

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley
a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406 **stmichaelvannuys.org**

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The Sunday of the Prodigal Son and the First and Second Discoveries of the Forerunner's Honorable Head

Sunday, February 24, 2019

Tone 6; Eothinon 6

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 6)

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Apolytikion for St. John the Baptist (Tone 4)

The Forerunner's sacred head, having dawned forth from the earth, doth send incorruption's rays unto the faithful, whereby they find healings of their ills. From on high he gathereth the choirs of the Angels and on earth he summoneth the whole race of mankind, that they with one voice might send up glory to Christ our God.

Apolytikion of our Patron the Archangel Michael (Tone 4)

O ye foremost of the heavenly hosts we beseech thee, though we are unworthy, pray that we may be encompassed with a shadow of Thy unearthly glory, preserving us who kneel and cry endlessly: deliver us from oppression since ye are the prince of the Highest Power.

Kontakion for the Prodigal Son (Tone 3)

Foolishly I sprang away from Thy great fatherly glory, and dispersed in wicked deeds the riches that Thou didst give me. With the Prodigal I therefore cry unto Thee now: I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. But receive me in repentance; make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for the Discovery of the Forerunner's Honorable Head)

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord. O God, hear my voice.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (4:6-15)

Brethren, it is the God Who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. While we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that He Who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

THE GOSPEL (for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke (15:11-32)

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. 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 he 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.’”

The Synaxarion

On February 24 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the First and Second Discoveries of the Honorable Head of the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John.

Verses

From the earth, the Forerunner showeth forth his august head,
Exhorting us once again to bring forth fruits that are worthy.

Thou who didst once baptize the throngs in springs of waters,
Appearing from the earth, baptize with springs of wonders.

On the twenty-fourth the Precursor’s head appeared.

When John was beheaded, Herodias—the wicked wife of Herod—ordered that his head not be buried with his body for she feared that this awesome prophet, somehow, would resurrect. Therefore, she took his head and buried it deep in the ground in a secluded and dishonorable place. Her maidservant, the good and devout Johanna, could not tolerate

this. Secretly she unearthed it, translated it to Jerusalem and buried it on the Mount of Olives. After a considerable period of time, the monk Innocent took up abode there, exactly in the place where the head of the Baptist was buried. Wanting to build himself a cell for himself, he dug deep and discovered an earthen vessel and in it a head, which was mysteriously revealed to him to be the head of the Baptizer. He revered it and reburied it in the same spot. Later, according to God's Providence, this miracle-working head of St. John traveled from place to place, sunk into the darkness of forgetfulness and again was rediscovered. Finally, during the reign of the pious Empress Theodora, it was translated to Constantinople. It now rests in the Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria near the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Patriarchate.

On this day, we make remembrance of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which occurs in the noble Gospel and which our deified Fathers reinstated in the Triodion.

Verses

O thou who art like me, a prodigal,
come forward with confidence and tranquility;
For unto all has been opened the door of Divine Mercy.

In the parable our Savior tells, Jesus illustrates three things: the condition of the sinner, the canon of repentance and the knowledge of God's compassion. For in the person of the prodigal son, we view the wretched condition that sin creates for us, distant from God and His Sacraments. However, we become aware of ourselves and awaken, hastening with hope to return to Him through repentance. Our Savior wants to call back to His mansions all those who have been overtaken by despair, lacking hope of forgiveness for their grave sins. The Father encourages all of his lost children to remove the desperation from their hearts, and revive their energies for virtuous deeds.

Through Thine ineffable love for mankind, O Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only* those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread is being offered this morning by Emile Skaff and family in memory of Carrie Deeb Skaff. Memory eternal.

Holy Bread and memorial wheat is being offered today by Leila & Abdallah Zaki for the forty-day memorial of the newly-departed servant of God, Nadia Mallouk (+11 January, 2019) of Montreal, Canada; the beloved sister of Leila Zaki. Memory eternal.

Memorial wheat is being offered this morning for the forty-day memorial of the newly-departed servant of God, Nancy Farha (+23 January, 2019) of Wichita, Kansas; the beloved grandmother of Anna Rowe. Memory eternal.

Today's "Pancake Breakfast" is being hosted by Emile Skaff and John Apostolou in memory of Carrie Deeb Skaff. All proceeds will be used to help our Church School curriculum.

