwar
 Archpriest George *(Hasenecz)* Archpriest Paul *(Shafraan)* Mitred Archpriest Daniel and Mat. Myra *(Kovalek)*
 Archpriest Jonathan *(Ivanoff)* Archpriest Paul *(Kucynda)* Archpriest Sergei and Mat. Gerry *(Glagolev)*

Archpriest Terenti *(Wasielewski)*

Expectant Mothers Randy Iris, Pete, Sara Douglas, Chris Costa *(Father of Pete Thanos)*
 Rachel and the child to be born of her Jonathan Kevin, Lary, Carly, Sherry, Mary Jo , Dragiza, Karl

Those Serving in The Armed Forces

Kenneth, Nadine, Jason, Robert, Andrew, Justin, Shawn, Austin, Catechumens
 Chris, John, Daniel, Gjorgie Juanita Martha

FOR THY DEPARTED SERVANTS OF GOD:

All of the clergy and parishioners of This Holy House who have departed this life, who now lie asleep in the Lord.

Ever-Memorable Archpriest Eugene Vansuch Ever-Memorable Archpriest George Timko
 Ever-Memorable Priest John Bohush Ever-Memorable Archpriest George Aswad
 Ever-Memorable Archpriest Rastko Matushka Dorothy *(Timko)* Met. THEODOSIUS
 Ever-Memorable Dn. Mark Ever-Memorable Sbdn. Gregory
 Ever-Memorable Pdn. Gregory Akhtar Remyat, and Barkat *(Family of Fr. Peter)*

Newly-Departed Servants of God Tedros *(brother of Sammy Afeworki)* Pdn. John *(Eby)* Proto. Daniel *(Hubiak)*

Archpriest John *(Chupeck)* *If anyone would like to have their loved ones added to the prayer list for remembrance during the Divine Liturgy, please see or contact Fr. Jason.

HYMNS FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY

Tropars/Kontakions for Divine Liturgy

TROPAR FOR THE RESURRECTION, TONE 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal 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 FOR THE RESURRECTION, TONE 5

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty; resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man, and we all cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

KONTAKION LENTEN TRIODION, 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 as a penitent, // and make me as one of Thy hired servants!”

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Steadfast Protectress Tone 6 (Hymn to the Theotokos)

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator. Despise not the entreating cry 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!

PROKEMEINON Tone 5

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.

v: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!

ALLELUIA VERSES

I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.

For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

It is truly meet to bless You, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Without defilement, You gave birth to God the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify You!

COMMUNION HYMN

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

EPISTLE LESSON FOR TODAY

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

BRETHREN:

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

GOSPEL LESSON FOR TODAY

LUKE 15:11-32

Let us Attend!

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great

way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fattened calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fattened calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”

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=== Scriptural Readings for the Week ===

Monday	1 John 2:18-3:10	Mark 11:1-11
Tuesday	1 John 3:11-20	Mark 14:10-42
Wednesday	1 John 3:21-4:6	Mark 14:43-15:1
Thursday	1 John 4:20-5:21	Mark 15:1-15
Friday	2 John 1:1-13	Mark 15:22-25, 33-41
Saturday	1 Corinthians 10:23-28	Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36
Sunday	1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2	Matthew 25:31-46

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**** NEW PROTOCOLS WHEN ATTENDING THE DIVINE LITURGY ON SUNDAYS****

☒ **A Parish Council Member will greet everyone at the Front Entrance Doors to the Church. We will have the Sign-Up Sheet there to mark off your name if you signed-up to attend. If we did not sign-up, then we will write your name down and kindly remind you to sign-up before next Sunday. We will also take your temperature as well. If someone has a fever or is experiencing symptoms or answers YES to any of the COVID Questions, they will not be permitted to come into the church.**

☒ **EVERYONE attending the Divine Liturgy (those in the Nave and those in The Parish Fellowship Hall – parishioners, choir members, parish council members) NEED to sign-up. Only Those in the Altar do not need to sign-up as they are not taking space in The Nave. Once we reach our capacity of 33 people in The Church, everyone else will be seated in The Parish Fellowship Hall. We must also remember to wear a mask in Church and in the Parish Fellowship Hall as well as on Church Property at all times and maintain social distancing. If we forget one, we will have them available at the Candle Desk as well as in the Parish Fellowship Hall. Also, when we enter the Church and say our prayers, we must use the hand sanitizer that is located at the Candle Desk as well as review the posted Diocesan Guidelines. These (masks, prayers, hand sanitizer) are also located in the Parish Fellowship Hall These precautions are for the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes and enters our Church to pray and worship God.**

☒ **When receiving Holy Communion, a Parish Council Member will call everyone up – pew by pew – to allow for social distancing (the children and Altar Servers will come first, then the first pews up front all the way to the back of the Church with the Choir being the last ones to receive Holy Communion). If any faithful are in The Parish Fellowship Hall, Fr Jason, Fr. Andreja, or Fr. Peter will bring Holy Communion to those in the Hall.**

****If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to see or contact Fr. Jason. May God continue to bless and guide all of you!****

LIVE-STREAMING OF DIVINE SERVICES

As a friendly reminder, ALL DIVINE SERVICES, WILL ALSO BE LIVE-STREAMED from Fr. Jason's Facebook page and our Parish Youtube Page so that we can still be together and pray together. So please continue to join us in prayer!! There are three ways you can join us in prayer via Live-Stream even if we do not have a FaceBook account:

- 1) Go directly to our Parish Website (www.stgeorgebuffalo.com) and on our homepage you will see a box that says 'Restream: Stream currently offline". When 'live-stream' is active, the live video will automatically appear.
- 2) Go directly to Fr. Jason's Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/jason.vansuch> and there you will see the Live-stream video.
- 3) Go directly to our Parish Youtube Page <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCft4AWAX2COrLZExfMJc5KQ> and there you will see the Live-stream video.

