



# The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



## FEBRUARY BULLETIN SPONSOR

*In memory of my grand-mother Justina Popodich– Given By V.R. Andrew Bartek*

### Liturgical & Events Schedule

#### TWO WEEK EDITION

#### Sunday, February 25 – Publican & Pharisee

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / B-day social

#### Saturday March 2 – NO VESPERS

#### Sunday, March 3 – Prodigal Son

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy– Served by AP John Adamicio  
Social

#### Saturday, March 9

12:30 PM: Lunch & OCMC Mission Event

2:30 PM: Vespers

5:00 PM: Hierarchal Vespers / Archangel Michael in  
Broadview Heights (Metropolitan Tikhon presiding)

6:00 PM: Cocktail Reception

7:00 PM: Dinner and Celebration honorong Michael Her-  
zak

#### Sunday, March 10– Last Judgment

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy (concelebrating AP Christo-  
pher Rowe– Assistant Development Director For OCMC /

## ALTAR SOCIETY MEMBERS

### Annual Dues

Maureen Koval is now collecting \$20 for the annual dues. Thank you for your cooperation and all you do.



## Prayers Requested for Archbishop Nathaniel

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America has accepted His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel's request for a medical leave of absence from his archpastoral duties as he deals with serious health complications. His Eminence went into heart surgery at 11:30 AM on February 15, 2024 and will need a long period of rest to recover and recuperate.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has appointed His Grace Bishop Andrei as the administrator of the Romanian Episcopate, effective February 15, 2024, for the duration of His Eminence's recovery.

Please pray for the health and swift recovery of Archbishop Nathaniel. Cards and other correspondence can be sent to the Chancery of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America:

PO Box 309

Grass Lake, MI 49240-0309

## 40 Day Remembrance

Feb. 25 – Irene Horodnic

March 10– Helen LIs

## FEBRUARY SOCIALS

February, 25 - B-day / Anniversary Celebration

## March 2024 Monthly Charity

St. Basil's workers

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

<https://www.stjohnthebaptist-campbell.org/>

[padrebartek@gmail.com](mailto:padrebartek@gmail.com)

## PLEASE KEEP OUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH & SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS– UPDATED 1-18-24

Send a “Thinking of You” card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

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### Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee Beginning of the Lenten Triodion Commemorated on February 25

The Sunday after the Sunday of Zacchaeus is devoted to the Publican and the Pharisee. At Vespers the night before, the Triodion (the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent) begins.

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who scrupulously observed the requirements of religion: he prayed, fasted, and contributed money to the Temple. These are very good things, and should be imitated by anyone who loves God. We who may not fulfill these requirements as well as the Pharisee did should not feel entitled to criticize him for being faithful. His sin was in looking down on the Publican and feeling justified because of his external religious observances.

The second man was a Publican, a tax-collector who was despised by the people. He, however, displayed humility, and this humility justified him before God (Luke 18:14).

The lesson to be learned is that we possess neither the Pharisee’s religious piety, nor the Publican’s repentance, through which we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ’s teaching, asking Him to be merciful to us, deliver us from sin,

and to lead us on the path of salvation.

Two weeks before the beginning of the Fast, as part of our preparation for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, the Church prescribes the reading of Saint Mark's Gospel. From Monday to Friday the focus is on the end times, and the Savior's death and burial.

#### Luke 18:10-14 (Gospel)

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

## PRAYER LIST– Updated 2-18-24

**PARISHIONERS:** Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Donna Chiarelli / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Anthony Jesko, Jr. / Paula Kennedy / George Kolesar / Barbara Kolesar / Ronald (Thomas) Moore / Mary Jane Puskas / Kenny Ruff / Joanna Shepelevich / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Marion Zwinski

**HIERARCHS & CLERGY:** Archbishop Benjamin / Archbishop Alexander / Archbishop Melchizedek / Archbishop Nathaniel / Bishop Matthias / Fr. James Gleason (Fr.) / Sub-deacon Wylie Meath (Fr)