Special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for Christina Maria Tortolano by her devoted family on the occasion of her natal day (February 28) with gratitude to God for His infinite blessings. May His guiding light illumine her life, and grant her many years in His loving grace.

for the repose of the newly-departed servant of God, Dolores Saba (+21 February, 2019). Memory eternal.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership

Our Annual Meeting will convene immediately following the Divine Liturgy this morning. Please be sure to sign-in with our Secretary, Eric Nelson, today in order to help expedite the record for our quorum.

Annual Report booklets were distributed last Sunday, February 17, 2019, however if you did not receive one, please check with Eric for your copy.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

[Note: Wednesday and Friday are observed as days of fasting.]

The Sunday of Meat Fare

[the final day for the consumption of all meat; dairy products allowed]

Saturday, March 2nd, – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, March 3rd – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Cheese Fare Sunday – March 10th

[the final day for the consumption of all dairy products]

Beginning of Great Lent - Monday, March 11th

Weekday Lenten Services: Mondays, Great Compline, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesdays, Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts, 6:30 p.m.

Fridays, Akathist Hymn (Intercessory Prayer Service), 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday Lenten Dinner Host Scheduling

Great Lent begins on Monday, March 11. Each Wednesday evening a simple Lenten meal is hosted by a group of families of our parish following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, beginning on March 13—hosted by families of our Church School. If you have not participated in previous years and would like to be included in a group on the following Wednesday evenings, please phone Rima Hage in the evenings at: 818-366-2119, or e-mail her at: <rimahingh@yahoo.com> to sign-up and she will gladly provide you with further details on being part of a group. The menu is vegan and should be modest and not elaborate.

Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.

Holy Bread Offering List

Mar 03 - The Habib family

Mar 10 - open

Mar 17 - The Abughazaleh Family

Mar 24 - open

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Mar 03 - Chili Cook-off (Meat Fare)

Mar 10 - the Ajalat family (Cheese Fare)

Mar 17 - The Abughazaleh Family

Mar 24 - open

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread and Cindy Tamoush at: (818-345-4363; famtam5@socal.rr.com) to sign-up for the Coffee Hour.

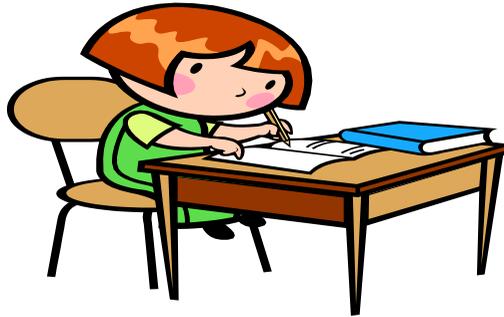
Church School Festival Workshop: Sunday, Feb. 10th, 17th and 24th

from 11:15 to 12 noon in the Church School Classrooms.

**It is our hope to have an entry by each of our children
at this year's Parish Life Conference in the:**

Creative Writing, Poetry,

+



Photography and Creative Arts Festivals



NOTE: Late entries CANNOT be accepted. Sorry.

For further information, please speak with our Church School teachers or visit the Archdiocese website at: < <http://www.antiochian.org/festivals>>.

Have You Visited our Bookstore Lately?

Several New Items Have Arrived for Great Lent. You may also place your order for a Holy Week Service Book. Also, beautiful handmade wood Orthodox crosses (crafted by Al Kinan) are for sale (\$25), 90% of proceeds will help support the Orthodox Secondary School in Taybeh, Palestine. The crosses make great gifts. Fr. Constantine Nasr and Fr. Timothy are benefactors of this school.

Upcoming Events (see the foyer bulletin board for more information)

50th Anniversary Chili Cook-off - Sunday of Meat Fare
March 3, 2019; Adults/\$7; under 12/\$5
sign-up with Adrienne Levy at: alevy202@gmail.com

50th Anniversary Annunciation Tea on Saturday,
March 23rd; Featured speaker: Tammy Tamoush Salamone
who will share her story on recovering from breast cancer:
“Are you there God? It’s me, Tammy”

Young Adult Retreat: May 3-5, 2019 (Boston)
“Forming Authentic Relationships in a Fallen World;”
\$135/person (by April 5); \$150/person (April 6-30)
Hotel: \$159/night (Homewood Suites; Worcester, MA)

Lenten Retreat at St. Michael Church (Whittier), Saturday, March 16
with Father John Finley who will present three meditations on:
“The Inner Heaven of Man” Focusing Upon the Healing of
Mind, Heart and Will; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., RSVP by e-mail to
Father John Fenton: frjohnfenton@gmail.com

Teen Gathering - Saturday, March 30, 2019 at
St. Nicholas Cathedral.