Also in the Parish Fellowship Hall, we have the Giving Tree! If anyone would like to sign up for Coffee Hour Readers Bulletin Collection, Communion Cloth, Home Blessing, please see or contact Fr. Jason!



A SINCERE AND HEARTFELT THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS TO THE PARISH FROM OUR PARISH GIVING TREE

- Matushka Fran for donating Hand Sanitizer
- Dr. Boris and Barbara Kuvshinoff for donating the flowers the Feast of The Meeting of Our Lord in The Temple
- Fr. Jason/Mat. Katia/Anna and Alex for donating the flowers the Feast of The Annunciation of The Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
- Paul and Joan Shosho for donating the Vigil Candles near The Gospel Book/Confession, The Icon of The Holy Sepulchre, Icons of All Saints of North America, and The Icons of St. Nektarios and The Holy Relics for the continued good health of their Family.
- Linda and George Mucyn for donating Plastic Bags for Prospora
- Flowers for Sunday February 28, 2021 offered by Patricia Fiden

Please be sure to check out "The Giving Tree" in the Parish Fellowship Hall as well as on our parish website (www.stgeorgebuffalo.com) to see how we may be able to donate towards the needs of our parish through our continued support and stewardship for our beloved parish.

If anyone has any questions, please see or contact Fr. Jason or Barbara.

Thank you for your continued prayerful support and stewardship. May God continue to bless and guide all of you, your families and our entire Parish family and keep all of us in His Loving Care!

WELCOME TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH!

Do we have questions about our life, its meaning, purpose, destiny?
Are we desiring to know Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God?
Are we seeking forgiveness, healing, and wholeness?
Do we wonder where to go to find answers?

We can find the answers to these questions and so many other questions
in The Holy Orthodox Church through Her Sacred Tradition,
Holy Scriptures, Her Teachings and Dogmas.

The Orthodox Church is the original Christian Church, the Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and described in the pages of the New Testament. Her history can be traced in unbroken continuity all the way back to Christ and His Twelve Apostles, empowered and sent forth on the day of Holy Pentecost. Incredible as it seems, for over twenty centuries she has continued in her undiminished and unaltered faith and practice. Today her apostolic doctrine, worship, and structure remain intact. The Orthodox Church maintains that the Church is the living Body of Jesus Christ. Many of us are surprised to learn that for the first 1000 years of Christian history there was just one Church.

Where is **"The Church"** to be found and experienced today? Come Taste and See How Good The Lord is every Sunday by joining us for The Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

What is Orthodox Christianity all about? How does it differ from other Christian confessions? This section will attempt to answer these questions and many more. For a visual introduction to the Orthodox Church, please view the video link below: http://www.youtube.com/v/Gj4pUphDitA&color1=0xb1b1b1&color2=0xcfcfcf&feature=player_embedded&fs=1 For a brief introduction and in depth study to The Orthodox Faith and to find answers to: 'What we Believe?', 'Who we Are?', and 'How we Live?', please view the PDF link below:

<http://orthodoxdelmarva.org/files/studies/InquirersClassV1final.pdf>
or you may visit the OCA website by clicking the link below:
<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith>
or you can begin a Journey Through Orthodoxy by clicking the link below:
<http://journeytoorthodoxy.com>

To learn more ways that we can teach our children about the Orthodox Faith, The OCA has provided a wonderful website for us to use that provides great resources such as (handouts, texts, articles, stories, and much more)! To see this great website, please view the PDF link below:
<http://dce.oca.org/page/resources/>

If you have any questions or would like to know more about The Orthodox Faith, please contact our parish priest: V Rev. Jason Vansuch (jvansuch@hotmail.com) or 716.875.4222 and he will be able guide you.

IMPORTANT DATES WITHIN THE LIFE OF OUR PARISH

Parish Announcements:

- We will continue with our on-going collections for The Buffalo City Mission, Hearts for Homeless, Mats for Mission, HomeSpace as well as Kevin Guest House and our other outreach ministry projects.
- **WE CONTINUE TO CONTACT ALL OF OUR PARISHIONERS ON A REGULAR BASIS TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IS OKAY, SAFE AND HEALTHY.**

****Please be on the lookout for emails this week with the following items:**

- 1) **Reader Vespers for Saturday Evening (March 6)**
- 2) **Reader Typika Service for Sunday Morning (March 7)**
- 3) **Information for St. George Book Class – Monday (March 1)**
- 4) **Information for Special Inquirer Class – Wednesday (March 3)**

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**EACH WEEK WE WILL BE RECORDING
THE WEEKLY INCOME FOR EACH SUNDAY AS WELL AS OFFERING THE
MONTHLY INCOME and EXPENSE FOR OUR PARISH!**

**INCOME FOR SUNDAY February 21, 2020 – \$ 1,991.25
& \$500 for Capital Improvement Fund**

**DONATIONS FOR THE NEW BOILER (Capital Improvement Fund) –
Total Donations so far for the New Boiler: \$19,130.00**

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND GUIDE YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND PRAYERS!