**FAMILY & FRIENDS:** Chrissy (Fr.) / David (Willison) / Dominic (Centofanti) / Ellen (Clark) / Genna & her un-born baby (Koval) / Paul Demkosky (Fr.) / Bruce Harris (Sabo) / Katie (Garrity) / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Ellen (Kessler) / Paul (Kolesar) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / Juli Kusinski (Fr.) / Jonathan Leso (Fr.) / Mea (Mahan) / Mary (Mahan) / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Matushka Raissa (Nicoloff) / Eugene (Pallai) / Teri Petroff (Fr.) / Matushka Helen (Psinka) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / William Romanchak (Fr.) / Roxanne Yannito / Julia Shirilla / Katherine (Steffaro) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Richard (Tusinac) / Brian (Shirilla) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Paula (Voytilla) / Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Drew (Willison) / Emilia Yannitto / Charlette Zenko / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / Zoland Zile (Fr.)

**MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS:** Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

### 2 Timothy 3:10-15 (Epistle)

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

### Sunday of the Prodigal Son Commemorated on March 3

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.

## March Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

- Bulletin:** In memory of my dad George on the occasion of his b-day– Given by V.R. Andrew Bartek  
**Wine:** In honor of Matthew Vansuch on occasion of his b-day-Given by Rdr. Nicholas & Monica Vansuch  
**Incense:** In honor of my mother Mary Frederick for her good health. –Given by Sherrie Frederick  
**Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light:** In honor of my dad, AP John Steffaro, on the occasion of his Birthday- Elizabeth Willison  
**Altar Candles:** In memory of my grandparents Michael & Helen Pasloskey and my grandparents John Psinka and Elizabeth Reams & Larry & Andrea Chamberlain - Given by Natalia Simko  
**Tetrapod Candles:** In memory of my mother Olga L. Sveda- Given by Barbara Kolesar / In honor of my dad, AP John Steffaro & deda ordination- Willison family Family  
**St. Herman Candles:** Commemorating all who participate in maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers & those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.  
**St. Panteleimon Icon Candles– AVAILABLE**  
**Protection Icon Candles:** For the Health of Mattushka Helen Psinka– Given by Michael & Natalia Simko  
**St. John the Baptist Candles: AVAILABLE**  
**Flowers:** In Memory of my dad, AP John Psinka– Given by Natalia Simko / March 13th Flowers in Memory of my Father Robert Frederick on the occasion of his 1st anniversary– Given by Sherrie Frederick

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>\$50 per month</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wine</li> <li>*Bulletin</li> <li>*Iconostasis Candles &amp; Eternal Light</li> <li>*Altar Candles</li> <li>*Tetrapod Candles</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>\$30 per month</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*St. Herman candles</li> <li>*St. Panteleimon Icon candles</li> <li>*Protection Icon candles</li> <li>*St. John the Baptist candles</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>\$25 per month</u></p> <p>Incense</p> <p><u>Flowers</u> - \$50 per week</p> |
|--|--|---|

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - February	2023	2024
<b>1st week</b>		
Feb. 1– Feast Day	22 - Liturgy	6 V vespers 10 Liturgy
Saturday	10 Vespers	8 Vespers
Sunday	73 / 43 Communicants	63 / 43 Communicants
<b>2nd week</b>		
Saturday	11 Vespers	9 Vespers
Sunday	71 / 41 communicants	60 / 46 Communicants
<b>3rd week</b>		
Saturday	14 Vespers	8 Vespers
Sunday	76 / 46 communicants	54 / 34 Communicants
<b>4th week</b>		
Saturday	10 Vespers	
Sunday	58 / 46 Communicants	

### FEBRUARY FINANCIALS THROUGH FEBRUARY 18

Expenses	\$11,505.12
Income	\$ 7,991.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(\$3,514.12)</b>
Weekly Tithe	\$7,680
Weekly Candles	\$271
Advent Social	\$10
Pascha Flowers	\$20
Fundraiser donation	\$10
Other Income: (that doesn't stay here):	
Cleveland Deanery	\$5
<b>Monthly Charity Income</b>	
OCMC	\$775

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Beginning this month (February) the cost of flowers will be \$50 per week. Please make note.  
 Flower purchases are for the week, not the month. Unless you want them for the month. Thank You !

