

**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

*The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest*

**Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**

**كنيسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية الأنطاكية**

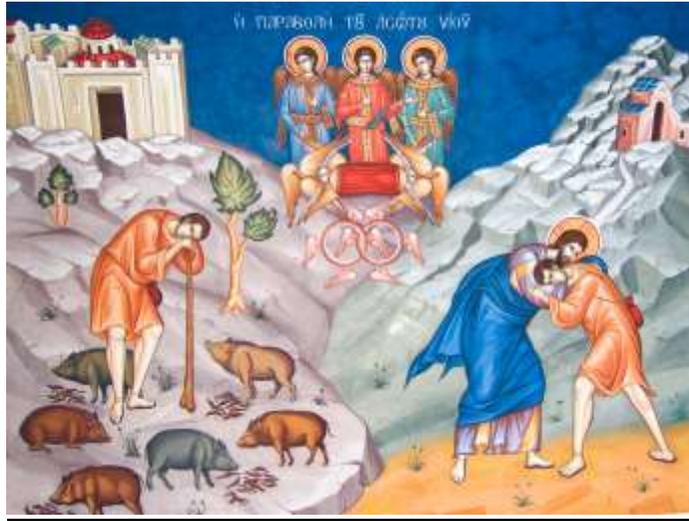
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**Sunday February 12th, 2017**



**أحد الإبن الشاطر**

**Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

**تغييرات في القداس**

**Changes in the Liturgy**

**الايصوديكون**

هلمّ لنسجد ونركع للمسيح ملكنا والهنا، خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الاموات، لنرتل لك هلوليا!

**Entrance Hymn**

O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

**طروبارية القيامة (باللحن الأول)**

إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ لَمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، وَجَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الْجُنْدِ، قُتِمَتْ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّالِثِ أَيْهَا الْمَخْلُصُ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الْحَيَاةَ. لِأَجْلِ ذَلِكَ قَوَاتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ هَتَفُوا إِلَيْكَ يَا وَاهِبَ الْحَيَاةِ. الْمَجْدُ لِقِيَامَتِكَ أَيْهَا الْمَسِيحُ، الْمَجْدُ لِمُلْكِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِتَدْبِيرِكَ، يَا مُحِبَّ الْبَشَرِ وَحَدِكَ.

### **Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone One)**

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world; for which cause the Heavenly Powers cried aloud unto Thee, O Giver of Life, Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy Providence! O Thou who alone art the Lover of Mankind.

### **(Troparion of the Annunciation – Tone 4)**

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth grace. Wherefore, do we shout with him to the Theotokos, Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee.

### **(للبشارة – باللحن الرابع)**

اليوم رأس خلاصنا، وإعلان السر الذي منذ الدهور، لأن ابن الله يصير ابن البتول، وجبرائيل بالنعمة يبشّر، فلذلك ونحن معه لنهتف نحو والدة الإله، إفرحي أيتها الممتلئة نعمة الرب معك.

### **قنّاق أحد الإبن الشاطر (باللحن الثالث)**

لما عصيتُ مجدك الأبوي بجهلٍ وغباوةٍ، بددتُ في المعاصي الغنى الذي أعطيتني. فلذلك أصرخُ إليك بصوت الابن الشاطر هاتفاً: خطئْتُ أمامك أيها الأب الرؤوفُ، فاقبلني تائباً واجعلني كأحدِ أجراءك.

### **Kontakion of the Prodigal Son (Tone Three)**

When I disobeyed in ignorance thy Fatherly glory, I wasted in iniquities the riches that thou gavest 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 as one of thy hired servants.

