



## Welcome!

Whether you're searching for a new church home or just visiting, we're glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

## This Week

### No Bible Study this Wednesday

Next Bible Study on Wednesday, March 6

### Saturday, March 2

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

### Sunday, March 3 – Meatfare Sunday

9:00 am Adult Education

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Church School following Divine Liturgy

### ➤ Important Upcoming Dates:

- Cheesefare Sunday – March 10
- Great Lent Begins (Clean Monday) – March 11
- *Western Easter* – April 21
- Holy Pascha – April 28

**To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians** who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*  
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*  
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

## Sunday of the Prodigal Son

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA  
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

February 24, 2019

## Announcements

➤ We are taking a second collection today to benefit the **victims of the four-alarm fire** that destroyed two homes and seriously damaged one other on the 200 block of Munson Ave, only one block away from our church. We have learned three young families lived at one of the homes which was destroyed and another family at the second home. They need our immediate help.

In our ongoing efforts to be a presence for good in the area, we are taking immediate donations of clothes, household goods, and money to assist the victims. There are many children and adults that are in need of clothing and can use financial assistance.

**If you have not had an opportunity to participate in our previous financial appeal this week, please give generously to our second collection today.** Your help is greatly appreciated. Our church has been designated as the city-wide focus of collections to help these families.

➤ **Our February hoagie sale** is being held on Wednesday, February 27. Italian Hoagies and wraps are \$6.50 each and the Turkey hoagies and wraps are \$7.00 each. Orders can be placed by calling 412-974-9912, faxing 724-926-4052 or emailing rjmbmsam1@verizon.net. Orders are due on Sunday evening, February 24. Orders can be picked up between noon and 1:00 pm February 27 at the church hall.

➤ **The St Nicholas Sisterhood will hold a meeting after church today** to discuss the blini dinner on March 10. The men of our parish are sponsoring the meatfare coffee hour next week. God bless you all for your faithfulness!

## Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be Hospitalized; Jack Saban (VA). Home: Nancy Pravlochak, Georgiann Robes. Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Olga Bednar, Garnette Kerchum, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

➤ **Vigil Lights From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Michelle Bittner. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha, Jack Saban, Michelle Bittner and Leonard Soroka. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of Nancy Pravlochak and Michelle Bittner. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, John Shaytar; for the health of Michelle Bittner and Leonard Soroka. **From John & Olga** for the departed servant, Ann Marie Kowalcheck; for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov and Elizabeth Grace Kowalcheck on her birthday. **From Bob & Mary Beth Madalinsky** for the health of Michelle Bittner. **From Kristie Mertz** for the health of Michelle Bittner. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of Michelle Bittner. **From Donya Yewisiak** for the health of Reader Leonard and Nancy Pravlochak. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton, Elizabeth Marie Hamilton and Reader Leonard. **From Alina** for the health of George. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servant, (brother) Nicholas—Memory Eternal; for the health of Michelle; special intentions.

## Thank you

➤ to **Bob and Mary Beth Madalinsky** for donating the bulletins in the month of February in memory of Ann Kunca.

➤ to **all those who worked at the Community Dinner** yesterday: May God richly bless you for your selfless work and love for serving those who are in need.

**St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.**

## Prodigal Son

by Fr Victor Potapov

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. (*continued on next page*)

# Hymns and Readings for Today

## **Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 6**

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb;  
the guards became as dead men.  
Mary stood by Thy grave,  
seeking Thy most pure Body.  
Thou didst capture hell,  
not being tempted by it.  
Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life.  
O Lord who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee!

## **Troparion of St John the Baptist Tone 4**

The head of the Forerunner has shone from the earth,  
sending forth rays of incorruption and healings to the faithful.  
It gathers together a multitude of Angels above  
and summons the human race below//  
to send up glory with one voice to Christ our God.

## **Kontakion of St John the Baptist Tone 2**

O Prophet of God and Forerunner of Grace,  
we have found thy head as a sacred rose.  
Therefore we always receive healings from it,  
and as in times past, now thou preachest  
repentance to the world.

## **Kontakion from the Lenten Triodion Tone 4**

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee!  
Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears!  
Let us cry to our Savior:  
"Have mercy on us, //  
O only merciful One!"

## **Prokeimenon (Psalm 27:9) Tone 6**

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

## **Epistle of the Sunday (I Cor 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 of the Sunday 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 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.'

## **Communion Hymn (Ps 148)**

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!

## **Prodigal Son (*continued*)**

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."

In a word, with each day he gives himself up more and more to the world, and, finally, he goes off to "a far country." What is the result of such an estrangement from the Holy Church? It is the same as the result of the prodigal son's leaving his parents' house. Light-minded youths very quickly waste their excellent energies and talents of soul and body, ruining for time and eternity all the good they have done. Meanwhile, there appears "a mighty famine in that land": emptiness and dissatisfaction — the inevitable result of wild pleasures. - *St John Maximovitch*

# Today in Church School

**Today's lesson:** The Seven Ecumenical Councils (Part 2)

## **Questions to ask/review:**

- Who presides over the councils? Why are they called? What example was set by the Jerusalem council in the book of Acts?
- What is meant by "heresy"?
- What was decided at each of the Seven Ecumenical Councils?
- How did each decision clarify our understanding of God and our salvation?
- Describe the heresy of the Monophysites. According to the Forth Ecumenical Council, what is the correct teaching?
- Describe the heresy of Monothelism. How is it similar to Monophysitism? According to the Sixth Ecumenical Council, what is the correct teaching?
- For younger students: Describe the life of St. Nina. Where and how did she serve God? Describe the life of St. Patrick. Where and how did he serve God?

## **Suggested Activities at home:**

- St. Nina brought Christianity to the land of Georgia by healing the queen of the land. However, the king would not believe, until one day the sun disappeared and did not return until he confessed Christ. Study the sun this week – its make-up, rising and setting. Watch the sunrise or sunset. Imagine with your child the king lost in the forest in the darkness with no sunlight in the middle of day.
- Prayer: Lord, St. Nina taught us that You are the light of the world. Lord, teach us to love our enemies, as did Your servant St. Patrick.