## REPOSED LIST FOR FEBRUARY / MARCH

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|---|---|
| <p>25- Vasil Heib (1920) ©<br/>         25- John Kotuka (1960) ©<br/>         25- Veronica Shirilla (1995) ©<br/>         27- Steve Basala (1985)<br/>         27- Mike Kazonis (1950) ©<br/>         28- Mike Babiak (1922) ©<br/>         29- Milan Miller Batalo (1920) ©<br/>         1- Anna Rago (1920) ©<br/>         1- Konstantin Pavchula (1933) ©<br/>         1- Spiros Psaromatis (1936) ©<br/>         1- Johnny Basala (1995)<br/>         2- Gerasimakis Mikes (1930) ©<br/>         4- Theodora Anos (1963) ©<br/>         4- Marie Feltovich (2004) ©<br/>         5- Emily Vasilchek (1970) ©<br/>         5- Mary Bilchik (1923) ©<br/>         5- Milan Milasav (1926) ©<br/>         6- Joseph Libertyn (1989) ©<br/>         6- Joseph Macala Jr (1993) ©<br/>         6- Eva Nedostup (1921) ©<br/>         6- Mike Korfia (1932) ©<br/>         6- Alexander Tsvetanoff (1949) ©<br/>         8- Helen Konik (1925) ©<br/>         8- Olga Sweda (1995) ©<br/>         9- Rampo Nikoloff (1957) ©<br/>         9- Stephen Feltovich, Jr. (2015) ©<br/>         10- David Joseph Wargo (1977) ©<br/>         10- Mary Durshaw (1980) ©<br/>         11- John Kostrounis (1924) ©<br/>         11- Nicholas Sivachko (1934) ©<br/>         11- Christine James (1959) ©<br/>         11- Helen Kalafut (1962) ©<br/>         11- Olga (Dr Nicoloff cousin) 2023<br/>         12- Metropolitan Nicholas (2011)<br/>         12- Margaret Krause (2009) ©<br/>         12- Eli Maystevovich (1951) ©<br/>         13- George Malchisky Sr (1980)<br/>         13- Steven Gozur (1993) ©<br/>         13- Robert Ferdericks (2023)<br/>         14- Steven Nosik (1987) ©</p> | <p>14- Nikita Meris (1933) ©<br/>         14- John Furin (1933) ©<br/>         15- Tatianna Muc (1931) ©<br/>         15- Mary Furin (1996) ©<br/>         16- Mary Grubich (1931) ©<br/>         16- Catherine Kovchuiak (1947) ©<br/>         18- Sub-deacon William Livosky (2015) ©<br/>         18- Vladimir Conkich (1924) ©<br/>         18- Still born Sabastinak (1924) ©<br/>         18- John Furin (1934) ©<br/>         19- Manthas Geanakis (1956) ©<br/>         21- Tai Whitham<br/>         21- Sava Yovansvich (1920) ©<br/>         21- Michael Barol (1965) ©<br/>         22- Matthew Pacak (1969) ©<br/>         22- Anna Sweesy (2010) ©<br/>         22- Theodore Boldosh (1931) ©<br/>         23- John Olesko (1971) ©<br/>         23- Andrew Zlatfoff, Sr. (1975) ©<br/>         24- Mary Bolina (1988) ©<br/>         25- Pani Janette Moriak (1997)<br/>         25- David Chikerotis (2019)<br/>         26- Joseph Krause (1998) ©<br/>         26- Michael Urchak (2005) ©<br/>         26- Irene Homulos (2005) ©<br/>         26- Vasili Spirtos (1925) ©<br/>         26- George Konstaudinidis (1943) ©<br/>         26- Tony Deligeorge (1957) ©<br/>         26- Dan Barbus (1958) ©<br/>         27- Darlene Hryb (2017) ©<br/>         27- Bogan Bolgar (1927) ©<br/>         27- Evdokia Vasilika (1932) ©<br/>         27- George Britven (1957) ©<br/>         28- Anthony Fojcik (1920) ©<br/>         28- John Patellis (1926) ©<br/>         29- Trofin Melnik (1931) ©<br/>         30- Nicholas Aasta (1921) ©<br/>         30- George Andras (1999) ©<br/>         31- Helen Homulas (1974) ©<br/>         31- James Malli (1925) ©<br/>         31- Katherine Hamanzi (1946) ©</p> |
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### 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (Epistle)

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.