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Please refer to the Weekly Bulletin and Church Website for any changes to the calendar!

DAILY FAMILY PRAYER RULE WE CAN PRAY TOGETHER AT HOME WITH OUR FAMILIES

A Prayer Rule must be done in front of the icons and the Gospel in our Icon Corners with a lit candle.. It is important to remember that we must make time for God, for the "Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force"(Matt. 11:12).The best time to pray is in the morning or in the evening when we as a family can come together in prayer. Also, when using a Rule of Prayer, we must be flexible and do what we can and do it attentively and consistently. Our goal is to maintain the connection with God and cultivate a real relationship with Him.

With that in mind, please fine below The Rule of Prayer offered by our Diocese for us to use at home especially during this most difficult time when we are not able to be in church together as a parish family.

<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/praying-at-home/A-FAMILY-PRAYER-RULE.pdf>

May God bless you and keep you always in His Loving Care!

ST. ANDREW'S CAMP

** Saint Andrew's Camp has released a new promotional video for prospective campers!

The video can be found here on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewsorthodoxcamp/videos/357928144820497/>

**Be sure to check it out...you may recognize the priest:)

For more than sixty years, St. Andrew's Camp has offered the young people of our parishes an incredible summer camping experience. Children and teens have been instructed in prayer and the divine services, the reading of Scripture and the teachings of our Orthodox Church. They have been nourished with the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. They have had fun swimming, horseback riding, playing sports, singing and learning musical instruments, creating in the visual arts, learning to safeguard the planet, and exploring the stars. And they have established friendships that last a lifetime, met their future spouses, and nurtured their vocations to serve the Lord in ministry.

As a token of gratitude for the labors of love extended by the administration and staff, both clergy and laypersons, of St. Andrew's over the past six decades, it is now time for us to help the Camp in an especially needed way.

Please join us in raising funds for the new multi purpose building which will include new kitchen, dining hall and activities center. The cost of this new building is \$300,000. To become a reality, the completion and furnishing of this much-needed center will require great generosity of individuals, organizations and parishes.

You can click on the link below which will take you to the gofundme.com page.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/st-andrew039s-camp-fundraiser-by-ss-peter-and-paul>

As we continue to fulfill the work of Our Lord by living and fulfilling His Gospel Message, let us open our hearts and minds by providing support and assistance to our Diocese, to our children, by taking a moment to reflect upon what God has given us, and to discern how we might be able to return to God a portion of the blessings we have received.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you and your families for your continued prayers, support and generosity.

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**Also, make sure we check out the promotional video for prospective campers!

The video can be found here on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewsorthodoxcamp/videos/357928144820497/>

**Be sure to check it out...you may recognize the priest:)

Remember our Loved Ones during Our Daily Prayers

'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

{Matt. 25:40}

As we say our daily prayers, let us also take time out to remember our loved ones who are homebound, who are in hospitals and who are in nursing homes. Let us remember them that GOD will continue to watch over them and protect them. Also, during the Year, let us take to either send them a card, give them a call, or visit them to let them know how much we love them, how much we remember them, and how much we pray for them.

Please refer to the of our Parish Shut-Ins below.

If anyone has any questions or would like to add someone to our List of Parish Shut-Ins, please see or contact Fr. Jason. May God continue to bless you and guide you!

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH PARISH SHUT-INS (2020)

Mrs. Diane Salvamoser 147 West Hazeltine Avenue Kenmore, NY 14217 716.875.9503	Reader Victor Shanchuk 495 Lafayette Avenue Buffalo, NY 14222 716.881.3096	Mrs. Luba Japadjief Elderwood Nursing Home (Memory Care Unit) 245 Bassett Road Williamsville, NY 14221 (Room 30)
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Mrs. Catherine Tony 274 Wadsworth Ave. Tonawanda, NY 14150 716.695.3068	Mr. Albert Fadell 317.376.2562
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Andrew Wityk
Ellicott Center
200 Seventh Street
Buffalo, NY 14201

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WEEKLY VIDEO SERMONS GIVEN BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL

These sermons offered to us by The Diocese via video can be found on the Diocesan Website: <http://www.nynjoca.org!> There are videos for each week beginning with The Feast of Feasts – Holy Pascha! Be sure to check them out!

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An Invitation to Support the Stewards of the OCA!

The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) set the direction for expanding our apostolic work in North America at the 18th All-American Council. The foundation for this work is Jesus Christ, Whom we encounter in our spiritual lives, stewardship, evangelism and outreach, and relations with others as we engage the world. Being a steward of the OCA goes beyond the financial gifts which support the work of our church. Being a steward is about caring for and knowing the history of the mission of the Orthodox Church here in North America and finding your place in that history. Having received this great gift of our Orthodox Faith, we bear the responsibility to continue the legacy of Saint Herman and Saint Tikhon; Saint Innocent and Saint Alexis and all the other saints known and unknown who have worked to build up and expand Christ's Church here in North America. Please consider being a part of that mission today by giving to the Stewards of the OCA. For more information, please visit The OCA Website: <https://oca.org/become-a-steward>

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An Invitation to Support the Ministry of the DDB!

