

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

His Beatitude, Patriarch JOHN X, of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch
and all the East www.antiochpatrarchate.com
Archpriest Timothy Baclig, Pastor frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org
Rev. Fr. Minas Sarchizian, Assisting Priest fatherminas@gmail.com
Rev. Deacon Andrew Monsue armcopper@gmail.com
Subdeacon Richard Tamoush Tamoush.Richard@gmail.com
Subdeacon Magued Wassef wassefm@msn.com
Subdeacon Richard Ajalat, Pastoral Assistant rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.com
Parish Council Chair - Connie Abdun-Nur Barilla cmatthews46@yahoo.com
Council Vice-Chair - Kris Thabit kthabit66@hotmail.com
Council Secretary - John Khouri johngkhouri@gmail.com
Council Treasurer - Britton McLinn britton@ikon-x.com

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of No. America (AOCWNA)

Chapter President - Charmaine Darmour cdarmour@sbcglobal.net
Choir Director - Art Danks artdanks1@yahoo.com
Church School Director - Adrienne Hines superintendent@stmichaelvannuys.org
Youth Director - Cooper Rowe crowe31@gmail.com
Young Adult Director - Richard Ajalat rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org
Young Parents' Ministry - Brittney Ajalat brittneylee704@gmail.com
Faithtree Resources Exec. Director - Michelle Moujaes michelle@faithtree.org
Project Manager - Michael J. Malouf michael@jacksonia.com
Stewardship Chair - Richard Tamoush Tamoush.Richard@gmail.com
Capital Funds Campaign Chair - Ron Zraick ronaldzraick@gmail.com
Communications Chair - Michael Paraskevas michaelparaskevas13@gmail.com
Bookstore Manager - Bobbi Monsue bobbi_monsue@att.net
Golf Classic Co-Chair - Don Meena donmeena@sbcglobal.net
Webmaster - Dan Raju dan.raju16@hotmail.com
Charity Coordinator - Cindy Tamoush cindy.tamoush@gmail.com
Head Usher - Ramez Hage jeddo.ramez@gmail.com

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Commemorating Meletios, Archbishop of Antioch;
New-martyr Christos of Constantinople

Sunday, February 12, 2023

Tone 2; Eothinon 2

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 2)

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

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 Sunday of the Prodigal Son)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (6:12-20)

Brethren, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food; but God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for

immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

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 12 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our father among the saints Meletios, Archbishop of Antioch; and New-martyr Christos of Constantinople..

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.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread and memorial wheat are being offered and a reception hosted by the Coudsy and Hollow families for the one-year memorial of our sister-in-Christ, the servant of God, Lila Coudsy (+14 February, 2022), with prayers for the members of her family. Memory eternal.

Holy Bread is also being offered by Marcia O'Dea with prayers for God's continued blessings for her precious grandson, Damien, celebrating his 10th birthday; also her sister Malvi, celebrating her birthday, and the continued health of the O'Dea and Chala families.

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

for the continued health and well being of Subdeacon Magued Wassef.

for the newly-departed Dr. Michael Mammone by Sharon Katerelos.
Memory eternal.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Sunday of Meat Fare

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

Saturday, February 18th, – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, February 19th – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Cheese Fare Sunday – February 26th

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

Beginning of Great Lent - Monday, February 27th

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.

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.



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: PV055/2023

February 7, 2023

To be read from the pulpit and printed in the bulletin.

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, reverend Clergy, and Christ-loving Faithful,

Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

This week we learned with heavy hearts of the devastation wrought by the powerful earthquake in Turkey and Syria. The toll of death and destruction is only slowly coming to light, but it is clear that thousands have died and the lives and livelihoods of many have been wrecked. In these moments, as our hearts break for our fellow man—especially for our brothers and sisters in the Faith—we feel acutely what St. Paul said about the Body of Christ: “When one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).

Brethren, the same apostle teaches us to share what we have with those who are now in need, knowing that a time may come when they can help us. He writes, “It is not that you should be burdened so that others might have it easy. Rather, out of equality, your abundance should now go toward their need, so that their abundance might someday supply your need, so that there might be equality” (2 Cor. 8:13–14). This openhearted sharing is an affirmation of our bonds with those now suffering. It is also an expression of love, which always takes the burden of the beloved upon one’s own shoulders.