50th Anniversary St. Michael Golf Classic - Monday, May 13, 2019
Woodland Hills Country Club

IOCC “Share the Love” Valentine Dinner, Sunday, May 19, 2019
St. Luke Church (Garden Grove) at 5 p.m., \$50/person
Go to: iocc.org/sharethelove

Neighborhood Open Houses

As we celebrate our parish's Fiftieth Year, it is our hope that you will get to know your fellow parishioners in your neighborhood. We have formed a listing of our members in each area of the Los Angeles metropolitan area and are looking for volunteers to host a neighborhood gathering sometime this year. Please contact Carolyn Sadd, who is being assisted by George Khouri in providing you with a list of parishioners in your area, should you be interested in being a host. The gatherings are to be informal and to allow for socializing; maximum two (2) hours, i.e., 7-9 p.m. Deserts or refreshments may be considered. Potlucks may also be planned. Hosts will be responsible in contacting parishioners in their neighborhood. We are asking our hosts not to include dates between March 11 to April 28 (Great Lent to Pascha); and to also note the church calendar dates of fasting. Should you have any questions, please speak with Father Timothy: 818-219-3761 <pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org>

Summer Camp Scholarships Available

Thanks to the funding of The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Summer Camp scholarships are available to any young person active in our parish and who may benefit from some help. Please speak with Father Timothy for more information. The deadline is March 1, 2019.

Antiochian Archdiocese Convention - July 21-28, 2019

Host: St. Nicholas Church; Grand Rapids, Michigan

Go to: AC2019gr.org to register for your hotel room, view the Convention schedule and download forms for the ad book and registration. There are two (2) Convention hotels: 1) the Amway Grand Plaza (\$149/night) with free self-parking and WiFi; 2) the JW Marriott (\$184/night), adjacent to the Convention hotel.

67th Annual Diocesan Parish Life Conference

Host: St. Anthony Church; San Diego, California, July 3-7, 2019

Go to: antiochianevents.com/la.html to register for your hotel room (\$169/night) at the Sheraton Harbor Island and Marina.

Antiochian House of Studies Begins Class Enrollment
[1020 Base Line Rd., La Verne, CA, 91750]

The following classes are scheduled for all interested: 1) Sacred Church Music with V. Rev. Anna Hakimeh (Arabic and English); to be held every other Saturday for 2.5 hours, beginning on March 2, 2019 at 10 a.m., \$600 [for further information contact Fr. Anania at: fatheranantias@gmail.com] 2) Sacred Art of Iconography with Khouiryeh Randa Al Khoury Azar; seven classes planned for Saturdays (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.), and Sundays (1-6 p.m.); March 30-31, April 06-07, 13-15, and on May 18 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), \$600, plus \$150 for course materials [for further information contact Khouiryeh Randa at: randa.Azar@gmail.com]. For registration contact: Anna Naser at 714-971-2244 or annasgi@yahoo.com for an application form.

March is Women's Month in the Antiochian Archdiocese

Ladies: Would you like to volunteer to help usher in March? Please phone Anita Chala at: 310-923-6806 to sign-up or e-mail her at: tuffy918@hotmail.com

PREPARATION FOR GREAT LENT

Great Lent is a particular spiritual season of the Christian Church when each of us begins to take a serious look at our own spiritual journey with God. It gives us a chance to see where we are and how we can conform our lives to that, which is found in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to maintain the proper character of the season within the life of the Church, we begin Lent with a new set of norms that help us to be better able to enrich our spiritual life. The tone within our church life gradually changes. There is a greater solemnity that requires the absence of elaborate parties, excessive pleasures, unnecessary vices, lavish menus, and the list goes on and on. It is important to remember, however, that our entrance into this season is one of joy and not morbidity. The call to Lent can be heard in the words of the Forgiveness Sunday Vespers: *Let us enter the fast with joy, O faithful. Let us not be sad. Let us cleanse our faces with the waters of dispassion . . . Let us begin the fast with joy! Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us*

purify our souls and cleanse our flesh. Let us abstain from passion as we abstain from foods, taking pleasure in the good works of the Spirit, and accomplishing them in love that we all may be made worthy of see the passion of Christ our god and His Holy Resurrection, rejoicing with spiritual joy.