### **الرسالة لأحد الإبن الشاطر**

### **Epistle for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

*Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us!*

*Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!*

*لِتَكُنْ يَا رَبُّ رَحْمَتُكَ عَلَيْنَا!*

*إِبْتَهَجُوا أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُونَ بِالرَّبِّ!*

**The Reading is 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.

**فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول الأولى إلى أهل كورنثوس (6:12-20).**

يا إخوة كلُّ شيءٍ مُباحٌ لي ولكن ليس كلُّ شيءٍ يُوافق \* كلُّ شيءٍ مُباحٌ لي ولكن لا يتسلطُّ عليَّ شيءٌ \* إنَّ الأطعمَةَ للجوفِ والجوفَ للأطعمَةِ وسيبيدُ اللهُ هذا وتلكَ. أمَّا الجسدُ فليس للزنى بل للربِّ والربُّ للجسدِ \* واللهُ قد أقامَ الربَّ وسيقيمنا نحنُ أيضاً بقوَّتهِ \* أمَّا تعلمون أنَّ أجسادكم هي أعضاء المسيح. فأخذ أعضاء المسيح وأجعلها أعضاء زانية. حاشي \* أمَّا تعلمون أن من اقترن بزانية يصير معها جسداً واحداً. لأنَّهُ قد قيلَ يصيران كلاهما جسداً واحداً \* أمَّا الذي يقترن بالربِّ فيكون معه روحاً واحداً \* أهربوا من الزنى فإنَّ كلَّ خطيئةٍ يفعلها الإنسان هي في خارج الجسد. أمَّا الزاني فإنه يخطئ إلى جسده \* أم أستم تعلمون أنَّ أجسادكم هي هيكلُ الروح القدس الذي فيكم الذي نلتُموه من الله وأتكم لستم لأنفسكم \* لأنكم قد اشتريتم بثمنٍ فمجدوا الله في أجسادكم وفي أرواحكم التي هي لله \*

### الإنجيل لأحد الإبن الشاطر

*Gospel for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son*

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

**فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيليِّ البشير، التلميذ الطاهر (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 be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was

قال الربُّ هذا المثل. إنسانٌ كان له ابنان \* فقال أصغرُهما لأبيه يا أبتِ اعطني النصيبَ الذي يَخُصُّني من المال. فقسَمَ بينهما معيشته \* وبعد أيامٍ غيرِ كثيرةٍ جَمَعَ الابنُ الأصغرُ كُلَّ شيءٍ له وسافرَ إلى بلدٍ بعيدٍ وبذَرَ مالهَ هناكَ عائشاً في الخلاعة \* فلما أنفقَ كُلَّ شيءٍ له حدثت في ذلك البلدِ مجاعةٌ شديدةٌ فأخذَ في العوزِ \* فذهبَ وانصوى إلى واحدٍ من أهلِ ذلك البلدِ فأرسلَهُ إلى حقوله يِرعى خنازير \* وكان يشتهي أن يَملاً بطنَهُ من الخرنوبِ الذي كانتِ الخنازيرُ تأكلُهُ فلم يُعْطِه أحدٌ \* فرجعَ إلى نفسه وقالَ كم لأبي من أجرَاءٍ يَفْضَلُ عنهم الخبزَ وأنا أهلكُ جوعاً \* أقومُ وأمضي إلى أبي وأقولُ له يا أبتِ قد أخطأتُ إلى السماءِ وأمامك. ولستُ مُستحقاً بعدُ أن أدعى لك ابناً فاجعَلني كأحدِ أجرائك \* فقامَ وجاءَ إلى أبيه. وفيما هو بعدُ غيرُ بعيدٍ رآه أبوه فتحنَّنَ عليه وأسرعَ وألقى بنفسِهِ على عنقه وقبَّله \* فقال له الابنُ يا أبتِ قد أخطأتُ إلى السماءِ وأمامك ولستُ مستحقاً بعدُ أن أدعى لك ابناً \* فقال الأبُّ لعبيده هاتوا الحلةَ الأولى والبسوه واجعلوا خاتماً في يدهِ وحذاءً في رجليه \* وأتوا بالعجلِ المُسمَّنِ واذبحوه فأكَلْ ونفَرَحْ \* لأنَّ ابني هذا كان ميتاً فعاشَ وكان ضالاً فوجدَ. فطَفِقوا يفرحون \* وكان ابنُهُ الأكبرُ في الحقلِ. فلما أتى وقربَ من البيتِ سَمِعَ أصواتَ الغناءِ والرَّقْصِ \* فدعا أحدَ الغلمانِ وسأله ما هذا \* فقال له قد قَدِمَ أخوكَ فدَبِحْ أبوكَ العجلِ المُسمَّنِ لأنه لَقِيَهُ سالمًا \* فغَضِبَ ولم يُردْ أن يَدْخُلْ. فخرجَ أبوه وطَفِقَ يتوسَّلُ إليه \* فأجابَ وقالَ لأبيه كم لي من السنينِ أخدمُك ولم أتعدَّ لك وصيةً قطُّ وأنتَ لم تُعْطِنِي قطُّ جدياً لأفرحَ معَ أصدقائي \* ولما جاءَ ابْنُكَ هذا الذي أكلَ معيشَتَكَ مع الزواني ذبحتَ له العجلِ المُسمَّنِ \* فقال له يا ابني أنتَ معي في كُلِّ حينٍ وكُلُّ ما هو لي فهو لك \* ولكن كان ينبغي أن نفرحَ ونُسِرَّ لأنَّ أخاكَ هذا كان ميتاً فعاشَ وكان ضالاً فوجدَ.