# 2024 Lenten Retreat

## St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church Campbell, OH

Rector, Archpriest Andrew Bartek

Saturday, March 30, 2024

*Spirituality in Everyday Life*

The Great Fast provides the opportunity to increase our spiritual awareness of God. How do we do that?

Join us for a day of reflection and discussion on why, and how to, invite God into our everyday life.

### **Schedule** (subject to minor change)

9:00 AM	Welcome & Sign-in
9:30 AM	Morning Prayers
10:00 AM:	Session 1
Noon	Lunch
1:00 PM	Session 2
3:00 PM	Vespers

### **Retreat Leader**

**Trudy Ellmore** serves as Diocesan Council Secretary to His Eminence, Archbishop Michael and the OCA Diocese of New York and New Jersey. The Summer of 2022 His Eminence, Archbishop Michael blessed her to create and deliver "Clergy Compensation Presentation" for the Diocese's annual Parish Council Workshops. The presentation was very well received and resulted in clergy compensation increases and life insurance policies being provided for more than a few priests across the Diocese.

She volunteers her time providing secretarial support to Archbishop Michael related to the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Annual Fund and for his seminary class handouts. She provides secretarial services to her Spiritual Father Archpriest Andrew Bartek, Rector of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church (Campbell, OH). She has volunteered on parish councils as secretary or treasurer, taught Church school and adult Bible studies and has served on various other church boards.

Home parish: St. Vladimir Orthodox Church, Trenton, NJ  
Rector: Fr. Volodymyr Chaikivskyi



## FEBRUARY / March Celebrations

- 25- Sandra Bufalini / Robert Willison
- 26- Andy Basile / Pani Bernedette Zarynow
- 26- Basil Glovinsky
- 1- Marilyn Calzone
- 2- Lori Batura
- 2- Andy Zenko
- 4- Kaitlyn Kuzemchak
- 6- AP John Steffaro
- 11- Cindy Ferrick
- 14- Reader Matthew Vansuch
- 16- Paul Bojan
- 16- Claudia Zile
- 18- Thomas Zelinsky
- 20- Gianna Hryb
- 20- Reader Jacob Hryb
- 21- Brooklyn Lariccia
- 24- Ann Jesko
- 25- Ephraimia Andrews
- 27- Mary Jane Puskas
- 30- Bobbie Royhab



### *NAMES DAY*

- 4- AB Daniel of Chicago & the Diocese of the mid-west
- 4- His Grace Bishop Gerasim of Forth Worth
- 17- AB Alejo of Mexico
- 17- His Grace Bishop Alexis of Alaska

### MEATFARE SUNDAY POT-LUCK SOCIAL

Sunday, March 10th there will be a Meatfare pot-luck social for all.

### CHEESEFARE SUNDAY

Sunday, March 17th there will be a Blini Coffee Hour hosted by the Sisterhood.

Thank You & God Bless

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH INVITES YOU TO THE



## OCMC YOUNGSTOWN MISSION LUNCHEON

### St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

305 Struthers-Liberty Rd. | Campbell, OH 44405

### Saturday, March 9

Lunch & Program at 12:30 PM  
Pan-Orthodox Vespers at 2:30 PM

**LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED  
FREE WILL OFFERING ENCOURAGED**

*(Proceeds will benefit OCMC ministries around the world.)*

Come and learn about OCMC's missionary efforts around the world. Hear the latest news and happenings from the mission field and how you can answer Christ's call to **"go and make disciples of all nations."**

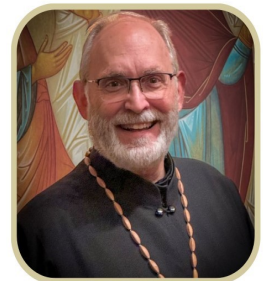
To register and donate online at:

[www.ocmc.org/Youngstown](http://www.ocmc.org/Youngstown)

For questions, please contact:

Fr. Andrew Bartek at [padrebartek@gmail.com](mailto:padrebartek@gmail.com),  
or OCMC Event Coordinator Elaine Drikakis at [elained@ocmc.org](mailto:elained@ocmc.org)

Donations can be mailed (payable to OCMC with a note) to: 220 Mason Manatee Way | St. Augustine, FL 32086



In-Person OCMC Presentation by:

**Fr. Chris Rowe**

OCMC Assistant Director of Development

*With a special Zoom presentation by an OCMC Missionary serving in the field.*

**SCAN TO  
DONATE  
TODAY!**



TO REGISTER OR DONATE ONLINE, SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT THE EVENT WEBSITE.

## Luke 15:11-32 (Gospel)

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

### LENT AS PILGRIMAGE

Two periods in the Orthodox Liturgical year are most significant: (1) Great Lent and (2) the period from Pascha to Pentecost. Great Lent is a symbol of our life on earth. The period from Pascha to Pentecost is a symbol of our life in heaven. The former period is a time of preparation, a pilgrimage, a spiritual ascent, leading to the glory of Easter. The latter period is a time of joy and thanksgiving, an image of the unending celebration in God's eternal Kingdom.

These two periods each have their own liturgical books, the Triodion and the Pentecostarion. These books contain the richest treasures of Orthodox hymnology—literally hundreds upon hundreds of hymns and prayers developed especially from the Gospel readings and arranged according to various themes such as repentance, forgiveness, fasting, prayer, renewal, and joy.

Are you familiar with the structure of Lent? The ten 10 week period of the Triodion begins with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and ends with the Saturday of Holy Week. Thus, in addition to the 40 days of Lent (6 weeks), it includes three pre-Lenten weeks and Holy Week up to Saturday. The four-pre-Lenten Sunday's are known as: (1) The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee; (2) The

Sunday of the Prodigal Son; (3) The Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare), and (4) The Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare).

Fasting, that is "eating sparingly and abstaining from certain foods," begins gradually during the pre-Lenten season. The week after the Publican and the Pharisee is fast free. During the week after the Sunday of the Prodigal Son only regular fasting on Wednesday and Friday is prescribed. Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare) is the last day on which meat is permitted. Then fish, eggs, and milk products may be eaten through the Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare). On the next day, Clean or Pure Monday, Lent begins, a period of strict fasting. However, physical fasting from food is only one aspect of Lent. It should not excessively dominate our thinking. It is worthless without spiritual fasting from evil. Spiritual fasting is the breaking with sin through repentance (Holy Confession) and the practice of positive disciplines such as prayer, daily reading of the Bible, regular attendance at all Lenten services including Sunday's, and frequent Holy Communion—leading to spiritual renewal.

The entire Triodion period (56 days of fasting) is a journey to Pascha, a spiritual pilgrimage, a time of cleansing and renewal, a reaffirmation of our liberation from the power of sin and **Con't next Pg**



## *Lent as Pilgrimage con't from previous pg*

Materialistic values. As the ancient Jews crossed the Red Sea and journeyed for 40 years in the desert before entering the Promised Land, so we also seek to cross the passageway of true repentance during Lent so that we may leave behind the old sinful nature and enter into a new life by the grace of the risen Christ.

Does this mean that the gift of new life received at our baptism is less important to us at other times of the year and more important during Lent? By no means. **OUR NEW BIRTH IN BAPTISM, OUR PASSAGE FROM DEATH TO LIFE IN CHRIST, IS ALWAYS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WHOLE EXISTENCE, THE SOURCE OF POWER FOR ALL OUR STRIVINGS, AND THE BASIS OF ALL OUR HOPES.** Christian life is always meant to be a permanent Pascha, a continuous festival of joy and thanksgiving, even amidst temptations, struggles, and suffering.

But all too often the power of sin touches us and defeats us. We give ourselves over to love of the world and “everything that belongs to the world—what sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of” (1John 2:16) Lent gives us the opportunity to get back on the right track. It helps us through specific ways to renew and deepen our life in Christ.

Our goals for this period:

1. Renewal through repentance
2. Reordering of our priorities according to Christ's teachings
3. Developing a stable, growing life in union with Christ.