Our Church prescribes a period of time prior to the beginning of Great Lent for preparing our minds and hearts. The duration of this time of preparation is three weeks and began last Sunday that was dedicated to the lesson of *The Pharisee and the Publican*.

The second Sunday is called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. The Gospel reading is the Parable of the Lord, recorded for us in the Gospel of St. Luke (15:11f). We are taught to have hope in God's mercy. Regardless of what we have done—or may not have done, we should never despair. Our God, who is a loving Father, will receive us in His bosom as did the Father of the Prodigal Son. The Kontakion (Hymn highlighting the lesson) points this out to us: When I disobeyed in ignorance Thy Fatherly glory I wasted in iniquities the riches that Thou gave me. Wherefore I cry to Thee with the voice of the Prodigal Son saying, I have sinned before Thee, O compassionate Father, receive me, repentant and make me one of Thy hired servants.

Meditation

The far-off country where the Prodigal wandered is the figure of a world in which the activities of human beings, even their duties, are disconnected, or antagonistic to each other . . . a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods that do not satisfy, drinks that do not quench our thirst; a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, engulfed as it is in untruth, deceit and sin.

... There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God, since the world in which we live is not a normal world, but a waste land . . . St. Ambrose of Milan comments: *He who separates himself from Christ is in exile from the fatherland and becomes a subject of the world. But we are not aliens and foreigners; we are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God: we were sometime afar off, but we were made near by the Blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:19, 13)* [George Barrois; Scripture Readings in Orthodox Worship, p. 25]

Pastoral Sermon by Father Timothy Baclig
The Sunday of the Prodigal Son
February 24, 2019

In the February 2017 issue of The Word magazine helps us to understand the challenge that we have today as a church. Bishop JOHN begins his editorial with the following statement: *Social scientists have been telling us that people are more interested in being spiritual, and less and less interested in following organized religion. Many want to have a relationship with God, but on their own terms. They want lots of nice feelings, assurance of some kind of salvation and a comfort in an enlightenment that they can control. In such a system, everyone chooses how to be spiritual and makes up the rules.*

Bishop JOHN's editorial comments is an introduction to how we have had to re-think our approach in reaching others. If we are to ask ourselves: Why is it that many are turned off by church as an institution? We could even ask ourselves: What comes to mind when you think of the word, "institution?" A well established organization; something that expects conformity! Aha! "Conformity."

Just think about the prodigal son in today's lesson. As a young man he was obviously stressed out! He was boxed in and I guess, considered himself suffocating. He had to leave home.

The difference of the lesson our Lord presented to the listeners in His day, and the situation of our lives today is: First, if a young person is raised in a Christian home (where there are the foundational aspects of Christian morals and discipline along with the necessary experience of love), and then takes the bold step that the prodigal son did, thinking that he could "do things on his own;" he would be guided by a conscience. However, we know from the circumstances of our day that homes do not provide for the formative values of Christian homes. Consequently, there are many more young and old who have left home and have not experienced foundational aspects of morals and discipline that cause one to have a conscience. They are like ships that have set sail, with no compass for direction, allowing the current to take them further away from their home port, with no sense of where they will arrive and in some cases, having no means of returning back home.

Today as we approach the season of the Great Fast. Are we the prodigal spoken of in today's Gospel: anxious to get what we consider we rightly deserve for

ourselves so we can do what we want? Or are we like the older son in the parable, who resent the fact that our brother can do what he “jolly well pleases...” with our Father’s wealth, while you and I have to go about doing our regular chores and never get properly compensated, or even acknowledged?

In the last three weeks we have been hearing lessons that prepare us for the season of Great Lent. A preparation that begins even before we are called upon to start fasting or focusing our attention upon doing good works. This past week there was no fasting in the church. Some would think that, like a *mardi gras* the church permits and even allows us to engage in “riotous living;” you know, giving us a chance to “get it all out of our system,” to “eat, drink, and be merry.”

Now let me ask you this question: Is there such a thing as “being on vacation from the Christian life?” There certainly is being a Christian on a vacation, but “taking a vacation from being a Christian?” No. You have to “have it together” and be truly content with God in your life.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son in today’s Gospel lesson presents us with the image of a young man who in his quest for independence, having received his inheritance, ventured on his own and squandered his possessions in “loose living.” The irony is that the real joy in feasting, the real celebration is revealed at the end of the story!