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 the son 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.’”

***“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner.”***

**St. Andrew of Crete said: “All of us should seek two things: to condemn our sins and forgive the sins of others. For whoever sees their own sins becomes more forgiving towards others. And whoever condemns others condemns and convicts themselves, even if they have many virtues. It is truly a great thing, my brethren, to not condemn others but to condemn ourselves.”**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:** Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-giver; for my soul goeth early to the temple of Thy holiness, coming in the temple of my body, wholly polluted. But because Thou art compassionate, purify me by the compassion of Thy mercies.

**Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages:** Amen. Prepare for me the way of salvation, O Theotokos; for I have profaned myself with coarse sins, and consumed my whole life with procrastination. But by thine intercessions purify thou me from all abomination.

**Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness, according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions:** **If I think upon the multitude of my evil deeds, wretch that I am, I tremble for the terrible Day of Judgment. But, trusting the compassion of Thy mercy, I shout to Thee like David, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy Great Mercy.**

# **Please sign up for the Holy Bread.**

## **❖ Church Announcements**

- 1) **Sunday School Valentine's day pancake feast:** Sunday February 12<sup>th</sup>, after the Divine Liturgy join the Sunday school for a Valentine's day celebration with all you can eat pancakes.
- 2) **Thank you for the donation to the Sunday School:** a donation from the New Year's Eve party to the Sunday school in the amount of \$1570 has been received, thank you.
- 3) **Ladies Meatfare Lunch:** Will be on February 19<sup>th</sup> with hamburgers, hotdogs and more. Join the ladies for the last Sunday we can eat meat.
- 4) **Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup>:** Konafa treat.
- 5) **Upcoming Services: Soul Saturday:** Great Vespers on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM, And Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup> Orthros 9:30 AM followed by the Divine Liturgy with memorial for the departed.  
**Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup>:** Forgiveness Sunday, we will have Forgiveness Vespers following the Liturgy.
- 6) **Antiochian Women Grant:** The North American Antiochian Women are giving a grant to young women who meet the following qualifications: 1. Be a female, 26 years of age or older. 2. Be a

member in Good Standing. 3. Be actively involved in the worship, service, and social life of her parish. 4. Must be registered in an academic program. 5. Demonstrate financial need. Please, see Father or one of the ladies officers.

- 7) **Lent Services: We are going to have services the first 4 days of Lent: February 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, March 1<sup>st</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and March 3<sup>rd</sup>. All services are at 7 PM. The first Pre-sanctified service is on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The first Madaih/Akathist service is on Friday March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 PM.**
- 8) **During Lent: every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday we will have services. Come and join us.**

**The Lionheart:** All those who signed up, we will meet every Thursday at 7 PM at the church. We will meet Thursdays February 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Lou Salloum** is assisting Father in forming a Christian men group.

**Lou writes:** The Lionheart, meaning: "A person of exceptional courage and bravery".

We had a great response from men in our parish to get involved in the Lionheart Sessions. This will be a rewarding experience to our men. The knowledge we absorb will be felt by our wives, children and even our friends.

Dates have been set for: Thursday nights 7:00 p.m. February 2, 9, 16, 23. Coffee will be on! Any questions, please call Lou at [403 861 3373](tel:4038613373)

- 9) **Giving back to God:** Our church depends on your generous giving back to God for all His blessings in your life. **Please, give generously and regularly and God will bless you back a 100 times.** **Give a percentage of your income.** Make a commitment to increase your giving for 2017. Write your name on the envelope for a receipt.

- 10) **Young adults meetings: Friday** February 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM.

- 11) **PLC:** The Parish Life Conference for the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West will on July 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> hosted by St. Michael Church, Van Nuys, California. It will be held at Los Angeles Airport Marriott call (310) 641-5700.

**The Archdiocese Convention:** The 2017 Archdiocese Convention will be in Miami from July 23<sup>rd</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Visit <http://www.ac2017miami.org/>

- 12) **Blessing of Homes:** Fr. Dahdouh started blessing homes. You can call him at 403/993-7945 to schedule an appointment. **A meal is not necessary,** Father will spend around an hour with each

family. Fr. Dahdouh will make an effort to visit each and every home this year before the Great Fast starts if possible.

- 13) **Let us make a commitment not to miss church this year.**
  - 14) **Father would like to compile a birthday and anniversary list:** If someone can help to make a list of our parishioners' birthdays and anniversaries.
  - 15) **World Food Day Canned Food Drive:** will continue serving the poor and hungry.
  - 16) **Church School: Church school is every Saturday at 4:30 PM.**
  - 17) **Don't forget to visit:** [www.ancientfaith.com](http://www.ancientfaith.com) [www.myocf.net](http://www.myocf.net) [www.journeytoorthodoxy.com](http://www.journeytoorthodoxy.com)
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By St. John Chrysostom

(From *A Homily on Lowliness of Mind*)

When lately we made mention of the Pharisee and the Publican, and hypothetically yoked two chariots out of virtue and vice; we pointed out each truth, how great is the gain of humbleness of mind, and how great the damage of pride. For this, even when conjoined with righteousness and fastings and tithes, fell behind; while that, even when yoked with sin, outstripped the Pharisee's pair, even though the charioteer it had was a poor one. For what was worse than the Publican? But all the same since he made his soul contrite, and called himself a sinner; which indeed he was. He surpassed the Pharisee, who had both fastings to tell of and tithes; and was removed from any vice. On account of what, and through what? Because even if he was removed from greed of gain and robbery, he had rooted over his soul the mother of all evils — vain-glory and pride. On this account Paul also exhorts and says: "Let each one prove his own work," and then he will have his ground of boasting for himself, and not for the other. He publicly came forward as an accuser of the whole world; and said that he himself was better than all living men. And yet even if he had set himself before ten only, or if five, or if two, or if one, not even was this endurable; but as it was, he not only set himself before the whole world, but also accused all men. On this account he fell behind in the running. And just as a ship, after having run through innumerable surges, and having escaped many storms, then in the very mouth of the harbor having been dashed against some rock, loses the whole treasure which is stowed away in her — so truly did this Pharisee, after having undergone the labors of the fasting, and of all the rest of his virtue, since he did not master his tongue, in the very harbor underwent shipwreck of his cargo. For the going home from prayer, whence he ought to have derived gain, having rather been so greatly damaged, is nothing else than undergoing shipwreck in the harbor.

