



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sun, February 28, 2021 : The Sunday of the Prodigal Son • Saint for the day : Venerable Basil the Confessor



Hymns for Today

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.

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!"

Epistle Reading - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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 Reading - Luke 15:11-32

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

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!*

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.'"

This Week's Schedule

This Weekend

SAT, Feb 27: 5 PM Great Vespers

SUN, Feb 28: 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy,
Church School

+++

Church Open for Personal Prayer

Wednesdays: 11 AM - 1:30 PM & 3:30 PM - 6 PM

+++

FRI, March 5: Parish Food Sale 11 AM- 5 PM

+++

Next Weekend

SAT, March 6: 5 PM Great Vespers,

5:45 PM Parastas for Stephen Krill

SUN, March 7: 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy,
Church School, Parish Council Meeting

Announcements & Meetings

March Parish Council Meeting: Our March Parish Council Meeting will be held NEXT Sunday, March 7th. Normally we hold it on the 2nd week of the month, but with Great Lent beginning on the 14th we needed to move it forward.

Lenten Food Sale Dates: March 5, 12 & 26. 11AM to 5PM. Pls note that there will be no food sale on March 19 as this is our first week of Great Lent with services each evening. Anyone wishing to make a monetary donation towards the purchase of a box of potato pancake batter (\$40) or clam chowder ingredients (any amount) may do so by contacting Sandy Serafin or Diane Welgus.

March 5th & 12th Food Sale Menu: Halushki, Potato Pancakes, and Clam Chowder (*cold*).

Annual Maintenance Contribution - A reminder letter for the annual Maintenance Contribution was included in a recent bulletin and also sent out in the mail. If you have not received a copy please pick one up at the candle stand or contact Father Innocent. *We have begun to receive some of your annual contributions already! Thanks so much for your support and dedication to the needs of our humble parish!*

Birthdays & Anniversaries

March Birthdays: Emma Lynn DiBatista (3/3), Abby Harvey (3/4), Lisa Marie Harvey (3/7), Nadine Breisch (3/13), Joshua Leonori (3/22), Gerry Stankiewicz (3/27), Jean Ann Hutz (3/31)

This Week's Birthdays: Andrew Rivera (2/28), Emma Lynn DiBatista (3/3), Abby Harvey (3/4)

Altar Server Schedule

Sunday, Feb 28: Vladimir H, Christopher D, Andrew C

Sunday, March 7: Alec B, Kaleb D, Symeon C

Sunday, March 14: Vladimir H, Alex H, Andrew N

Sunday, March 21: Alec B, Tommy D, Ephraim N

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Rosalie Bagenski, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Antonette Terry, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Mat Delores Donlick & Fr. Daniel Donlick, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Marni Bachman & Family, Rose Marie, Elaine Benczkowski, Helen Gudaitis, Mahaffey Family, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Dustin & Nina, Louis Gianuzzi, Betty Serafin, Donald Tumavitch

Newly Departed: Mitred Archpriest Eugene Pianovich, Mitred Archpriest Daniel Ressetar

On the Church Calendar

Month of MARCH

Fri, 5th @ 11 AM-5 PM: Parish Food Sale

Sat, 6th @ 5 PM: Great Vespers

Sun, 7th @ 9 AM: Sunday of Last Judgement / Liturgy
Parish Council Meeting

Fri, 12th @ 11 AM-5 PM: Parish Food Sale

Sat, 13th @ 5 PM: Great Vespers

Beginning of GREAT LENT 2021 (Clean Week)

Sun, 14th @ 9 AM: Forgiveness Sunday / Divine Liturgy

Mon, 15th-Thurs, 18th @ 6:30 PM: Canon of St. Andrew

Fri, 19th @ 6:30 PM: Akathist w/ Lity for Departed

Sat, 20th @ 9 AM: Divine Liturgy - St. Theodore

Week 2 of Great Lent

Sat, 20th @ 5 PM: Great Vespers

Sun, 21st @ 9 AM: Triumph of Orthodoxy / Divine Liturgy

Wed, 24th @ 6 PM: Presanctified Liturgy

Fri, 26th @ 11 AM-5 PM: Parish Food Sale

Fri, 26th @ 6:30 PM: Akathist w/ Lity for the Departed

Sat, 27th @ 9 AM: Divine Liturgy

Week 3 of Great Lent

Sat, 27th @ 5 PM: Great Vespers

Sun, 28th @ 9 AM: St Gregory Palamas / Divine Liturgy

Wed 31st @ 6 PM: Presanctified Liturgy



Sunday of the Prodigal Son

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.

Starting tomorrow, the weekday readings summarize the events of Holy Week. On Monday we read Saint Mark's account of the Entry into Jerusalem. On Tuesday we read how Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray the Lord. On the night before His death Christ tells His disciples that one of them will betray Him. He also predicts that they will desert Him, and that Peter will deny Him three times. On Wednesday the Gospel describes how Judas betrayed the Savior with a kiss. Thursday's Gospel tells how Jesus was questioned by Pilate. On Friday we read the narrative of Christ's crucifixion and death.

On the Virtues: Obedience

Fr. Thomas Hopko, oca.org



In speaking of Christ's humility, Saint Paul said that Jesus was obedient to God His Father "unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2.8). In truth, Jesus obeyed God in all that He did.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me, but raise it up on the last day (Jn 6.38–39).

All that Jesus has and is, He has received from God the Father. From all eternity, the Son has listened to the Father in order to do His work and to accomplish His will. The will of God is that the Son should become a man, take up the sins of the world and die in the flesh in order to raise the dead that "nothing would be lost." Jesus has accomplished this in divine and perfect obedience, giving the example to all.

My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt . . . if this cannot pass until I drink it, Thy will be done (Mt 26.39, 42).

There is no degradation in obedience to God, nothing shameful or demeaning. On the contrary, to do the will of God is glory and life. It is the highest dignity of man, his greatest joy and delight (cf. Ps 119). It is the way of perfection for all, even for the man Jesus Himself.

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered, and being made perfect He became the source of salvation to all who obey Him (Heb 5.8–9).

Disobedience to God and His Son Jesus Christ is the source of all sin. Refusal to submit to God in all things is the cause of all sorrow and death. Those who hear the Gospel and fail to enter into the eternal rest of God, do so only "because of disobedience" (Heb 5–6, cf. Deut 4.29–31).

In the Orthodox spiritual tradition, obedience is a basic virtue: obedience to the Lord, to the Gospel, to the Church (Mt 18.17), to the leaders of the Church (Heb 13.7), to one's parents and elders, to "every ordinance of man" (1 Pet 2.13, Rom 13.1), "to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 6.21). There is no spiritual life without obedience, no freedom or liberation from sinful passions and lusts. To submit to God's discipline in all of its human forms, is the only way to obtain "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8.21). God disciplines us as His children out of His great love for us. "He disciplines us for our good, that we might share His holiness" (cf. Heb 12.3–11). Our obedience to God's commandments and discipline is the exclusive sign of our love for Him and His Son.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him... If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come and make our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me (Jn 14.21–24).