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a lesson, which in the days of Jesus, that could’ve easily made his hearers laugh. What you and I today would consider a beautiful story, when examined more closely conveys a very profound message. There are three things that would never have taken place in the context of 1st century Palestine (and perhaps in the homes of many traditional families. 1) A son (a younger son) would never have received his father’s inheritance and wandered off into a life of riotous living; 2) a father would not be anxiously waiting for his son’s return; see him from a distance and run out to meet him; then 3) beg his eldest son to join him in celebrating the return of his lost brother.

Sadly, we live in a world today with thousands of homeless young people, not all of which chose to be without a home. Many today suffer from what are called “dysfunctional families” and have become dependent upon the resources of others. In other words, the conventional family, as we hear in today’s lesson may not be the context of many young people today. In fact, for some, a prodigal son (or daughter) may be returning home (if they do) with someone else with them, if not a child of

their own. Young people today may also be retuning home with tremendous emotional if not physical scars from having experienced trauma or a personal crisis. There are also many adult children still living under the roof of their parents, who are very secure as dependent adults, many without jobs, who have no thought of leaving home. Then there are prodigal parents: fathers, mothers, spouses, who have left their families, or who may have been caught by some snare outside of their home. People who have found themselves living double lives; resulting in a growing phenomenon of our day: “being a single parent.”

You and I also know very well how many in our country have returned home from repeated deployments for two wars over the past decade; some very much like prodigals from their own marriages, whose lives have been deeply scared by the condition and horrors of war in a foreign land, often described as a world of the dark ages.

So then, who today is a prodigal? Who today runs away? And if going away from family, friends, wife, husband, country, is a choice, who today returns? How do they return? With whom today do they return? What do they return to? Or do they even return at all?

Many who are not even Orthodox Christians don't even need to have a teaching about confession or even require an explanation about their need to confess! Speak to any social worker in our parish or anyone who works as a professional counselor, and you will quickly realize how we as a church need to understand our mission: not only as priests who are professionally trained in seminary or continuing education seminars, but as Christian parents, Christian stewards, or better yet, servants of Christ, who are called to minister in providing hope, if not shelter, but also to teach; and most importantly to love as our heavenly Father loves us.

The parable of the prodigal son in today's Gospel therefore is a lesson that helps us to envision what we as believers in a loving and merciful God are called to do; for whom and for what: Build a church? Yes. Have fundraisers? Yes. Be part of a fellowship? Yes. However, discovering that being at home is being in **our Father's house where *we* prodigals return home again and again.**

You and I are here today (in church) because someone was a good model and example. Whether they are alive or have passed on from this life, that person, or persons, prayed for us; and could very possibly be praying for us even now. You and I are part of this community and have been called to be a part of this

parish for a reason: We have a mission and a purpose; not by the design by Father Timothy or our Parish Council. Our mission, vision and purpose is doing our Father's business; acting and behaving, serving and sharing as the inheritors and as wise and faithful stewards of our Father's Kingdom whose resources are in fact beyond what we perceive or understand them to be.

It is time for you and I to examine ourselves more closely, especially as we approach the season of the Great Fast. Are we the prodigal spoken of in today's Gospel: anxious to get what we consider we rightly deserve for ourselves so we can do what we want? Or are we like the older son in the parable, who resent the fact that our brother can do what he "jolly well pleases..." with our Father's wealth, while you and I have to go about doing our regular chores and never get properly compensated, or even acknowledged?

Our Church always provides for us a full picture of the truth. That is the reason why the religious art in our church frequently looks absurd and somewhat distorted to the natural eye. While the lessons of the church may be the same in their content, there can always be something to gain in deepening our understanding in every stage of our life. You've often heard me say: the lessons we learn at the age of 60 may not be the lessons learned at 20 or 30. That is also because the lessons learned at 20 or 30 cannot be learned until 50 or 60. Then there is being 70 or 80.

There is no learning (or even growing up) if you and I will only consider things from a fixed perspective. We should guard ourselves from fixed perspectives; myopic thinking. Such "perspectives" and ways of thinking can stagnate, debilitate and paralyze us spiritually.