In order to fund necessary ministries and fulfill the work of the Church in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors** generously contribute financial support. To learn more about the DDB, please go to the following link: <http://vimeo.com/71021182> and watch a 60 second video inviting you to join the ever-growing list of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey who joyfully support the on-going work of our diocese. Their support allows us to provide assistance to new mission parishes, scholarships to seminarians, support the departments of The Diocese, and much-needed encouragement to older struggling parishes. How about you? Our parish is a member of the DDB. If anyone would like to join, please see Fr. Jason as well as take a pamphlet from the table in the back of the church. May God continue to bless and guide you for your continued support. The Diocese of New York and New Jersey has two monthly newsletters: "**First Fruits**" and "**Beyond the Plateau.**" The goal, as expressed by Archbishop Michael, is to increase communication and grow the communal spirit of diocesan fellowship in the building-up and strengthening of our parish communities. To learn more about these monthly diocesan publications, please refer to the diocesan website: <http://www.nynjoca.org/newsletters.html>.

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"Lessons in Our Faith" Video presented by His Eminence Archbishop MICHAEL

His Eminence Archbishop Michael presents a series of talks on matters of faith, belief, and the teachings of the Church. These instructional videos are concise and "to the point," offering Orthodox Christians much-needed information, helpful advice for their spiritual journey, and assistance in answering questions that may come from non-Orthodox friends or acquaintances. The goal is that we might better know and better live our faith. These instructional videos can be found at the Diocesan Website: <http://www.nynjoca.org>! For those who do not have internet, please see the handouts from each lesson which are located on the table in the back of the church. **There are 14 videos! Be sure to check them out!**

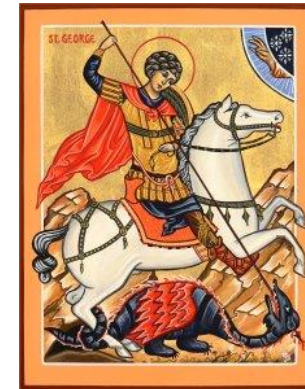
ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH BOOKSTORE

As you are in the Parish Fellowship Hall for coffee hour, don't forget to check out our newly-formed Bookstore. We have some new items that just arrived. These items include: Icon ornaments, jewelry, Icons, prayer books, prayers ropes, and much more. If you need a Gift, come check out the Bookstore...you may find something you like!! We are now also offering Gift Certificates for our Bookstore. Please speak with Dave or Andrea for more details/information!! We thank David and Andrea Chmiel who are managing of our Bookstore for us. If you have any questions or if you would like to order something that you do not see, please see or contact David or Andrea Chmiel and they will be able to assist you. You may also email them at: bookstore@stgeorgebuffalo.com. May GOD continue to bless and guide all of you.

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH MEET n GREET

SUNDAY MARCH 14, 2021

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY



IN THE PARISH FELLOWSHIP HALL

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS

Please join us on Sunday March 14 for a Special Social Distant Lenten Coffee Hour during which we will get to know our parish family a little better as we begin The Great Lenten Season!

Great Food ~~~~ Great Fellowship ~~~~ Great Fun for All

Let us come together as a parish family, as brothers and sisters in Christ and enjoy Christian Fellowship as begin The Great Lenten Season!

Please see or contact Fr. Jason, Mat. Katia or Mat. Fran if you would like to help out or bring a Lenten **(dairy but no meat)** covered dish to share with everyone!!



MEATFARE SUNDAY LUNCHEON SUNDAY MARCH 7, 2021

Please see or contact Fr. Jason, Mat. Katia or Mat. Fran if you would like to help out or bring a covered dish to share with everyone!!

IMPORTANT DATES WITHIN THE LIFE OF OUR PARISH

March 7: MeatFare Sunday (Sunday of The Last Judgment)

St. George Meatfare Luncheon in the fellowship hall immediately following The Divine Liturgy. **Please Note:** Please see or contact Fr. Jason, Mat. Katia or Mat. Fran if you would like to help out or bring a covered dish to share with everyone!! Please remember that we must maintain social distance as well as were masks and following all proper CDC Protocols and Guidelines to maintain the health, safety, and well-being of everyone.

March 14: Forgiveness Sunday

St. George Meet & Greet in the fellowship hall immediately following forgiveness Sunday Vespers. **Please Note:** Please see or contact Fr. Jason, Mat. Katia or Mat. Fran if you would like to help out or bring a Lenten covered dish to share with everyone!! Dairy is permitted but no meat products! Please remember that we must maintain social distance as well as were masks and following all proper CDC Protocols and Guidelines to maintain the health, safety, and well-being of everyone.

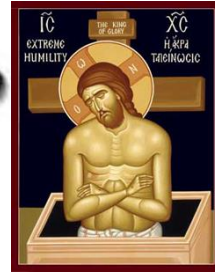
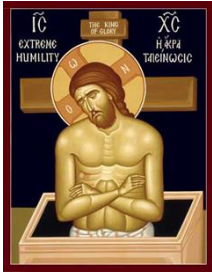
Please join us on Sunday March 1 for a Special Lenten Coffee Hour during which we will get to know our parish family a little better as we begin The Great Lenten Season!

Great Food ~~~~ Great Fellowship ~~~~ Great Fun for All!

Let us come together as a parish family, as brothers and sisters in Christ and enjoy Christian Fellowship as begin The Great Lenten Season!

March 21: World Down Syndrome Day.

Do you know about the lots of socks initiative? Those with Down syndrome have a 3rd copy of chromosome 21, so on Sunday March 21 (3/21) the world celebrates World Down Syndrome Day. The idea behind lots of socks is that everyone wears two different colorful socks to highlight the uniqueness of these individuals and show their support for the Down syndrome community. We will be celebrating this on Sunday March 21. So get your mismatched socks ready and be prepared to display them on Sunday. We will also be collecting financial donations from Coffee Hour. Last year we donated the money to the local Learning Disabilities of WNY!



