

THE SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE

From oca.org...

The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to "come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that our heavenly Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Luke 15:11-24).

After the Polyeleion at Matins, we first hear the lenten hymn "By the Waters of Babylon." It will be sung for the next two Sundays before Lent begins, and it serves to reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel.

From GOARCH.org...

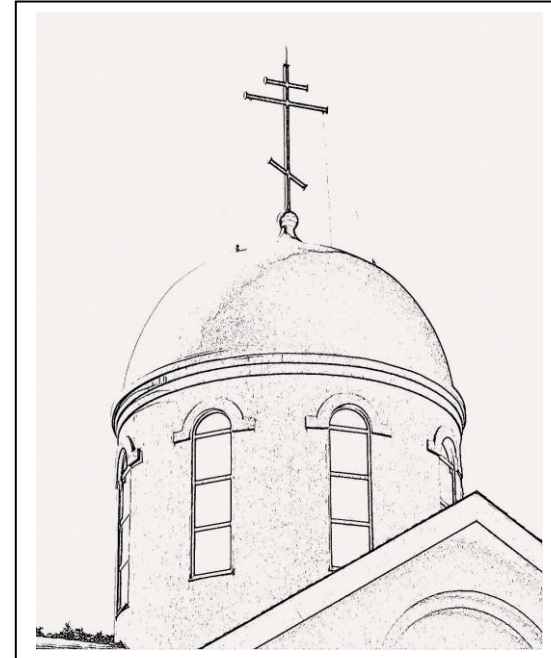
...this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God's divine purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods and drinks that do not satisfy, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, and a world engulfed in untruth, deceit and sin. It is the exact opposite of the world as created by God and potentially recreated by his Son and Spirit. There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God. The world in which we live is not a normal world, but a wasteland. This is why in the Slavic tradition of the Orthodox Church the reading of Psalm 137 is added to the Matins service for this and the following two Sundays. This nostalgic lament of the Hebrew exiles states: "By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion. On the willows we hung our harps, for how could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalm 137).

Here we can see the challenge of life in this world and the alienation from God that can happen when sin reigns in our lives. As a result of sin in our lives, we lose the joy of communion with God, we defile and lose our spiritual beauty, and we find ourselves far away from our real home, our real life. In true repentance, we realize this, and we express a deep desire to return, to recover what has been lost. On this day the Church reminds us of what we have abandoned and lost, and beckons us to find the desire and power to return. Our Heavenly Father is waiting and ready to receive us with His loving forgiveness and His saving embrace.

*Brothers, let us not pray like the Pharisee!
He who exalts himself will be humbled.
Let us prepare to abase ourselves by fasting;
let us cry aloud with the voice of the Publican:://
"O God, forgive us sinners!"*

from Great Vespers

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Matthew Petrides, *Senior Warden*

Christian Gamboa, *Choir Director*

February 9, 2025

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE

Tone 8. Beginning of the Lenten Triodion. Leavetaking of the Meeting. Martyr Nikephoros of Antioch in Syria (ca. 257). Uncovering of the Relics of St. Innocent, Bishop of Irkutsk (1805). Ven. Pankratii (Pancratius) of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.). Ven. Nikifor (Nicephorus—1557) and Gennádii (Gennadius—ca. 1516), of Vazheozérsk. Hieromartyrs Marcellus, Bishop of Sicily, Philagrius, Bishop of Cyprus, and Pancratius, Bishop of Taormina (1st c.).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 and Hebrews 7:7-17

Gospel: Luke 18:10-14 and Luke 2:22-40

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Today – **9:00am Divine Liturgy**

Saturday – **Crowning of Brian and Megan**

Saturday – **6:00pm Great Vespers**

Sunday – **9:00am Divine Liturgy**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Gospel: Luke 15:11-32



*The Publican and
the Pharisee*

Please pray for vocations to the Holy Priesthood!

Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted.

Among them are **Fr. Paul Kucynda, Brian Price, Victorianne Vessio, Mary Herelick, Betty James, Manya Shark, Deryl Tczap, Mary Tczap, George Stavrou, Margaret Makara, Dennis & Ann Marie Gahr, Michael Getmanov, Alan Diaz, Ellen Norman, Maryann Sivilic, Lia Eickhorn, Jack Rinderer, and Lori Ratushnuk.**

We are happy that you have joined us for worship today. Coffee Hour today will take place after our Parish Annual Meeting. **The reception of the Holy Eucharist is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.**

Annunciations

TODAY – We welcome all our guests visiting us today. Please join us for the **COFFEE HOUR** in the Parish Hall after the Parish Annual Meeting. **Team #3** is in charge of today's Coffee Hour.

TODAY – The **Parish Annual Meeting** will be held after Divine Liturgy. All parishioners are strongly encouraged to participate in the meeting. **Reports for the meeting** were sent out electronically, and a limited number of **paper reports** will be available at the meeting.

TODAY – **NO Church School** will be held during Coffee Hour. Classes will resume next Sunday.

THIS SATURDAY – Brian and Megan Gray will have their marriage blessed in the Church with a **service of Crowning**. The service will be held at **5:00pm**, and all are invited to attend. **Great Vespers** will follow at 6:00pm.

This week is a fast-free week. No dietary restrictions are in place throughout the entire week. This time is best used to prepare for the upcoming **Great Fast**.

Houseblessings have resumed. All parishioners are encouraged to have their homes blessed. A **sign-up sheet** is located in the Parish Hall. Appointments may also be made by contacting Father Gary.

Please continue to use the **clothing bin** located in the church parking lot. A list of items that can be donated is located on the whiteboard in the Parish Hall. Each donation helps the parish financially. Many thanks for your participation.

Keep up on OCA news by visiting www.oca.org, diocesan news by visiting www.nynjoca.org, and parish news by visiting www.occa-brick.org.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week:

Thursday – Nana Langworthy

Friday – Darren Flood

Wedding Anniversaries this week:

Saturday – Brian & Megan Gray

The Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors program is an essential vehicle for funding the activities and programs of our diocese. 2024 turned out to be a very strong year during which \$252,167 was donated to the program. Please consider participating in the program. More information is available at the diocesan website at www.nynjoca.org.