Through the centuries the Church did not provide for us certain disciplines (like Great Lent) for no reason. It is rooted in God's truths: wisdom that is based upon knowing a great deal about human behavior, common sense, good reason. Its answer for a world in darkness and chaos is: a God of great mercy and compassion illustrated in today's parable. However, next Sunday, in the third lesson of our Pre-Lenten season, we will be presented with a very sobering image: The "The Last (and Final) Judgment". Something else that you and I don't often give much thought to: a lesson that helps us to recognize that while our God is the God of love (and love is not God); love is also not permissive. Our freedom and blessing to have choices requires our personal responsibility. But a responsibility that also compels us to act and

behave in ways that are an aid to us in encountering and knowing our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

O Christ our God, assist us with pray with divine wisdom and strength, that we may be found as sons and daughters of our Father's house, doing Thy will on earth as it is in heaven. Inspire us by Your truth and strengthen us in our repentance, that we may be found with all that you have provided to us, faithful stewards and members of Thy Kingdom. For blessed is Thy Name and glorified is Thy Kingdom: of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. A-men.

EOTHINON 6

الايوثينا 6

TONE 6

اللحن 6

THE SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON AND THE FIRST AND SECOND DISCOVERIES OF THE FORERUNNER'S HONORABLE HEAD

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن السادس

إنّ القواتِ الملائكية ظهرت عند قبرك الموقر، فالحراسُ صاروا كالأموات، ومريم وقفت عند القبرِ طالبةً جسدك الطاهر، فسيبتَ الجحيمَ ولم تُجربَ منها، وصادفتَ البتولَ مانحاً الحياة، فيا من قام من بين الأموات، يا ربَّ المجدُ لك.

لَقَدْ بَزَغَتْ هَامَةٌ السَّابِقِ مِنْ جَوْفِ الْأَرْضِ، فَأَشْرَقَتْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَشِعَّةِ الْأَشْفِيَةِ وَعَدَمِ الْبِلَى، وَهِيَ تَجْمَعُ جَمَاهِيرَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مِنَ الْعَلَاءِ، وَتَدْعُو

كُلَّ جِنْسِ الْبَشَرِ مِنْ تَحْتِ، لِلاِجْتِمَاعِ مَعًا، لِكَيْ يُمَجِّدُوا الْمَسِيحَ الْإِلَهَ بِأَصْوَاتِ مُنْفَقَةٍ

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسلُ إليكم نحن غير المستحقين، حتى أنكم بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظلِّ أجنحةِ مجدكم غير الهولي، حافظين إيانا نحنُ الجائين والصارخين بغير فتور، أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القواتِ العلوية.

إِذْ عَصَيْتُ مَجْدَكَ الْأَبَوِيِّ بِجَهْلٍ، وَبِالْمَعَاصِي بَدَدْتُ غِنَاكَ الَّذِي أَعْطَيْتَ، فَبِصَوْتِ الْإِبْنِ الشَّاطِرِ إِلَيْكَ أَهْتَفْتُ: أَيُّهَا الْأَبُ الرَّؤُوفُ، خَطِئْتُ نَحْوَكَ، فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي التَّوْبَةَ وَاجْعَلْنِي كَأَحَدِ أُجْرَائِكَ

الرسالة

يَفْرَحُ الصِّدِّيقُ بِالرَّبِّ، اسْتَمِعْ يَا اللَّهُ لِصَوْتِي
فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولَسِ الرَّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى أَهْلِ كورِنثوس (6:4-15)

