

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 St. George Orthodox Church

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Altar Candles are offered by Anthony DelNuovo in Loving Memory of Thy Departed Servants of his family. May their memory be eternal.

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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 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

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SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 2. St. Leo, Bishop of Catania in Sicily (ca. 780). Ven. Agafón (Agathon), Wonderworker of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th -14th c.). Beheading of Ven. Cornelius, Abbot of the Pskov Caves (1570). Hieromartyr Sadoc (Sadoth), Bishop of Persia, and 128 Martyrs with him (342-344). St. Agathon, Pope of Rome (682).

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!

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EPISTLE LESSON

GOSPEL LESSON

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Luke 15:11-32

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Come and See how we are all called to be Stewards of The Church!

- Stewardship is our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.
- Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.
- Stewardship is offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- Stewardship is what a person does after saying "I Believe . . . ", as proof of that belief.
- Stewardship is learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

If you would like to make a donation to our parish, please feel free to use the QR Code below. Thank you for your continued support and generosity for our parish in bringing The Love and Faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ to all! May God continue to bless and guide you and keep all of you in His loving care today and always!



HYMNS FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY

Troparion for The Resurrection — Tone 2

When Thou didst descend to death,
O Life immortal, Thou didst slay
hell with the splendor of Thy
Godhead. And when from the
depths Thou didst raise the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried
out:// “O Giver of life, Christ our
God, glory to Thee!”

Kontakion for The Resurrection — Tone 2

Hell became afraid, O Almighty
Savior, seeing the miracle of the
Resurrection from the Tomb! The
dead arose! Creation, with Adam,
beheld this and rejoiced with Thee,
and the world, my Savior, praises
Thee forever!

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

Kontakion for The 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.*

THE 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.

THE 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

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 2
**The Lord is my strength and my
song; / He has become my
salvation.**

*v. The Lord has chastened me
sorely, but He has not given me over to
death.*

ALLELUIA VERSES

*May the Lord hear thee in the day of
trouble! May the name of the God of
Jacob protect thee!*

*Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on
the day we call!*

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!

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 fatted 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 fatted 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 fatted 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.'"

COMMUNION HYMN

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

Scriptural Readings for the Week
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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

1 John 1:1-13 Mark 15:22-25, 33-41

Saturday

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
John 5:24-30
1 Corinthians 10:23-28
Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36

Sunday

Hebrews 13:17-21
John 10:9-16
1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2
Matthew 25:31-46

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Warming Up for Great Lent III:

Returning to the House of the Father

The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. 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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Life: "The most sublime expression of God's creative activity"

LOVE CONQUERS 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

The words below from Fr Alexander Schmemman of Blessed Memory are very fitting for our life:

"All that exists is God's gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, and to make man's life communion with God!"

Love one another! Pray for one another! Forgive one another!

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Another saying from The Holy Fathers for everyday of our life and for everything that we go through:

"The Will of God will never take us where The Grace of God cannot protect us!"



Prayer is a safe fortress, a sheltered harbor, a protector of virtues, a destroyer of passions!



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!**

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IMPORTANT PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We will continue with our on-going collections for The Buffalo City Mission, Hearts for Homeless, Mats for Mission, HomeSpace, Resurrection Life Food Pantry, Baker Victory as well as 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 Outlines for ALL weekend SERVICES**
- 2) Zoom information for Education Classes and Book Club**
- 3) Updates on Schedule of Services Events**
- 4) Pastoral Video for Parish Monthly Update**

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EACH WEEK WE WILL BE RECORDING

THE WEEKLY INCOME FOR EACH SUNDAY AS WELL AS POSTING THE MONTHLY INCOME and EXPENSE FOR OUR PARISH FOLLOWING THE MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS!

INCOME FOR SUNDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2022 - \$1,320.10

Commercial Savings Account Deposit

\$ DONATION TO THE CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT FUND (Kitchen) – \$750.00

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

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.

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

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.