2021 - THE SCHEDULE OF SUNDAY GREAT LENTEN VESPERS - 2021

“Fulfilling the Gospel through Our Life in Christ”

****ALL SUNDAY EVENING VESPERS
WILL BE SERVED AT ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH (BUFFALO, NY)****

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Discussion: “Being called to be Living Icons of The Gospel in our everyday life”

**Sunday March 21, 2021
5:00 PM**

St. Gregory Palamas

Discussion: “Prayer as a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

**Sunday March 28, 2021
5:00 PM**

Veneration of the Cross

Discussion: “The Cross a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

**Sunday April 4, 2021
5:00 PM**

St. John Climacus

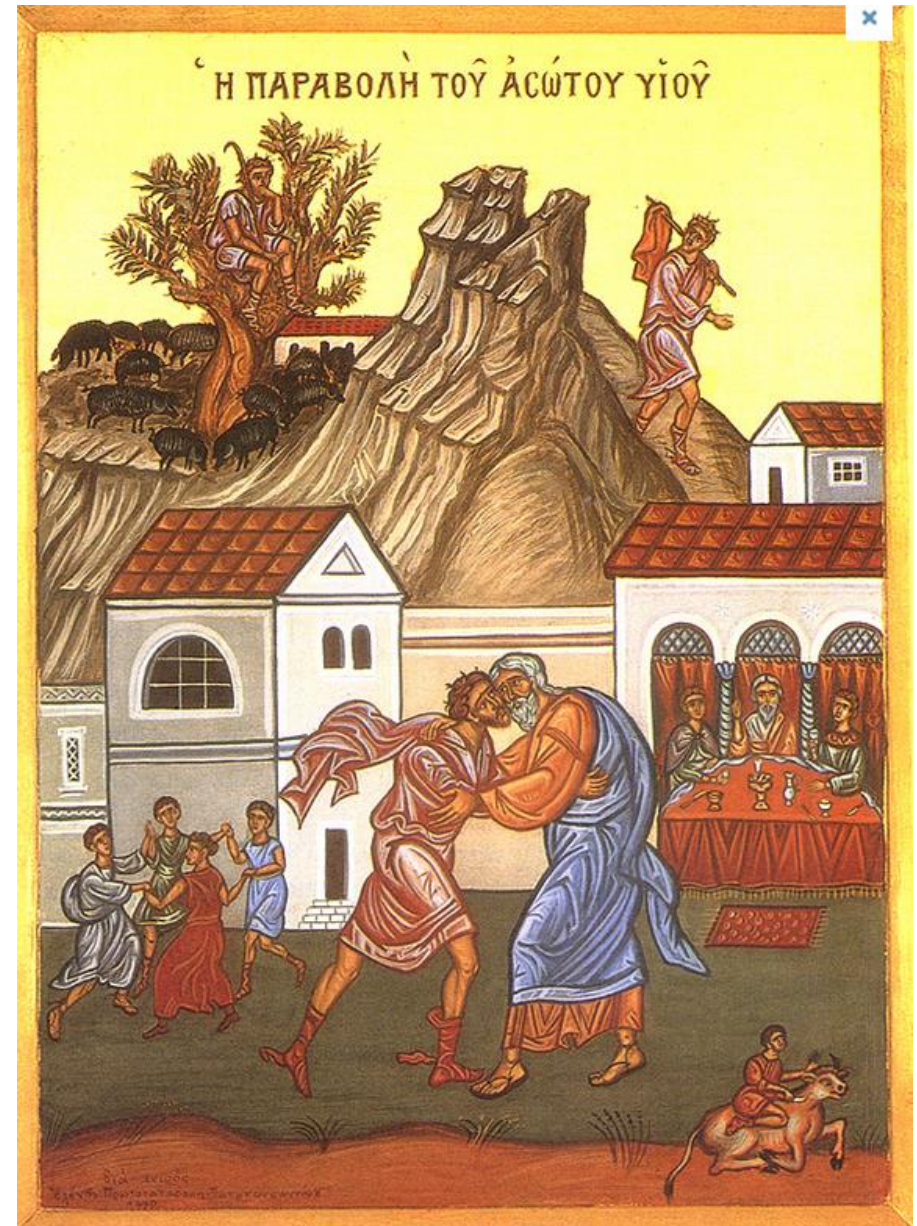
Discussion: “The Ladder of Divine Ascent a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

**Sunday April 11, 2021
5:00 PM**

St. Mary of Egypt

Discussion: “Repentance a key to Fulfilling The Gospel in our everyday life”

**Sunday April 18, 2021
5:00 PM**



SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** which is the next Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that our heavenly Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Luke 15:11-24).

After the Polyeleion at Matins, we first hear the lenten hymn "By the Waters of Babylon." It will be sung for the next two Sundays before Lent begins, and it serves to reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel.

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The second preparatory Sunday of Great Lent is termed the "Sunday of the Prodigal Son." In the touching parable of the Prodigal Son read during Liturgy, the Holy Church teaches us to rely on the mercy of God, provided we have sincerely repented of our sins. On this Sunday and the succeeding two Sundays, during the Polyeleos at the All-night Vigil, Psalm 136 is chanted: By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and we wept when we remembered Sion... This psalm describes the suffering of the Jews during the Babylonian captivity and their longing for their fatherland. The words of this psalm teach us about our spiritual captivity, the captivity to sin, and that we should aspire towards our spiritual fatherland, the Heavenly Kingdom.