يا إِخْوَةَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَمَرَ أَنْ يُشْرِقَ مِنْ ظُلْمَةِ نورٍ، هُوَ الَّذِي أَشْرَقَ فِي قُلُوبِنَا لِإِنَارَةِ مَعْرِفَةِ مَجْدِ اللَّهِ فِي وَجْهِ يَسُوعِ الْمَسِيحِ* وَلَنَا هَذَا الْكَنْزُ فِي أَنْبِيَةِ خَرْفِيَّةٍ لِيَكُونَ فَضْلُ الْقُوَّةِ لِلَّهِ لَا مِنَّا*
مُتَضَائِقِينَ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ غَيْرَ مُنَحْصِرِينَ. وَمُتَحَيِّرِينَ وَلَكِنْ غَيْرَ يَائِسِينَ* وَمُضْطَهَدِينَ وَلَكِنْ غَيْرَ مَخْذُولِينَ. وَمَطْرُوحِينَ وَلَكِنْ غَيْرَ هَالِكِينَ* حَامِلِينَ فِي الْجَسَدِ كُلِّ حِينٍ إِمَاتَةَ الرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ لِتُظَهَرَ حَيَاةَ يَسُوعَ أَيْضاً فِي أَجْسَادِنَا* لِأَنَّ نَحْنُ الْأَحْيَاءَ نَسَلِّمُ دَائِماً إِلَى الْمَوْتِ مِنْ أَجْلِ يَسُوعَ، لِتُظَهَرَ حَيَاةَ الْمَسِيحِ أَيْضاً فِي أَجْسَادِنَا الْمَائِتَةِ* فَالْمَوْتُ إِذَنْ يُجْرِي فِيْنَا وَالْحَيَاةُ فِيكُمْ*
فَإِذْ فِيْنَا رُوحَ الْإِيمَانِ بِعَيْنِهِ، عَلَى حَسَبِ مَا كَتَبَ "إِنِّي آمَنْتُ وَلِذَلِكَ تَكَلَّمْتُ،" فَحَنُّ أَيْضاً نُؤْمِنُ وَلِذَلِكَ نَتَكَلَّمُ* عَالِمِينَ أَنَّ الَّذِي أَقَامَ الرَّبُّ يَسُوعَ سَيَقِيمُنَا نَحْنُ أَيْضاً بِيَسُوعَ، فَتَنْصَبُ مَعَكُمْ*
لِأَنَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ هُوَ مِنْ أَجْلِكُمْ، لِكَيْ تَتَكَاثَرَ النِّعْمَةُ بِشُكْرِ الْأَكْثَرِينَ، فَتَزِدَادَ لِمَجْدِ اللَّهِ.

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ لوقا الانجيلي البشيرِ والتلميذِ الطاهرِ.

قال الربُّ هذا المثل: كان لرجل ابنان، فقال الأصغرُ لأبيه: يا أبتِ أعطني النصيبَ الذي يعود علي من المال. فقسّم ماله بينهما. وبعد أيامٍ قليلة جمع الابنُ الأصغرُ كلَّ ما يملك، وسافر إلى بلدٍ بعيد، وهناك بدّد ماله عائشاً في الإسراف. فلما أنفق كلَّ شيء أصابت ذلك البلد مجاعةٌ شديدة، فوقع في ضيق. فلجأ إلى العمل عند رجل من أهل البلد، فأرسله إلى حقوله ليرعى الخنازير. وكان يشتهي أن يملأ بطنه من الخرنوب الذي كانت الخنازير تأكله، فلم يعطه أحدٌ. فرجع إلى نفسه وقال: كم أجير لأبي يفضل عنهم الطعام، وأنا أهلك جوعاً. سأقوم وأمضي إلى أبي وأقول له: يا أباي أخطأت إلى السماء واليك، ولا استحق أن أدعى لك ابناً فاجعلني كأجير عندك. فقام ورجع إلى أبيه. فرآه أبوه قادماً من بعيد فأشفق عليه وأسرع إليه، وألقى بنفسه على عنقه وقبله. فقال له الابن يا أبتِ أخطأت إلى السماء واليك، ولا أستحق بعد أن أدعى لك ابناً. فقال الأب لخدمته: هاتوا أفرح ثوب وألبسوه، وضعوا خاتماً في يديه وحذاء في رجليه. وأتوا بالعجل المثلثن واذبحوه، فنأكل ونفرح، لأن ابني هذا كان ميتاً فعاش، وكان ضالاً فوجد. فأخذوا يفرحون. وكان ابنه الأكبر في الحقل، فلما رجع واقترب من البيت، سمع صوت الغناء والرقص. فدعا أحد الخدام وسأله: ما هذا؟ فأجابه قد رجع أخوك، فذبح له أبوك العجل المسمن.

فغضب ورفض أن يدخل. فخرج أبوه وسأله أن يدخل: فقال لأبيه: كم سنة خدمتك وما عصيت لك أمرا، فلم تعطني جديا لأفرح به مع أصحابي. ولكن لما رجع ابنك هذا، بعدما أكل مالك مع الزواني، ذبحت له العجل المسمن! فأجابه أبوه: يا ابني، أنت معي في كل حين، وكل ما هو لي هو لك. ولكن علينا أن نفرح ونُسر، لأن أخاك كان ميتا فعاش وكان ضالا فوجد.

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعنى عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المشاركة في سر القربان المقدس هنا مقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسية والذين يحضرون أنفسهم بالصلاة والصوم والاعتراف منذ فترة قريبة (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة فى الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضوا. فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية