

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS!

March 3, 2013	The Sunday of the Prodigal Son	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	This is the last week for eating meat before Great Lent (Wednesday and Friday fast as usual.)		
March 9	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
March 10	Sunday of the Last Judgment - Meatfare	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Venerable Erasmus of the Kiev Caves (1160). Uncovering of the relics (1486) of Saint Romanus, Prince of Uglich. Martyrs Montanus, Lucias, Julian, Victoricus, Flavian and their companions at Carthage (259). Saint Cummain Ailbe, Abbot of Iona (669). Saint Non of Wales (6 c). Saint Owen of Lichfield, Hermit (680). Saint Sacer, Abbot-founder of the Monastery of Saggard, Dublin (7 c), Saint Winwaloe Abbot of Landevennec (532). Saint Cele-Christ (Christacola), Bishop of Leinster (728). Saint Foila of Galway, Virgin (6 c). Saint Lamalisse of Lamlash, Hermit (7 c).

Please remember in your prayers: John, Stephanie, Michael, Priest Sergius, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, Michael, Mother Raphaela, John, James, Nancy, Archpriest Jason, Archpriest John, Archpriest Vincent, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Priest Senan Taylor, Gregory Udics and David Kessler were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Metropolitan VLADIMIR (Nagosky) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Rose Sokol were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Helen Sokol.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Andrew Homyk, Tatiana Keblish and Michael Steciak were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

• **April 21: Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt. Lenten Retreat.** In the presence of the Myrrh-Streaming Icon of Saint Ann, Archimandrite Athanasy of Saint Tikhon's Monastery will lead us in a Lenten Retreat.

• **Wednesday, April 24,** 6 pm, His Grace, Bishop MICHAEL will celebrate the Presanctified Liturgy here.

• We received a **request for information about Margaret Tuger**, as in the Tuger School. The researcher says you need not have known Miss Tuger personally, but may know about her through relatives and friends. If you have any information, please contact Father who will pass along your information to the researcher.

PRODIGAL SON

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh 3 February 1991

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

How simple and how restrained are the words in which the Gospel describes his cruel rejection of his father, and prepares his departure into the far, the strange country! "Father - give me my part of thy inheritance!" Do these words not mean: "Father - I can't wait until your death! You are still strong, and I am young; it is now that I want to reap the fruits of thy life, of thy labours; later they will be stale. Let us come to an agreement: for me you are dead; give me what belongs to me or what would belong to me after your actual death, and I will go, and I will live the life I have chosen".

This is what really the young man meant; but isn't it very much the way we treat God and His gifts. From Him, as long as we are with Him, we are in possession of all things, but we feel constrained by His presence, we feel limited by the inevitable rules of His household: He expects from us integrity and truth? He expects from us to learn from Him what it means to love with all one's mind, all one's heart, all one's strength, all one's being, - and that is too much for us. And we take all His gifts, and we turn away from Him to use these gifts so that they can profit us, and us alone, without any returns either to God, or to anyone else.

We all, without any exception but in different degrees obey the cruel, deceitful question of satan to Christ in the wilderness! You have the power to do it - make these stones to become bread; You are God's child - use what God has given you of wisdom, of strength, use it for you own benefit! Why waste your time until you are too old? Isn't it an image of our own behaviour?

And then, the young man leaves; he leaves for an alien country, a country which is not God's own, a country which has rejected God, renounced God, which has been betrayed into the power of His adversary, a country where there is no place for Him. And he lives according to the rules of this country and to the desires of his heart. And then, hunger comes.

Now, we turn away, carrying with us the gifts of God; and we live in a country which is also alien; we live in a world which is man-made, but not God-made; or rather: made by God, and distorted by man. What kind of hunger comes to us? We are rich, we are safe, we have everything which God gave us, and continues to give -

only we don't realise that God continues to give while we squander. But what is the hunger that can come to us? The awareness which Christ describes in the first Beatitude: Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the Kingdom of God... Who are the poor of spirit? The poor of spirit are those who have understood, and understand day in, day out, all their life through that they have no existence except that God loved us into existence; we have no life except God's life poured into us, His breath, the breath of life. And then we are so rich, because God has revealed Himself to us: He has revealed Who He is; we can love Him, know Him, worship Him, serve Him, emulate Him indeed because He has become man and has shown us what a man can be. And He has given us all that our intelligence, a heart, a will, a body, the world around us, the people around us, the relationships that are ours - all these are God's, because we cannot make them, we can force no one to love us, and yet, we have friends and people who love us. We cannot be sure of our mind: in one moment a stroke can extinguish the greatest mind; there are moments when we want to respond to a need, to a suffering - and our heart is of stone; only God can give it life! We waver between good and evil - only God can steady our will; and so forth.