Some of the items on the leaves are as follows:

Candles
7-Day Vigil Candles
Flowers for Feast Days
Charcoal
Altar Wine
Cups for Zapifka
Paper Towels
Toilet Paper

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!

PARISH THEME FOR 2022:

Orthodox Christian Stewardship

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

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH OCMC PARISH AMBASSADORS

To The Glory of God, our parish has been blessed with two parishioners who have answered The Call of Our Lord to be Parish Ambassadors for OCMC guiding us to help bring The Gospel of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ of “Making Disciples of All Nations baptizing them in The Name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit!” Anthony Gregory DelNuovo and John Moses Lutz are our Parish Ambassadors for OCMC (The Orthodox Christian Mission Center). To help the good work being done by The OCMC of supporting Missionaries around the world, our parish will be sponsoring and supporting a missionary on a annual basis. The cost is only \$600/year. So far we have collected over \$1000 for this year’s sponsorship. If anyone would like to make a donation, please see or contact Anthony or John. We express our most sincere and heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everyone who has graciously donated so far. Thank you for kindness and generosity in supporting the good work and mission of The OCMC in fulfilling Our Lord’s Command in The Gospel of Matthew of: “Making Disciples of All Nations!”

For more information about The OCMC, please visit their website: www.ocmc.org

Another blessing for our parish of continuing the Good Work that has been entrusted to us of bringing The Gospel Message to All! Lord it is good to be here!

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FEBRUARY 2022

**27 – Sunday of The Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)
Meatfare Sunday Parish Pot-Luck Luncheon**

- *Education Sermon on Sunday February 27: The Lenten Sundays***
- *Meatfare Sunday Pot-Luck Luncheon – Sunday February 27****
- *Matins will be celebrated on Sunday March 13 and 27 at 9:00 AM!**
- *The Hours will be celebrated Sunday March 20 at 9:40 AM!**

****GENERAL CONFESSION WILL BE CELEBREATED ON SUNDAY MARCH 6 – FORGIVEBESS SUNDAY – AT 9:30 AM!****

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 parish 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 Retreats, gatherings, and fellowship and by supporting our Parish in her many endeavors through which, by the Grace of God, we will bring the light and love of Our Lord to all!

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

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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.nynioca.org!](http://www.nynioca.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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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
(2022)

Mrs. Diane Salvamoser Reader Victor Shanchuk Mrs. Luba Japadjief
147 West Hazeltine Avenue McAuley Residence Elderwood Nursing Home
Kenmore, NY 14217 1503 Military Rd. 104 Old Niagara Rd.
716.875.9503 Buffalo, NY 14217 Lockport, NY 14221 (Room 47A)
716.881.3096

Mrs. Bonnie Dan Mr. Albert Fadell
15 Pine Street 317.376.2562
North Tonawanda, NY 14150
716.693.1377

Andrew Wityk Mrs. Tita Abraham
Ellicott Center 84 Stonington Lane
200 Seventh Street Getzville, NY 14068
Buffalo, NY 14201

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****GENERAL CONFESSION SERVICE**

SUNDAY MARCH 6 (FORGIVENESS SUNDAY) AT 9:30 AM**

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PREPARATION FOR GREAT LENT

Our preparation for Lent thus begins with a prayer for humility, the beginning of true repentance. Through repentance, we can find and return to the true order of things, a restoration of our spiritual vision that will guide us in a very difficult and challenging world. By entering Great Lent in humility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He blesses by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

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RETURN FROM EXILE

The Lesson of the Prodigal Son

by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (+1983)

On the third Sunday of preparation for Lent, we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son (LK 15:11-32).

