

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



Icon of the Prodigal Son

January 28, 2024: Sunday of the Prodigal Son		
Epistle: 1 Cor. 6: 12-20		Gospel: Lk. 15: 11-32
This Weekend	4:00	For Our Parishioners
	10:30	+ Nick Chaykosky (John & Mary Ann Turko)
Mon., Jan. 22 to Fri., Feb. 2	No Divine Liturgies	
Sat., Feb. 3	No Morning Divine Liturgy	
	2:00	Confessions
	4:00 pm	+ Brian Westington (Mom)
Sun., Feb. 4	10:30	For Our Parishioners

WELCOME MITRED ARCHPRIEST PETER WASLO

We welcome back Mitred Archpriest Peter Waslo to our Parish. He is substituting for me as I recover from Covid-19. Mitred Archpriest Peter is stationed in Philadelphia at the

Archbishop's Chancery. May God grant Mitred Archpriest Peter many happy and blessed years! Mnohaya Leeta!

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE

Introduction

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the first Sunday of a three-week period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. It marks the beginning of a time of preparation for the spiritual journey of Lent, a time for Eastern Christians to draw closer to God through wor-

ship, prayer, fasting, and acts of charity.

Biblical Story

The name for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ found in Luke 18:10-14. This is the story of two men, one a Pharisee, a member of a Jewish sect known for its diligent observance

of the Law, and the other a Publican, a government official charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes.

Both men enter the temple, and the Pharisee stands openly and prays, thanking God that he is not like other men, specifically extortioners, the unjust, adulterers, “or even this tax collector” (v. 11). He then begins to list his religious accomplishments by stating, “I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I possess” (v. 12).

In direct contrast to the pride of the Pharisee, the Publican goes to a place where he will not be noticed by others and beats his breast saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (v. 13).

Having told this story, Jesus affirms that it was the Publican who returned home justified and forgiven rather than the Pharisee. He states, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v. 14).

The theme of this parable is repentance. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the

starting-point of the journey to Pascha. To repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means “change of mind.” To repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship with God and with others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Gospel depicts him as a man that is pleased only with himself who thinks that he has complied with all of the requirements of religion. But in his pride, he has falsified the meaning of true religion and faith. He has reduced these to external observations, measuring his piety by the amount of money he gives.

The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a “change of mind.” He humbles himself, and his humility justifies him before God. He becomes, in the words of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3), “poor in spirit.” He acknowledges that he

is a sinner, and he knows that salvation is only found in the mercy of God. Here we find an example of true humility, an essential aspect of repentance. A “change of mind” and the transformation of our lives can only happen when we humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our willingness to turn from sin, and receive His grace into our lives.

Our preparation for Lent thus

begins with a prayer for humility, the beginning of true repentance. Through repentance, we can find and return to the true order of things, a restoration of our spiritual vision that will guide us in a very difficult and challenging world. By entering Great Lent in humility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He blesses by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

CHURCH VESTIBULE FLOOR DAMAGE

It has been discovered that part of the floor system in the Church Vestibule has rotted away. The steam pipes have dropped in the crawl space beneath the floor due

to the radiator dropping almost 1.5 inches. Repairs are underway. Please be careful as you pass through the Vestibule.

KEEP GREETING ONE ANOTHER

A reminder to all: just as we prepared for Christmas with a 40-day preparation and fasting period, so now we celebrate the bright days of Christmas, New Year's, and Theophany for 40 days. Please continue to sing our beautiful Christmas carols, and to greet one another with our traditional “Christos Razhdayetsia! Slavite

Yeho! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!” During the darkness of the Winter months, do all you can to keep the bright light of Christ burning brightly! Let Christ shine through you!

Note: according to tradition, we continue to sing Christmas carols up until the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord on February 2nd.

SOROKOUSTY MEMORIAL SERVICES

In just a few short weeks, the holy season of the Great Fast (Lent) will once again be upon us. As in the past, we will honor the memory of our beloved deceased with Sorokousty Memorial Services. This is the service where Fr. Nestor reads aloud the Family names of the deceased. If you would like your de-

ceased family members commemorated during these services, please submit your envelope with the names clearly listed. Envelopes are included in your packet of donation envelopes. Please clearly PRINT the first names of the deceased on the front.

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS COMING TO AN END

Volunteers are needed! Again, special thanks to the Parishioners who decorated the Church for Christmas. We received so many comments as to how beautifully the Church was decorated.