The final words of this psalm scandalize many with reference to Blessed shall be he who shall seize and dash thine infants (those of the Babylonians) against the rock! Of course, the literal meaning of these words is brutal and unacceptable for the Christian, for the Lord Himself taught us to love and bless our enemies and to worship God in spirit and truth. These words gain a pure and lofty significance with a Christian and spiritual nature, for they mean, "Blessed is he who has a firm resolve to break, on the rock of faith, the newly forming evil thoughts and desires (as it were in their infant state) before they mature into evil deeds and habits."

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THE PRODIGAL SON

Today's Gospel reading reminds us that we must repent before we can hope of returning to the Father. *"I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father, and among sinners I have scattered the riches Thou gave 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."* (Today's Kontakion)

We also learn from the Gospel that no matter how great our sins are when we come to our senses and repent, God the Father will welcome us and forgive us.

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Sunday of the Prodigal Son - Today - Luke 15:11-32

The Prodigal took his inheritance early, wasted it, and then found himself a non-person in a foreign land. He returned to his father and home, hoping to be at least admitted as a servant, instead, his father welcomed him and returned him to his former position as a beloved son. Likewise, 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.

As we proceed on the path to Great Lent, we are also called to return to God in repentance, and **God will accept us as His beloved children.**

NEXT SUNDAY: The Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)

COMMENTARY ON THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The parable of the prodigal son is known so well that some of its phrases have passed into ordinary spoken language. We all remember book illustrations relating to it from our childhood.

Christ's parable of the prodigal son replies to the reproaches of the Pharisees that "*He receiveth sinners, and eateth with them*" (Luke 15:2). Christ forgives them and calls sinners to repentance, saying "*there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth*" (Luke 15:10). All three of these parables-the good shepherd, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son, stress forgiveness in the final time, are found in chapter 15 of the Gospel according to Luke

This parable is inexhaustible; its themes, too many to count. Every man who studies it with reverence, finds consolation for his anxiety about his own soul.

The first theme of the parable is history - God's chosen people and the pagan nations. The elder son in the parable could be Israel, and the younger son, the pagans. According to Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, this parable may summarize the Old Testament period, when men committed the original sin and withdrew from God. "The Father grieves over the departure of the beloved son. But, not infringing upon his filial dignity and filial freedom, He waits until the son himself, on having come to know all the bitterness of evil, and having remembered his past life in the Father's home, begins to yearn for this home and opens his heart to the Father's love. Thus it was with the human race."

The second theme is guilt. The parable of the prodigal son is read at the Liturgy on the third preparatory Sunday before Great Lent, when the faithful prepare to cleanse themselves from sin through the endeavor [*podvig*] of repentance.

Its third theme is repentance: the gradual, inner process of the sinner's turning towards full repentance, which calls for awareness of his fall, his sincere remorse, and his humble conversion of spirit toward the Heavenly Father.

Its fourth theme is the Church and her Liturgy. According to the Synaxarion for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, the best robe, in which the father arrays his son who has returned, is the Mystery of Baptism; the ring and seal of the Holy Spirit is the Mystery of Chrismation; the feast with the eating of the fatted calf is the Eucharist, the Mystery of Communion.

The music and dancing are symbols of the Church celebration of her restored fullness and oneness.

The fifth theme is the Savior Himself, Who appears as the Eucharistic slaughtered calf, referred to in Scripture as "*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

The elder son represents envy, legalism and need for mutual, brotherly forgiveness. The younger, prodigal son is all fallen mankind as well as each individual sinner. His portion of goods, that is, the younger son's share of the property, are God's gifts to each man. According to Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, these are "the mind and heart, and especially the grace of the Holy Spirit, given to each Christian. The demand made to the father for the portion of goods falling to the son in order to use it arbitrarily is the striving of man to throw submissiveness to God off from himself and to follow his own thoughts and desires. The father's consent to hand over the property depicts the absolute authority with which God has honored man in the use of God's gifts."

Having taken his portion, the younger son departs to a far country, a foreign place of estrangement from God. There he stops thinking of his father and "lives riotously," in a life of sin that alienates him further from the Creator. He quickly squanders his property, his share of God's gifts of mind, heart, and body. His poverty is spiritual desolation. Such a man does not really control what brings him pleasure. It controls him. This is why Apostle Paul warns Christians: "*I will not be brought under the power of any [thing]*" (I Corinthians 6:12).

One Church thinker has written: "This far country, this foreign land reveals to us the profound essence of our life, of our condition. Only after having understood this, can we begin the return to real life. He, who has not felt this at least once in his life, who has never realized that he is spiritually in a foreign land, isolated, exiled, will not understand the essence of Christianity. And he, who is completely "at home" in this world, who has not experienced a yearning for another reality, will not comprehend what repentance and remorse are . . . Remorse and repentance are born out of the experience of alienation from God, from the joy of communion with Him . . . It necessarily includes in itself the profound desire to come back, to return, to find anew the lost home."

Before Great Lent, beginning with the Sunday of the prodigal son, the Church chants the psalm "By the waters of Babylon," to remind us of the captivity of the Jews in that far country. This same captivity in sin alienates the Christian from God. But this psalm likewise speaks of repentance, love, and return to the father's home.