Together with the hymns on this day, the parable reveals to us the time of repentance as man's return from exile. The prodigal son, we are told, went to a far country and there spent all that he had. **A far country!**

It is this unique definition of our human condition that we must assume and make ours as we begin our approach to God. A man who has never had that experience, be it only very briefly, who has never felt that he is exiled from God and from real life, will never understand what Christianity is about. And the one who is perfectly "at home" in this world and its life, who has never been wounded by the

THE INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (IOCC) is an agency of The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) which represents Orthodox Christians in North America and understands its work to include developing in Orthodox Christians a commitment to philanthropy and global cooperative involvement within the Orthodox Church. IOCC was established in March 1992 as the Official Humanitarian Organization of SCOBA.

Consonant with the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20 and Matthew 25:35-46), the vision of IOCC is to provide programs and services such as: providing emergency relief and establishing developmental programs as well as ministering to those who are in need worldwide.

For more information about IOCC please visit their website at: <http://www.iocc.org>.

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It is the Psalm of exile. It was sung by the Jews in their Babylonian captivity as they thought of their holy city of Jerusalem. It has become forever the song of man as he realizes his exile from God, and realizing it, becomes man again: the one who can never be fully satisfied by anything in this fallen world, for by nature and vocation he is a pilgrim of the Absolute. It reveals Lent itself as pilgrimage and repentance – as return. ~ Amen

nostalgic desire for another Reality, will not understand what is repentance.

Repentance is often simply identified as a cool and “objective” enumeration of sins and transgressions, as the act of “pleading guilty” to a legal indictment. Confession and absolution are seen as being of a juridical nature. But something very essential is overlooked – without which neither confession nor absolution have any real meaning or power. This “something” is precisely the feeling of alienation from God, from the joy of communion with Him, from the real life as created and given by God. It is easy indeed to confess that I have not fasted on prescribed days, or missed my prayers, or become angry. It is quite a different thing, however, to realize suddenly that I have defiled and lost my spiritual beauty, that I am far away from my real home, my real life, and that something precious and pure and beautiful has been hopelessly broken in the very texture of my existence. Yet this, and only this, is repentance, and therefore it is also a deep desire to return, to go back, to recover that lost home....

One liturgical peculiarity of this “Sunday of the Prodigal Son” must be especially mentioned here. At Sunday Matins, following the solemn and joyful Psalms of the Polyeleion, we sing the sad and nostalgic Psalm 137:

*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat
down, and we wept when we remembered
Zion... How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a strange land? If I forget thee, O
Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue
cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer
not Jerusalem above my chief joy...*

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH MEET n GREET

**SUNDAY MARCH 6, 2022
FORGIVENESS SUNDAY**



**IN THE PARISH FELLOWSHIP HALL IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS**

Please join us on Sunday March 6 for a Special Lenten Luncheon 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
FEBRUARY 27, 2022**

Please join us on Sunday February 27 in The Parish Fellowship Hall immediately following The Divine Liturgy for a Special Meatfare Sunday Luncheon!

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!!

Lenten and Paschal Cycle



Zacchaeus Sunday

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Feb 14	Feb 6	Jan 29	Feb 18	Feb 2



Publican & Pharisee

Beginning of the Lenten Tridion

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Feb 21	Feb 13	Feb 5	Feb 25	Feb 9



Prodigal Son

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Feb 28	Feb 20	Feb 12	Mar 3	Feb 16



Meatfare

Sunday of the Last Judgment

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mar 7	Feb 27	Feb 19	Mar 10	Feb 23



Cheesefare

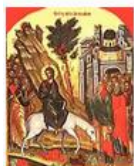
Forgiveness Sunday

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mar 14	Mar 6	Feb 26	Mar 17	Mar 2



Beginning of Great Lent

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mar 15	Mar 7	Feb 27	Mar 18	Mar 3



Palm Sunday

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Apr 25	Apr 17	Apr 9	Apr 28	Apr 13



PASCHA

Beginning of the Pentecostarion

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
May 2	Apr 24	Apr 16	May 5	Apr 20