If we only realise this, then we understand that we are totally destitute: we are nothing, we have nothing, and yet, so rich we are; because destitute, we are endowed with all the gifts of God; having betrayed Him time and again, turned away from Him time and again, we still are loved of Him: indeed - "blessed are the hungry: they shall be filled"! If we only realise our hunger for the real things, then it will come our way. But not simply because we are hungry; they will come our way at a moment when totally poor, we are loved: and this is the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of love: God loves us. And He has granted the gift of love to each of us. The young man felt hungry. He felt hungry for his father's home, and yet he knew that he had no right anymore to call himself a son to him: he was a murderer! He had told him: Die before your time that I may live according to my will... And yet he goes, because he still can call the man whom he rejected 'Father'.

And what happens then? The father sees him coming from afar off; he does not wait in dignity for him to fall at his feet and confess his sins. He rushes towards him, he embraces him! And the young man makes his confession: I am no longer worthy to be called thy son - but at that moment the father stops him: you may not be worthy of being my son, and yet, you are my son, and you can not become a hireling in your father's house... He claims from his, as God claims from us that we should be aware, and grow to the level of our human greatness: the children of the Living God called to be partakers of the divine nature, His sons and daughters in Christ and in the Spirit.

That is what this parable tells us; that is what we must reflect on: where do we stand to this first simple, cruel, murderous words of the young man? And are we aware of our dereliction? Are we hungry enough to realise that we must go home to the Only One who loves us, and Who, seeing us fallen, still claims from us the greatness of sonship...

Let us reflect on this. It's one more step towards the day when in repentance we will come to make our confession, receive forgiveness. And if we were honest in our repentance, determined in our turning Godwards, we will be at home and ready to enter into Holy week together with Christ the Son, together with the Father Who gives His Son, together with the Mother of God Who accepts the death upon the cross of Her Son, that we may be saved. Amen

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THE HOLY MARTYRS EUTROPIUS, CLEONICUS AND BASILLISCUS were companions of Saint Theodore Tiro. When the righteous Theodore gloriously died, they remained behind in prison, and for a long time they were not sentenced due to a change in the emperor's deputy in the city of Amasea. When the new governor arrived, more inhuman than his predecessor, he ordered that these three be brought before him. All three were youths. Eutropius and Cleonicus were blood brothers, and Basilliscus was a kinsman of Saint Theodore. All three were like blood brothers in brotherly love. As such, they said before the governor, "As the Holy Trinity is undivided, so also are we by our faith undivided and in love inseparable." In vain was all the flattery on the part of the governor and in vain were his attempts to bribe Eutropius. First of all, the deputy invited Eutropius to dine with him. Eutropius refused, quoting from the Psalms, "Happy the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked" (Psalm 1:1). After that, the deputy offered him a large amount of money, one hundred-fifty litres of silver, which Eutropius also refused and reminded the governor that because of silver, Judas lost his soul. After all attempts at interrogation and torture, the first two were sentenced to be crucified, and Basilliscus was sentenced to be beheaded. And so it was, two brothers crucified on two crosses for which they gave thanks to Christ that He made them worthy of the same death by which He Himself died. The third, Basilliscus, was beheaded. They all entered the Kingdom of Joy where Saint Theodore, their commander, awaited them and who before them was glorified by Christ the Lord and Victor. They suffered honorably in 308

REFLECTION by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha

Humanly speaking, Christ, by His obedience, elevated Himself to primacy in the Church, in the world and in the history of mankind. No one can be a good leader who has not completed the school of obedience. Adam forfeited the authority and dominion over the living creatures and the elements of nature at the very moment when he showed himself disobedient to God. The Abba Moses said, "Obedience begets obedience; if someone listens to God, God also listens to him." It is obvious then, that God listens to man more than man listens to God, especially when one takes into consideration how often and in how many ways man sins daily against the commandments of God. It is a fact that the Eternal God listens to us, corruptible as we are, more than we listen to Him. This should fill all of us with shame who still have a conscience. When Saint Eutropius was being tortured, along with his two companions, he prayed to God, "Come to us in assistance as You came to Your servant Theodore Tiro." Suddenly, the ground shook and the obedient Lord appeared with His angels along with Saint Theodore. The Lord said to the sufferers, "During the time of your torture, I stood before your faces and observed your patience. I will write your names in the Book of Life."