Knowing therefore these things, beloved, even if we should have mounted to the very pinnacle of virtue, let us consider ourselves last of all, having learned that pride is able to cast down even from the heavens themselves him who takes not heed, and humbleness of mind to bear up on high from the very abyss of sins him who knows how to be sober. For this it was that placed the Publican before the Pharisee; whereas that, pride I mean and an overweening spirit, surpassed even an incorporeal power, that of the devil; while humbleness of mind and the acknowledgment of his own sins committed brought the Thief into Paradise before the Apostles. Now if the confidence which they who confess their own sins effect for themselves is so great, they who are conscious to themselves of many good qualities, yet humble their own souls, how great crowns will they not win. For when sinfulness be put together with humbleness of mind it runs with such ease as to pass and out-strip righteousness combined with pride. If therefore you have put it to with righteousness, whither will it not reach? Through how many heavens will it not pass? By the throne of God itself surely it will stay its course; in the midst of

the angels, with much confidence. On the other hand if pride, having been yoked with righteousness, by the excess and weight of its own wickedness had strength enough to drag down its confidence; if it be put together with sinfulness, into how deep a hell will it not be able to precipitate him who has it?

These things I say, not in order that we should be careless of righteousness, but that we should avoid pride; not that we should sin, but that we should be sober-minded. For humbleness of mind is the foundation of the love of wisdom which pertains to us. Even if you should have built a superstructure of things innumerable: even if almsgiving, even if prayers, even if fastings, even if all virtue; unless this have first been laid as a foundation, all will be built upon it to no purpose and in vain; and it will fall down easily, like that building which had been placed on the sand. For there is no one, no one of our good deeds, which does not need this; there is no one which separate from this will be able to stand. But even if you should mention temperance, even if virginity, even if despising of money, even if anything whatever, all are unclean and accursed and loathsome, with humbleness of mind being absent. Everywhere therefore let us take her with us, in words, in deeds, in thoughts, and with this let us build these [virtues].

### **Here are certain sure marks of humility:**

1. **The humble man is always mindful of his particular sins.** The proud man is blind to his sins. What was first in the mind of the Publican as he came into the temple? His sins. Is this our mind in Church? Do we stand here piercingly mindful of our sins and supplicating the Lord for forgiveness?

2. **The humble man forgets his good deeds and does not think on them.** The proud man never ceases recounting them to himself and to others. We hear nothing of the Publican searching his mind before God for some of his good deeds which might offset his sins. He doesn't say, "Well God, I have sinned, but I am doing pretty well here God. Remember that!" The humble man attempts rather to forget his good deeds trusting that if there is anything truly good in them God will keep the record. Never tell others of your good deeds, and try not to even think about them! This is pure pride, and it is sure to lose you your heavenly reward. If you, in fact, have any good deeds, labor to conceal them from the eyes of men. Remember that the proud Pharisee was a zealot for the Lord and a strict tither and faster! He tithed on every piece of income and fasted diligently twice a week! We contemporary Orthodox, who are often so spiritually lazy, if we are proud, become even worse than this Pharisee since we are proud over nothing! Here is a great test for your humility: How do you feel when you are overlooked? How do you feel when no one notices your spiritual labors or your service to the church? The humble man, since he is laboring to not notice them himself, rejoices if others don't notice! The proud man, since he is mentally recording every pathetic little action he can call good, is inflamed if he is snubbed, and his deeds aren't appreciated. This is pride.