Having lost his inheritance, the younger son begins to hunger. To survive, he herds pigs as a swineherd. And he would gladly eat the swine's food-"with the husks," but no one would give him any. A saving thought awakens in him: "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

The prodigal son could recall this fact because he had not dissipated his one remaining gift--memory of his father and his home, which amounts to his conscience (God's voice within us). And here, conscience life returns and he

understands his terrible situation. Resolve comes to him, to forsake his sins and to repent his offences to the Lord. Finally, his humility, repentance, and awareness of his unworthiness bring the sinner back to the father.

When God allows calamities to sinners, He brings them to their senses. They are God's call to repentance.

Bishop Theophan the Recluse compares the typical sinner to a man in a deep sleep. In man's turning to God, the recluse finds three psychological moments that match the parable: (1) awakening from the sleep of sin (Luke 15:17); (2) the ripening of resolve to forsake sin and to dedicate himself to pleasing God (Luke 15:17-21); and (3) investing the sinner with power in the mysteries of repentance and communion.

The vivid parable image of this father of two sons stands for the Heavenly Father. The Father is the primary allegory of the parable, Whose goodness exceeds all human concepts, in His love for the sinner and His joy when the prodigal son's returns to Him. The Gospel says to us, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." The waiting father has looked every day to see whether his son were returning. When He sees him, He has compassion, and runs and falls on his neck, and kisses him. The son starts his confession, but the father does not let him finish. The Father has already forgiven and forgotten everything, and he receives the dissolute and starving swineherd as a beloved son. The father does not require proofs of his son's repentance, because he sees that his son has overcome shame and fear to return home. He commands his servants to give him the best robe, shoes, and a ring on his hand. The ring is God's gift to the forgiven sinner, the gift of God's Grace. According

to Blessed Theophilact, the ring restores the sinner's marriage to the earthly Church and the Church in Heaven.

Words cannot convey the fullness of God's love for fallen sinners. Perhaps Apostle Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians has it best: "Charity suffereth long and is kind . . . charity vaunteth not itself, . . . is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:4-7). Because every sin is against love, repentance can be real only before God, the face of Perfect Love, for "*God is love*" (I John 4:8).

The Father's joy is there because "my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The prodigal son was spiritually dead when he was living without God, and he come back to spiritual life by returning to life in God. Sacred Scripture often represents return to God as a resurrection from the dead (cf. Romans 6:13, Matthew 8:22, Revelation 3:1, Ephesians 2:1).

The elder son of the parable is also problematic. The return of his younger brother and his reconciliation to the father displeased the elder son. Here is how the parable sets it forth:

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he

answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

The elder son, Jesus Christ implies, is the Pharisee or Scribe whose legalism blocks him from coming to the Father. The elder son is all of us. The elder son was not much at fault until his brother returned and provoked the terrible sin of envy, which had led to the first murder and to the later murder of the Savior Himself. In the house of the Father (an image of the Church) angels feel joy and exultation over one sinner that repents, but this joy is sealed off from the elder son. The father invites the elder son to enter this joy, but he prefers to calculate legal considerations and contracts. Such cold, juridical attitudes prevail wherever love has dried up. The elder son does not really value his father's gifts. His soul holds a void more fearful than his brother's before repentance. The elder son has choked his conscience.

At some time, we all behave like the sons of the compassionate father. By our sins, we all alienate ourselves from His love. The service for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son describes our alienation from God: "I have wasted the riches which the Father gave me; I have spent them all and now am destitute, dwelling in the land of evil citizens." The prodigal son was in that state until the Gospel parable says, "he came to himself."

What does "he came to himself" mean? One Holy Father says that our salvation begins in self-knowledge. We may

argue that self-knowledge is a cumulative lifetime pursuit, toward which a man always strives. But the Holy Fathers would say that until you have come to know who you are; until you have sensed the image of God in yourself; until you, living amidst earthly citizens, have felt that you are a citizen of heaven and have been enslaved to "foreign citizens"; until you, amid the filth of your soul, have come to know the image of God in yourself - until then you have not entered on the path of salvation at all. Salvation begins when you come to know your own divine nature, as the prodigal son did. In one instant he saw that he was a slave to sin in a foreign land without genuine life. After a such self-recognition, a man may contrast himself with God's image in him, however bruised and calloused by habitual sin. Then a man begins to thirst for regeneration from sin and conversion back to being God's image. Conversion may take a great change in perspective. A monk came to Venerable Antony and began to ask that he forgive and have mercy on him. Antony replied to him: "Neither I, nor God will have mercy on thee, if thou wilt not have mercy on thyself." This rebuff from Saint Antony may seem strange to us. How is this so? Saint Antony asks us to understand that each of us must first discover the image of God in himself. Each of us must say "Have mercy on my inner man who, though brutalized by sin, possesses the image of God; until I myself have mercy on God's creation in myself; until in my conscience I have mercy on myself, who am sinful, defiled, and prodigal, until I take pity on my immortal soul - until then, God also will not have mercy on me. Until then, my entreaty will be in vain."

Patristic experience teaches that our requests for mercy will be in vain until we must sense in ourselves the image of

God, the remnants of Divine beauty in us although distorted. The prodigal son saw how badly he was living and how well his father's servants lived. At that point, he had mercy on himself, and so went to God to beg for mercy from Him. When we have mercy on ourselves and feel the contrast between ourselves in creation and ourselves in life, then we too can follow the path of the prodigal son toward God and can beg for mercy. Renewal of the image of God in ourselves is conversion, our sole business on earth. For us to keep God's creation - the image "of God's ineffable Glory" - constantly before our eyes, means we have more mercy on ourselves. We shall perceive the joy of life in God while we endure. Then we shall come to God and shall beg Him, as the prodigal son: "make me as one of Thy hired servants." And we shall be received by God.