I call upon all our parishes to collect contributions each Sunday throughout the month of February for the relief of those suffering as a result of this earthquake. Immediately after each Sunday, each parish should mail a check for the funds collected that Sunday to our archdiocese headquarters and email the total amount to Mr. Daniel Nehme at our headquarters (dnehme@antiochian.org), which will allow us to distribute the funds more quickly. Individuals can also contribute online at antiochian.org/earthquake. We will forward the collected funds to His Beatitude Patriarch John X as they come in, as a demonstration of our love, to be distributed through our patriarchal relief agencies to those affected by this disaster.

With love and prayers for you as we approach the holy struggle of Great Lent, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

✠Metropolitan ANTONIOS

Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies

Patriarchal Vicar of New York and All North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Zoom Meeting Virtual Bible Study on The Book of Genesis

Our weekly Bible Study — will NOT meet this Tuesday, February 14th (Valentine's Day), however, will have our final session on chapters 45-50 of The Book of Genesis on the following Tuesday, February 21st, before breaking for Great Lent and Holy Week. Recorded links of our study are available upon request of Father Timothy.

Upcoming Events

[Note: You may now access our Google Parish Calendar to your personal calendar. Here is the link: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/1?cid=YWRtaW5Ac3RtaWN0YWVsdmFubnV5cy5vcmc>]

Camp St. Nicholas Winter Camp — February 17-20, 2023

Annual Chili Cook-off — Meat Fare Sunday, February 19, 2023

Meeting of the Holy Synod of Antioch

Wednesday, February 22, 2023; Balamand, Lebanon

Day Retreat Especially for Orthodox Moms and Moms to Be!

hosted by St. Luke Church (Garden Grove) February 23, 2023

58th St. Nicholas Sweetheart (Debutante) Ball

April 29, 2023; Hilton Universal City

St. Michael Antiochian Women Annunciation Tea

Saturday, March 25, 2023; Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
followed by a Lenten Lunch

St. Michael 30th Annual Golf Classic

— Monday, May 22, 2023
Wood Ranch Golf Club; Simi Valley

Diocesan Parish Life Conference hosted by St. Luke Church
(Garden Grove) June 28 to July 2, 2023; Irvine Marriott; www.laplc.org

56th Biennial Antiochian Archdiocese Convention

hosted by St. George Church (Phoenix, Arizona); July 23-30, 2023

Go to: www.ac2023az.org



SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

February 12, 2023. YOUNG ADULTS

616 groveview ln

La Canada CA 91011

1:30 pm, whenever

PLEASE PARK ON

OAKWOOD AVE

COME HAVE FUN
AND WATCH THE
GAME

FOOD , DRINKS
FELLOWSHIP

JOIN US FOR ANOTHER

MEATFARE SUNDAY

CHILI COOK-OFF

SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 19TH

**IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILI HAS WHAT IT TAKES
CONTACT ADRIENNE LEVY: ALEVY202@GMAIL.COM**

Cook and Compete or Just Come to EAT!

Adults \$7 Kids under 12 - \$5

Family of 4 or more \$20 (2 adults - unlimited kids)

*Hot Dogs and Chips will also be provided!

*Dessert and beverage donations appreciated

**PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT
ORTHODOX CRISIS
PREGNANCY CENTERS
PROVIDING AID TO
MOTHERS IN NEED**

**A shared Act of Mercy for the
Antiochian Women of our Archdiocese**



JALAPEÑO

CAYENNE



HABANERO

POBLANO



HOT!

HOT!

**SPICY
HOT!**

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622

His Beatitude, Patriarch JOHN, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East

Dear St. Michael Church Family,

We all have much to still learn as we are now in our new church sanctuary. There are several resources that you may or may not have known about that is available on our parish website. They are as follows:

a. Homepage slider #6 — “Building a Worshipping Community:” A five part slide presentation on the different parts of an Orthodox Church structure and its practical function liturgically.

b. Homepage slider #2 — Gallery Update: Church Sanctuary “Orthodox Church Architecture, Iconography and Hymnography” (20 Articles that help to understand Orthodox liturgical worship and the relationship between church architecture, iconography and hymnography (music); including a history of Orthodox Church structures in North America.)

<https://www.stmichaelvannuys.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Articles-on-Orthodox-Architecture.pdf>

It is my sincere hope that you will explore these references as we thank God for all that He has accomplished in the many ministries of our parish and the hard work of our Founders, predecessors, and current Benefactors who continue to provide us with a solid foundation for our growth.