Taking down the decorations is much easier. Everything is doublechecked to see that it is marked with a ribbon for its proper

location for next Christmas. Lights are wound, everything is stored in bins, etc. and stored in the Church basement. We need the men of the Parish to help with the manger itself, the larger trees, ladders, etc.

Lend us a hand today (Sunday) IMMEDIATELY after the 10:30 Divine Liturgy. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

SOMETHING TO PONDER.

- All classes of people were aboard the Titanic - wealthy people, famous people, highly educated people, illiterate people, and poor folks down in the steerage. But a few hours later when they posted the list in the Cunard office in New York,

there were only two categories: LOST and SAVED. That is how God sees humanity.

- One man asked a priest: "If God is everywhere, what do I go to Church for?" To which the priest replied: "The whole atmosphere is filled

with water, but when you want to or a well.”
drink you have to go to a fountain

MYASOPUSNA 2024

Transfiguration of Our Lord Church Ukrainian Catholic Church is pleased to announce that dinner tickets are now available for their Annual Myasopusna Festival, held at the church's banquet hall at 240 Center Street, Nanticoke, on Sunday, February 4, from noon to 4 pm. The Myasopusna (Meatfare) Festival is the parish's pre-lenten celebration, preceding the Great Fast. Dinner (a platter of holuptsi, kobasi, pyrohy, black bread and butter, and a home-

made dessert) will be served from 12:30 to 2:00 pm, followed by live Ukrainian dance performances by Saint Mary's Ukrainian Dancers. A variety of Ukrainian crafts will be on display and for sale. Dinner tickets are \$20 if purchased by January 30 (\$22 at the door). Children under 12 are half price. Tickets can be purchased by calling Helen (735-4654) -leave a message OR from the rectory OR from Lisa 570-574-1016. Invite your friends and neighbors!

INCLEMENT WEATHER

It is very rare that the Divine Liturgy is canceled, especially on a Sunday. I want to encourage those of you who must walk further or more importantly, who drive to church, to PLEASE USE COMMON SENSE, when making a determination about attending the Divine Liturgy on

the snowy, icy, inclement weekend or even more so on the weekday. If attendance means putting yourself and others at risk, I am sure the Lord understands if you should decide to pray at home. Please use common sense and a well-informed conscience when making such a decision.

WBS PENGUINS HOCKEY

We are considering having a Parish Group outing to a Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins Hockey game. The date would be on Saturday,

February 24, 2024 at 6 pm. If you are interested in attending, please let Fr. Nestor know as soon as possible so that tickets may be obtained.

UKRAINIAN PYSANKY CLASSES

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church in Olyphant will be offering Ukrainian Pysanky classes on February 18th and March 3rd. The two-hour beginner class will teach the basics to create a traditional Ukrainian pysanky egg. The cost of the class is \$25 for each person. Supplies are included. Classes will

be held in St. Cyril's Parish Hall, 207 River Street, Olyphant, with plenty of free parking. There will be two classes each day: 12:00 noon and 3:00 pm.

Class size is limited and you must call for a reservation to register. Call Tammy Budnovitch at 570-766-1919.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...

The Collection Processing Team for the month of January 2024 is

Team #1: Jerry Sereditch, Michaelene Davis, and Gloria Jablonski.

Sunday Collection for January 20 & 21, 2024: \$

A TIME TO CELEBRATE...

Happy Birthday and Mnohaya Leeta to the following Parishioners who celebrate their birthday in September:

Jane Granza

Marie Martin

Melanie Mohila

Carol Pompey

Rosemarie Sember

Nick Spryn

John Turko, Sr.

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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Who Art in Heaven

These words I think have a very deep meaning. They remind us of the homeland we have abandoned, of the citizenship we have lost. In the parable of the young man who left his father's house, went off the rails and was reduced to living with pigs, the Word of God shows us human wretchedness. That young man did not find his one-time happiness again until he had realized his moral degradation, had looked into his own heart and had pronounced the words of confession. These words almost agree with the Lord's Prayer, because the prodigal son says: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." [Luke 15:21] He would not confess himself to be a sinner against heaven

if he were not convinced that the homeland he had left at the time of his going astray were not in actual fact heaven.

By this confession of his he makes himself worthy once again to stand in the presence of his father who runs towards him, embraces him, and kisses him. The conclusion is this. To return to heaven there is only one route and that is to admit one's sinfulness and seek to avoid it. To make the decision to avoid it is already to be perfecting one's likeness to God.

*St. Gregory of Nyssa
On the Lord's Prayer*