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GOD WILL TAKE US BACK

The Lord spoke this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything.

"But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the

fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But the son was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost and is found.'"



Image courtesy of freeimages.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What does being a son mean? What is required in order to be defined as a son of someone?
2. What does the younger son think it means? The older son?
3. Is the younger son still a son once he leaves his father's land? Why or why not?
4. What does the father's response when the son returns, "he was dead," tell us about this question?
5. What does this suggest about being sons of God? Are we sons of God is we stop serving him?
6. What happens when the son returns to his father? Is he a slave or a son again?
7. What does this suggest about what God does for us when we return to his service?



Let Us Attend! is published by the Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education (www.antiochian.org). If you would like information on our present programs and future initiatives, contact Mrs. Carole Buleza at aodce@antiochian.org. We gratefully acknowledge support from the Order of St. Ignatius which funds, in part, the work of the Department.

Visit www.antiochian.org/LetUsAttend for free downloads related to this Gospel story: mp3 audio, coloring sheet, script for readers' theater, and handouts for preschool through high school. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AODCE.

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

“Let the little children come to me, and do not for bid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

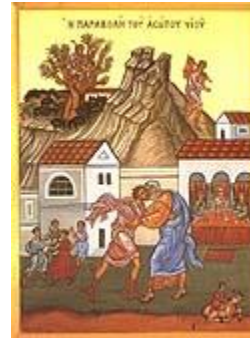
The Joy of the Lord

Have you ever been so excited to get somewhere that you ran on your way? Imagine taking a walk to the playground and then taking off running when you saw the park. Sometimes it’s just too hard to wait! Today we hear the beautiful story of the Prodigal Son. We hear how the young man asks his father for his money. We hear how he wastes all that money. We hear how he feels awful about it, and we hear how he comes back to ask for his father’s forgiveness. Then we hear how happy his father is to see his son again!

Do you know just how excited his father is? The Bible says, “But while he was still far away, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and hugged him and kissed him.” Do you see how excited and happy his father was to see his son? He ran to meet him! He just couldn’t wait.

Now we know this story is really a story about how God loves us, His children, too! When we make mistakes, we can always turn back to our Lord. We can always change the way we’re acting or break the bad habits we have. We can turn back to the Lord, and we can ask for our Father’s forgiveness. Then, He will be like the father in the Prodigal Son story today. He will meet us and welcome us back. God will have that same joy too!

The Pre-Lenten Sundays



The next Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Hearing the parable of Christ about God’s loving forgiveness, we are called to “come to ourselves” as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being “in a far country” far from the Father’s house, and to make the movement of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that the Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only “arise and go,” confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that “home” where we truly belong (Lk 15.11–24).



The next Sunday is called Meatfare Sunday since it is officially the last day before Easter for eating meat. It commemorates Christ’s parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25.31–46). We are reminded this day that it is not enough for us to see Jesus, to see ourselves as we are, and to come

home to God as his prodigal sons. We must also be his sons by following Christ, his only-begotten divine Son, and by seeing Christ in every man and by serving Christ through them. Our salvation and final judgment will depend upon our deeds, not merely on our intentions or even on the mercies of God devoid of our own personal cooperation and obedience.

... for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and in prison and you visited Me. For truly I say to you, if you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me (Mt 25).

We are saved not merely by prayer and fasting, not by “religious exercises” alone. We are saved by serving Christ through his people, the goal toward which all piety and prayer is ultimately directed.





Finally, on the eve of Great Lent, the day called Cheesefare Sunday and Forgiveness Sunday, we sing of Adam’s exile from paradise. We identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity

and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this day the Lord’s teaching about fasting and forgiveness, and we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive us.

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses (Mt 6.14–18).

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2021

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 21st	 TRIDION WEEKS Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 28th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare MARCH 7th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare MARCH 14th FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 21st	 GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 28th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent APRIL 4th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS HALF WAY TO PASCHA! Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent APRIL 11th	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 18th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 25th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 GREAT AND HOLY WEEK ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 30th	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! MAY 2nd NO FASTING!	 BRIGHT WEEK HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God by teaching and giving examples of a virtuous life to all (St. John Chrysostom). A primary goal of Stewardship is to strengthen our understanding of the teachings and dogmas of The Orthodox Faith through supporting the work of The Church. This can be found in The Divine Services as reiterated by St. John of San Francisco: "The Divine Services in their composition contain all the fullness of the dogmatic teaching of the Church and set forth the path of salvation." Fulfilling our responsibility of continual learning begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. Through being Stewards of the Gospel and of The Orthodox Church, Education calls on the faithful to cheerfully receive instruction given to the Church by Our Lord, Holy Scripture, The Divine Services, and The Holy Fathers of

the Church. Through Orthodox Christian Stewardship, The Church promotes spiritual growth and strengthened faith and calls on all of us to bring the faith and love of Our Lord to every aspect of our lives as gifts from Him through our time, talents, and treasures. During this year, let us come together as a Diocesan Family and recommit ourselves to both spiritual growth of our Life in Christ as well as through Orthodox Christian Stewardship by attending the Divine Services, attending the many opportunities of Education for both Adults and Children through Parish Education, gatherings, and fellowship and by supporting our Parishes and Diocese in the many endeavors through which, by the Grace of God, we will bring the light and love of Our Lord to all!

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8