Our provisions for this Lenten journey are also 3:

1. Prayer / Sacramental life
2. Fasting
3. Good deeds.

Read Matthew 6:1-18. This passage from the Sermon on the Mount tells us of Jesus' teachings on the three aspects of Christian life which are central to Lent.

*A year of the Lord Liturgical Bible Studies Vol. 3*

## MEDITATION

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the “bright sadness” of Lent, we see—far, far away—the destination. It is the joy of Easter, it is the entrance into glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter effort a “spiritual spring.” The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. “Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of humankind!” Alexander Schmemmann, Great Lent

## PRAYER

IN the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Open to me, O giver of Life, the gates of repentance: for early in the morning my spirit seeks you in Your holy temple. Although I bear a temple of the body wholly impure. O merciful God, cleanse me by Your loving kindness. Amen.

A Hymn of Repentance, Lenten Matins

## THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE

On the first Sunday of the Triodion during the Liturgy we hear the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. What if the Parable went this way?

A respected educator, who had made many contributions to a local school system and also served for many years as Sunday School supervisor in his parish, came to his local Orthodox Church one Sunday morning and prayed: “I thank you, Lord, for my pious parents who had the wisdom and strength to sacrifice for my education. I thank you for the opportunities that came along in my life. I haven't squandered my talents, like others, but used them to great advantage for my self and society. I am satisfied with my place in the community and thankful for my personal success.”

On the same Sunday morning a less than scrupulous car salesman also came to church and he prayed this way: “Lord, I am ashamed to come to Church. How can I even talk to You. You know that I have used every sales trick in the book. I have taken advantage of many people. If there is any hope for me it is because of Your mercy, not because of anything I can do. Forgive me and help me make a new beginning.”

“I tell you,” said Jesus, “this man (the salesman) was in the right with God when he went home, rather than the other!” See Luke 18:14

Jesus' words sometimes shocked pious people, especially those who regarded God's Kingdom as their exclusive possession and thought of **Con't next Pg**

### **Publican & Pharisee con't from previous pg**

Themselves as God's elite. Even today Christ may appear disturbingly unfamiliar if we seek to understand Him in human terms, to place Him within our own molds, and to deal with Him on the basis of our own categories and patterns of thought and action. Indeed what a strange Lord we have who was born in a manger; who befriended the poor, the sick and the outcast; who came to serve and not be to served; who loved sinners, prostitutes and tax collectors, and who said He came to save the lost and not the righteous!

We are not to suppose that all tax collectors were praised by Jesus, nor that all the Pharisees were condemned by Him. Not all tax collectors confessed their sins humbly before God, nor did all Pharisees pray in a self-righteous way. If Jesus used two stereotypes from His society, the respected Pharisee and the despised Publican, He did so to show that God cares nothing for stereotypes. God looks into our hearts. A proud, self-satisfied and self-glorifying heart is an abomination to Him, no matter how respected a person may be by social or religious standards. But a **HUMBLE, CONTRITE, AND PENITENT HEART WHICH MAKES NO CLAIMS BEFORE GOD BUT RECOGNIZES ITS TOTAL DEPENDANCE ON HIM IS A FRAGRANT SACRIFICE TO HIM, EVEN IF IT BELONGS TO A PERSON REGARDED BY OTHERS AS A SINNER.**

Jesus praises the humble repentance of the publican and condemns the self-righteous pride of the Pharisee. This parable is especially challenging to Christians who assume a superior status simply because they are Christians. Helmut Thielicke has put it this way: "Pharisaic pride is one of the most dreadful and also the most infectious diseases of Christianity, your sin and my sin, the sin of us who have subtly made of our Christianity a sign of virtue and given it the unpleasant smack of privilege." Read Luke 18:10-14 and 2 Timothy 3: 10-15

### **MEDITATION**

The heart of the Publican's prayer is an appeal, filled with trust, to the goodness and the tenderness of God. "God be merciful to me a sinner," he says. These first words, "God be merciful" echo the opening words of Psalm 51, which is essentially a psalm of penitence; "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving Kindness: according to the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions." The fact that Jesus chooses to place these words in the mouth of the publican and so to make them a model of our prayers of repentance, throws a great deal of light on the soul of our Savior, and on what He intends. What Jesus asks of a penitent sinner (and so, of each one of us) is above all this abandon, this absolute trust in the tender mercy and the favor of God.