In Christ

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig

Pastor

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Feb 19 - open (Meat Fare Sunday)

Chili Cook-off

Feb 26 - open (Cheese Fare Sunday)

Mar 08 - Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts and Lenten Meal

Mar 05 - open (“Sunday of Orthodoxy”)

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread or host the coffee hour.



SAVE THE DATE

MOMS' RETREAT WITH THE KRUSES Hosted by Antiochian Women DLAW

- **WHEN:** Saturday, February 25th
- **WHERE:** St Luke - Garden Grove, CA
- **WHO SHOULD ATTEND:** Moms of all ages & even moms to be!

Registration Information Out in Mid-January

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 12, 2023

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 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. This is not true in every case, especially in homes where children are grounded in our Faith, however, it is becoming more evident in the lives of young people in our day.

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 previous weeks we have been hearing lessons that prepare us for the season of Great Lent. It is 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.** We should also closely notice, as difficult it is to realize: It was not about the money. It was about the relationships.

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. They also fragment and separate us from others.

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.

THE SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

MELETIOS, ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH; NEW-MARTYR CHRISTOS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

طروبارية القيامة باللحن الثاني

عندما انحدرت إلى الموت، أيها الحياة الذي لا يموت، حينئذ أمتّ الجحيم ببرق لاهوتك، وعندما أقتت الأموات من تحت الثرى، صرخ نحوك جميع القوات السماويين: أيها المسيح الإله المعطي الحياة، المجد لك.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسل إليكم نحن غير المستحقين، حتى أنكم بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظل أجنحة مجدكم غير الهولي، حافظين إيانا نحن الجاشين والصارخين بغير فتور، أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القوات العلوية.

إذ عصيت مجدك الأبوي بجهل، وبالمعاصي بددت عنك الذي أعطيت، فبصوت الإبن الشاطر إليك أهتف: أيها الأب الرؤوف، حطت نحوك، فتقبل مني التوبة واجعلني كأحد أجرائك.

الرسالة

لتكن يا رب رحمك علينا، ابتهجوا أيها الصديقون بالرب.

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول الأولى إلى أهل كورنثس

يا اخوة، كل شيء يحل لي، ولكن ليس كل شيء ينفع. كل شيء يحل لي، ولكن لن أدع شيئاً يتسلط علي. الطعام للبطن والبطن للطعام، والله سيبيد الاثنين معاً. أما الجسد فليس هو للزنى، بل هو للرب، والرب للجسد، والله قد أقام الرب من بين الأموات، وسيقيمنا نحن أيضاً بقدرته. أما تعلمون أن أجسادكم هي أعضاء المسيح؟ فأخذ أعضاء المسيح وأجعل منها أعضاء امرأة زانية؟ حاشى! أم إنكم لا تعلمون أن من اتحد بامرأة زانية صار وإياها جسداً واحداً. فإنه قيل: "يصير الاثنان جسداً واحداً." ولكن من اتحد بالرب صار وإياه جسداً واحداً. اهربوا من الزنى، فكل خطيئة يرتكبها الإنسان هي خارجة عن جسده. أما الزاني فإنه يُذنب إلى جسده. ألا تعلمون

أنَّ أجسادكم هي هيكلُ الروح القدس وهو فيكم وقد نلتموه من الله؟ إنكم لستم لأنفسكم، بل لله، لأنكم اشتريتم بثمن، فمجدوا الله في أجسادكم وفي أرواحكم التي هي لله.

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ لوقا الانجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر.

قال الربّ 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 أبي أخطأت إلى السماء واليك، ولا استحق أن أدعى لك ابناً فاجعني كأجير عندك. فقام ورجع إلى أبيه. فراه 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 لخدمه: هاتوا أفرح ثوب وألبسوه، وضعوا خاتماً في يديه وحذاء في رجليه. وأتوا بالعجل المثلثن وادبحوه، فأنكّل 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 أمراً، فلم تعطني جدياً 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 ونُسِر، لأن أخاك كان ميتاً فعاش وكان ضالاً فوجد.

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعني عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المش القربان المقدس هنا مقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسية والذين يحضرون أنفسهم بالصلاة نذ فترة قريية (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة في الخبز المقدساركة في سروالصوم والاعتراف م الذي يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً في الكنيسة الارثوذكسية