THE SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2022

THE SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

9:40 A.M. The Hours
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy

COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP
IN PARISH FELLOWSHIP HALL FOLLOWING
THE DIVINE LITRGY

Church School Class In-Person and
Via Google Classroom

MONDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2022

6:00 P.M. Monthly Healing Prayer Service
6:45 P.M. St. George Bible Study Class
(via Zoom)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2022

MEMORIAL SATURDAY

3:00 P.M. Full Panahyda Memorial Service
4:00 P.M. Great Vespers

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2022

THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT
MEATFARE SUNDAY

9:40 A.M. The Hours
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy

ANNUAL MEATFARE SUNDAY LUNCHEON
FELLOWSHIP N PARISH FELLOWSHIP HALL
FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITRGY

Church School Class In-Person and
Via Google Classroom

SAFETY GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS FOR OUR PARISH

We will continue to celebrate The Divine Services with FULL CAPACITY in The Church. ALL Pews will be open and available for everyone to stand together. So that we can, to the Glory of God, pray together, sing together and stand together as parish family, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Until further notice, we continue to follow the following guidelines based upon The Newly Updated Pastoral Guidelines for our Diocese, Parish and the new directives from The State Government and Erie County:

- To ensure that everyone feels comfortable and safe while attending Divine Services and Fellowship Activities at our parish, we will make the wearing of masks a voluntary decision. If someone wishes to continue to wear a mask, that is their choice and their right to. If someone chooses not to wear a mask, that is their choice not to wear a mask. This is to ensure that we, as a parish family and as brothers and sisters in Christ, minister in every way possible through love to those who come to St. George Orthodox Church to grow in their faith and love of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. Out of love, care, concern, and the well-being of EVERYONE, The Clergy, when distributing Holy Communion and Holding The Cross at the Veneration of the Cross/Dismissal and whenever there is interaction between The Clergy and parishioners, The Clergy will be wearing a mask to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone. As a parish family, let us continue to love one another, respect one another, and pray for and with one another! As I have mentioned previously, the topic of vaccinated vs unvaccinated has no place in our parish. That is a private and individual matter and choice and above that is a HIPAA Privacy Law!
- We will also continue to have hand sanitizer and masks available for everyone both in the Church and in The Parish Fellowship Hall to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes to St. George Orthodox Church for Divine Services and Fellowship Activities. These precautions are for the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes and enters our Church to pray and worship God.

- * There will be Coffee Hour Fellowship will resume while following the Proper Protocols, Guidelines, and Directives.

- * The choir will continue to sing up front

- * The space in the back of the church (choir area and children's area) will remain open for the 17 chairs socially distant for those who wish to stand there.

- * We will continue to use the Common Communion Cloth. However, if anyone wishes to use the individual napkin to wipe their lips after receiving Holy Communion, they may do so.

- * We will resume with the passing the Stewardship Collection Plate during The Litany before The Lord's Prayer.

- * The Church will continue to be cleaned and sanitized every week and after every service

- * The Parish Fellowship Hall will continue to be cleaned and sanitized throughout the week as well as a thorough cleaning/sanitizing every week by hiring our Professional Cleaner (Rocco) who will come in every week on Saturday Night to clean and sanitize the Parish Fellowship Hall and Restrooms.

- * With this in mind, we will still need to sign up when we come to Church for THE DIVINE LITURGY on Sundays! This is to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of everyone attending our Parish for the Divine Liturgy. We do NOT need to sign-up beforehand but rather we will need to sign in at The Candle Desk when we come to church. This sign-up is important for us and our parish not only to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to come to Church to pray, participate in The Divine Liturgy and to receive Holy Communion but also to ensure that I have a record of everyone who attends the Divine Liturgy in case, God-forbid, someone becomes ill I would need to contact everyone who was in attendance.

We are taking every measure that we can to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our parishioners and of everyone that comes to our parish to pray. Together, with the Parish Council, we express our most sincere and heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your help, assistance, patience, and understanding and for your continued working together and praying together as a Parish Family for The Glory of God, To the Glory of God, and With the Glory of God!

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

FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME In The Orthodox Christian Church

Saturday Great Vespers 4:00 PM

SUNDAY Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

~ All are Welcome ~

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 or needs and help or assistance, please contact our parish priest: V Rev. Jason Vansuch (jvansuch@hotmail.com) or 716.875.4222 and he will be able guide you.

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:)**



The poster features a green tree icon on the left. The background shows a lake with several people kayaking. The text is as follows:

**St. Andrew's
Camp Summer 2022**

Save the Dates!

Week 1: Sunday, July 3 - Friday, July 8 -- Family Week

Week 2: Sunday, July 10 - Saturday, July 16 -- Horse Week 1

Week 3: Sunday, July 17 - Saturday, July 23 -- Mish Mash Week

Week 4: Sunday, July 24 - Saturday, July 30 -- Horse Week 2

Week 5: Sunday, July 31 - Saturday, August 6 -- Teen Week

standrewscamp.org



Red Blazer Men's Chorus

SAVE the DATE!

Join us April 1 & 2 for the **Red Blazer Varieties** of 2022 ...

Tickets now available!

Seating is limited to 400 to ensure comfortable spacing.

Tickets are \$20 (\$10 for students) and can be purchased at:

RedBlazerMensChorus.com/tickets

THE 2022 GREAT LENTEN SEASON SUNDAY LENTEN VESPERS SERVICE SCHEDULE

Saturday of St. Theodore, March 12, 1:00 PM (Annunciation Family Life Center)

Father Andrew Damick, "Demons, Paganism, and the Gospel"

First lecture, "What Do Demons Have to Do with the Gospel?"

Lunch

Second lecture, "What Does Paganism Have to Do with Christianity?"

Vespers

Lenten Vespers schedule for 2022, Sundays at 6:00 PM

Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 13 (Annunciation, Buffalo)

Father Andrew Damick, "What Do Angels Have to Do with Salvation?"

St. Gregory Palamas, March 20 (St. Stephen)

Father Raphael, Reenchantment of the World

Veneration of the Cross, March 27 (SS. Peter and Paul)

Father Jason, Evangelization

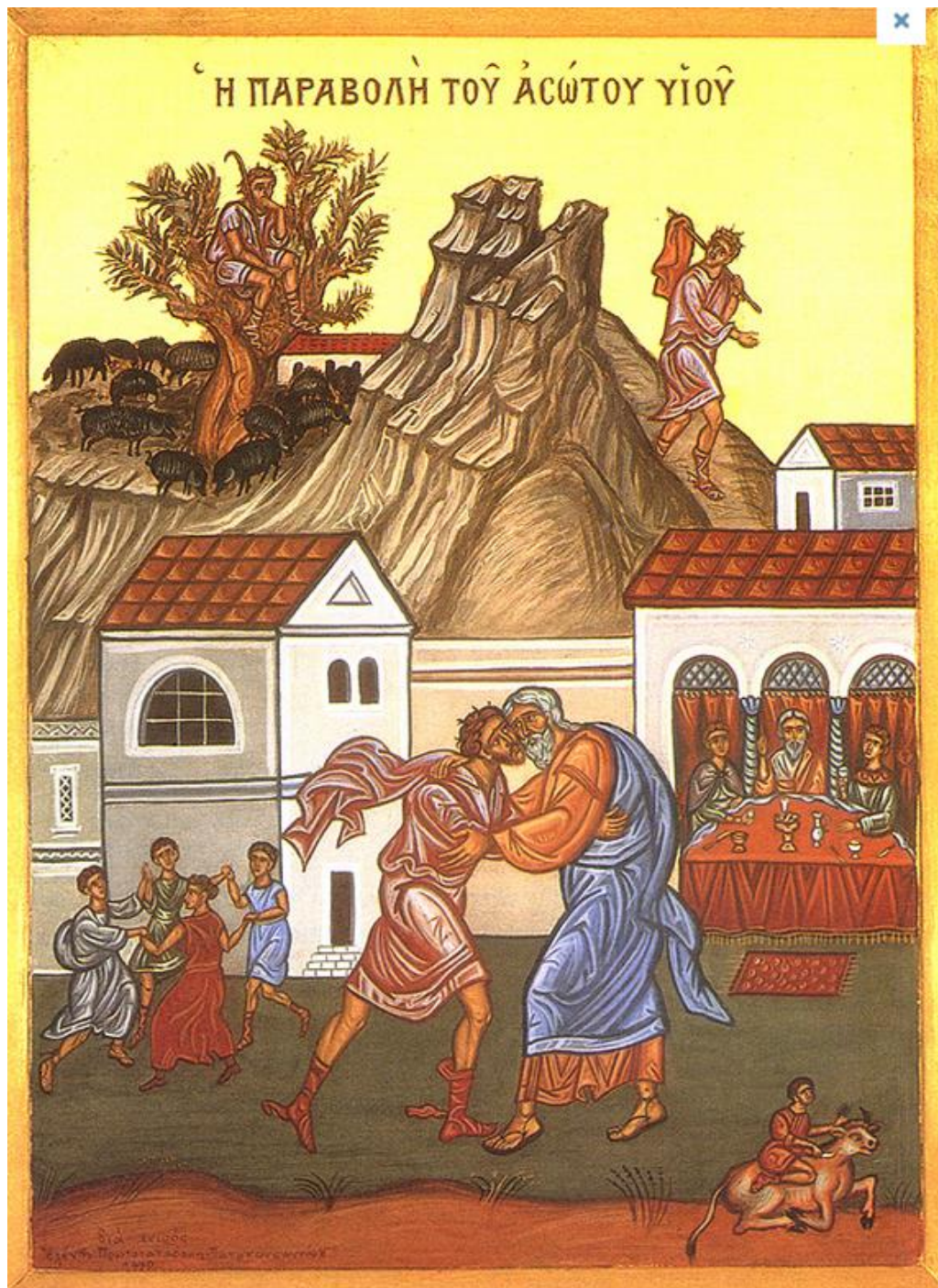
St. John of the Ladder, April 3 (St. George, Buffalo)

Father Christos, Guardian Angels

St. Mary of Egypt, April 10 (St. George, Niagara Falls)

Father Andrew H., Not yet determined

“THE ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH EDUCATION CORNER”



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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MIGHT BEHOLD CULTURE

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.



Image courtesy of freeimages.com

"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.'"

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 if 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

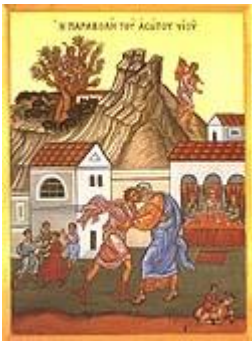
“Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

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 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).



COUNCIL OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX CHURCHES
OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

PAN-ORTHODOX LENTEN RETREAT

with

V. Rev. Fr. Andrew Damick

“DEMONS, PAGANISM, AND THE GOSPEL”

1 PM - “What Do Demons Have to Do with the Gospel?”

2 PM - Lunch

2:45 PM - “What Does Paganism Have to Do with Christianity?”

3:30 PM - Q&A

4 PM - Vespers

ALL ARE WELCOME

Saturday of St. Theodore, March 12, 2022

Annunciation


Family Life Center

5992 Genesee St, Lancaster, NY 14086



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2022

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 13th	 <p style="text-align: center;"><i>TRIODION WEEKS</i></p> 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 20th	 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 FEBRUARY 27th 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 6th 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 13th	 <p style="text-align: center;">..... <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i></p> 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 20th	 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 MARCH 27th	 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 bowl
4th Sunday of Lent APRIL 3rd	 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 10th	 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 17th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> 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 22nd	 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! APRIL 24th NO FASTING!	 <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: Jan 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!