3. **The humble man expresses his inner humility bodily.** Look at the Publican's demeanor. We see eyes cast down not haughtiness. We see standing in the back not attention seeking. We see beating of the breast not luxury. We see a loving of the last spot not clamor for the best things. This is the language of humility. The humble man humbles his body. He bows low. He prostrates. He fasts and prays as an expression of and help to inward humility not to show off. The humble man does not compare himself with others or think on others' sins. The Publican makes no mention of the hypocrisy of the Pharisee. He is not concerned about the Pharisees' sins, he is concerned about his own. He knows God doesn't grade on a curve. Such is the humble man. He refuses to meditate on other's sins, and if he sees another's sins he assumes he taught them this sin. The proud man notices the sins of others, and gives himself a demonic sense of self-satisfaction by comparing himself to another. If you are critical of others you are proud. Are you often bothered by the actions of others? Why are you thinking about them and so little about your own? If you are critical of others God will be critical of you on the Great Day of Judgment. "For by the standard of measure you use it will be measured unto you" (St. Matt. 7:2). If you are critical of yourself – now you are on the right path. Now you are using your power of criticism for its God-given purpose. This is what St. John of the Ladder teaches, "Increasing self-criticism is the sign of increasing humility...Indeed, there is no clear sign". To our humility loving God be all glory forever. Amen.

## **“The door of God’s mercies is opened unto all. On this day we celebrate the summoning of the Prodigal Son, which our divine Fathers reinstated in the Triodion”**

There is a great search for happiness and fulfillment in life now. The emphasis now is on enjoying life. That search for happiness and fulfillment is symbolized by the younger son in our parable this Sunday who went in search of happiness. The only problem was that he thought he could find happiness in what the parable calls a life of debauchery. We would say now he tried to find happiness by satisfying every desire of his no matter whether moral or immoral. This eventually led him to living with the pigs in the piggery. But true happiness is not to be found outside of ourselves, but within ourselves, in our own hearts. If his father or anybody else had tried to persuade him that he would be wasting his life and money, he would shoot them down. He had to be left to learn the hard way, from his own mistake since there was no way you could reason with him. And he had to decide himself to come home. If someone went to bring him home he would resent it. SAINT JAMES ORTHODOX CHURCH 195 N. Main Street Milpitas, Ca 95035 [www.sjorthodox.org](http://www.sjorthodox.org) Sundays – Matins 8:00 a.m. Sundays – Liturgy 10:30 a.m. The Very Reverend Fr. Jiris Hanna (408) 509-8802 Dcn. Joseph Kawar (408) 398-6357 Services This Week Tuesday 2/7 at 10:30am St. Gregory the Theologian Friday 2/10 at 10:30am Saints of this week: Transferring of the relics of St. John Chrusostom – St. Ephraim the Syrian – St. Isaac the Syrian That younger son reminds us of the struggle of society at this time to be successful. In many ways we have a spiritual famine in this country at the moment. Because of that spiritual famine in some ways we have ended up like the younger son living with the pigs in the piggery. We could think of the instances of drug and alcohol abuse, all the fraud and stealing in the workplace, murders and violence, marital infidelity, all the rows and tensions between people. Because of these and so many other things we could say we are like the younger son living with the pigs in need of returning to our Father. So let us return, we won’t find happiness with the pigs. Happiness is to be found within, not outside of ourselves. In the parable we are given a most beautiful description of our Father. He is outside of the house waiting for the younger son to return. And when he does return, his father ran to him, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly and he brings him in and throws a party for him. When we return to God He throws a party for us. Not only does he come out of the house once, but he comes out a second time to try to persuade the elder son to come in. Our Father comes out to welcome each of us to His party. The most beautiful line in the parable is what the father says to the elder son, “all I have is yours”. Our Father says to us, “All I have is yours”. This is a most beautiful promise and invitation. After reading this parable we also have a choice to make, will we stay outside or will we go in to enjoy the Father’s party. Far away hills look green, there are many attractions in life, there are many voices saying to us ‘Follow me’ or ‘Follow your desires and you will find happiness.’ But the best offer of happiness is from God our Father, “all I have is yours”. God our Father is outside the door waiting for us to come to Him. When we return He runs to us, clasps us in His arms and invites us into the party. For during Lent we might try to make an effort to answer that invitation from our Father, “all I have is yours”. At every Divine Liturgy we receive the same invitation from Jesus, “This is my Body which is broken for you...this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you...”. Let us go into the house and enjoy God’s party.