### **PRAYER**

As a publican, let us offer to God prayers for mercy. Let us avoid the ungrateful prayer of the Pharisee and the boastful words with which he judged his neighbor, that we may receive God's Forgiveness. O Christ, Who of your own will endured the Cross and raised up the world by Your divine power, be merciful to Your servants. Amen.

### **FREEDOM: BURDEN & GIFT**

Freedom is a person's greatest burden! It is an awesome gift of God which makes every person a kind of god—a center of consciousness, will and decision; an agent of good or evil in the world; even a partner or a rival of God! "Father," the younger son said, "give me my share of the property now" (Luke 15:12). And the father did! Bent on exercising his freedom in his own way, the son not many days later sold the property, took the money and left home to go to a far country where he could live in total independence. Amazingly the father let **Con't Next Pg**

### **PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM**

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. (*Prostration*)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant. (*Prostration*)

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. (*Prostration*)

O God, cleanse me a sinner. (*12 times*) deep bow, then:

*Read the entire prayer again with a single prostration at the end.*

## PRAYER

Let us behold the power of the mystery of salvation. When the Prodigal Son departed from sin and returned to his Father's house, his loving Father came out to meet him and kissed him. He restored to the Prodigal the signs of his former glory. Let our lives, then, be worthy of the loving Father Who has offered the Savior as sacrifice for us. Let us pray to Him: As the Prodigal Son I come to You, merciful God; I have wasted my whole life in a foreign land, and I have scattered the wealth which you gave me. Receive me in repentance, O Father, and have mercy upon me. Amen.

Adapted Hymns, Sunday of the Prodigal Son

## MEDITATION

There is a principal in spiritual life which is unchanging: the more a person exercises his or her freedom in the right way, with love and sharing, forgiveness and reconciliation, the more a person becomes free. But the more a person exercises his or her freedom in the wrong way, with selfishness and arbitrariness, insensitivity and carelessness, the more a person becomes enslaved to self, the world, and human conditions. True freedom is with God who alone can liberate us from the bondage of our own will given to sinful inclinations and ways. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3:17). True Freedom is with Christ whose saving truths set us free. "If the Son sets you free, then you will be really free" (John 8:36)

### *Freedom con't from previous pg*

Him go. He did not try to stop him. If the son insists, the father cannot do otherwise than let him be free to live his own life. There is guidance, admonition, and discipline. But finally he must let go. He loves his child too much to violate his or her personal dignity. He honors the gift of freedom, even though pain and injury may lie ahead for the son or daughter.

What do you do with your gift of freedom? The younger son who left his father's house wanted to be free but found himself a slave. He squandered his possessions—not merely his money but also his human qualities—until he reached a state of physical and spiritual desperation. In his search for complete autonomy—apartness from God—he found a black hole, a hell of self-destruction. In the act of exercising his freedom arbitrarily, he became a slave first to himself, then to things, and then to others.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 This is the passage for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

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## PRAYER

O loving Father, I have departed far from You, but forsake me not, neither reject me from Your Kingdom. The evil enemy has stripped me and taken all my wealth. I have wasted, like the Prodigal, the grace given to my soul. But now I have arisen and returned, and to You I cry out: Make me as one of Your hired servants. O Christ, for my sake on the Cross You stretched out Your sinless hands, to rescue me from the Evil One, and to clothe me once again with a pure garment. O loving Lord, glory to You!

Adapted Hymn of Praises, Sunday of the Prodigal Son

## LENTEN BOOKS FOR SALE

There are some Lenten prayer books for sale:

Pre-sanctified Liturgy

Holy Saturday

And some others.

Please check at the Candle desk. Price: \$3.00 each



## SISTERHOOD SILENT BAKE AUCTION

### *Success!*

A huge thank you goes out to the Sisterhood & all those who baked and all those who purchased the baked goods with your action bid. As of February 18th, the Sisterhood collected \$302.