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GREAT LENT 2022

Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 13

Fr. Andrew Demick - **What Do Angels Have to Do with Salvation?**

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 146 West Utica Street, Buffalo, New York 14222

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, March 20

Fr. Raphael Barberg - **Reenchantment of the World**

St. Stephen Serbian Orthodox Church, 177 Weber Road, Lackawanna, New York, 14218

Sunday of the Cross, March 27

Fr. Jason Vansuch - **Evangelization**

Ss. Peter and Paul, 45 Ideal Street, Buffalo, New York, 14206

Sunday of St. John of the Ladder, April 3

Fr. Christos Christakis - **Guardian Angels**

St. George Orthodox Church, 2 Nottingham Terrace, Buffalo, New York, 14216

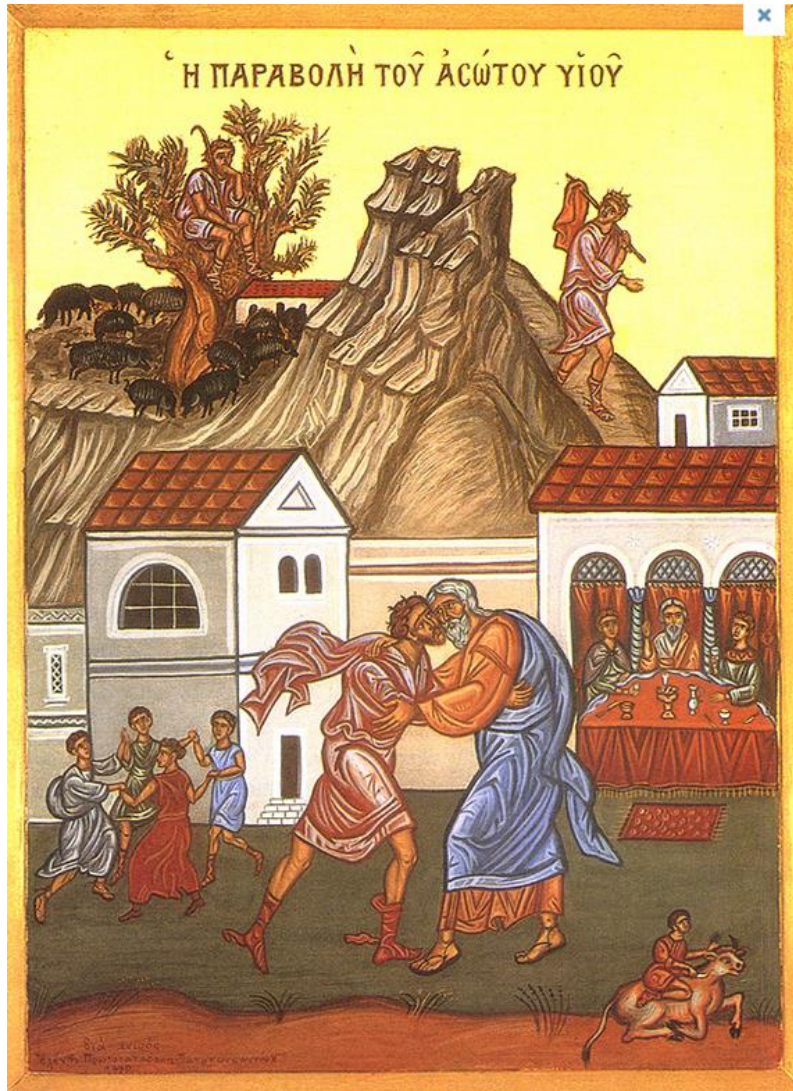
Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt, April 10

Fr. John Hutnyan - **Not yet determined**

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, 1073 Saunders Settlement Rd, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Vespers Services begin at 6 PM followed by presentation and discussion

ALL ARE WELCOME



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

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of Saint George Orthodox Church, Buffalo, NY
a parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey
and The Orthodox Church in America

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