

**PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR ...**

*The health and salvation of –*

Abducted Bishops Paul & John	Pauline
Hieroschemamonk Ambrose	Ann
Archpriest Ian	Stefan
Archpriest Eugene	John
Reader Aleksei	Vivian
Monk Philaret	Jung Sook
Matushka Mary	Thomas
Matushka Mary Sara	Cheyenne
Andrea	Nancy
Virginia • Thomas	Randall
John • Jacqueline	Rose
Euphrosynos	Don
John • Catechumen Rebecca	Norma

*The repose and salvation of –*

Michael (January 6)

*Please let Father know if there are any names you would like added to the list.*

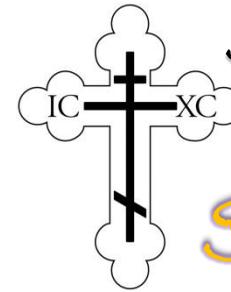
“When [the Prodigal Son] confesses like that, he will be considered worthy of more than that for which he prayed. His father neither takes him in like a hired servant nor treats him like a stranger. Oh no, he kisses him as a son. He accepts him as a dead man come back to life again. He counts him worthy of the divine feast and gives him the precious garment he once wore. Now there is singing and joy in the father’s home. What happened is the result of the Father’s grace and loving kindness. Not only does he bring his son back from death, but also through the Spirit he clearly shows his grace. To replace corruption, he clothes him with an incorruptible robe. To satisfy hunger, he kills the fatted calf. The Father provides shoes for his feet so that he will not travel far away again. Most wonderful of all, he puts a divine signet ring upon his hand. By all these things, he begets him anew in the image of the glory of Christ.” — St. Athanasius, Festal Letter VII

**Saturday, February 25 – 4:00 choir practice and 5:30 Great Vespers**

**Sunday, February 26, after coffee hour – forgiveness Vespers**

**GREAT LENT BEGINS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

*A mission parish under the omophorion of His Eminence Benjamin,  
Archbishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West,  
Orthodox Church in America*



**ST TIKHON ORTHODOX  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**Sunday, February 12, 2017**

**Sunday of the Prodigal Son**



*The Return of the Prodigal Son by Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1668)*

**Sunday Hours & Divine Liturgy at 9:10 AM, followed by agape potluck  
Other services as announced**

**Rev. Alexander Vallens, Rector**

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## The Parable of the Prodigal Son

On the third Sunday of preparation for Lent, we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32). Together with the hymns on this day, the parable reveals to us the time of repentance as man's return from exile. The prodigal son, we are told, went to a far country and there spent all that he had. A far country! It is this unique definition of our human condition that we must assume and make ours as we begin our approach to God. A man who has never had that experience, be it only very briefly, who has never felt that he is exiled from God and from real life, will never understand what Christianity is about. And the one who is perfectly "at home" in this world and its life, who has never been wounded by the nostalgic desire for another Reality, will not understand what is repentance.

Repentance is often simply identified as a cool and "objective" enumeration of sins and transgressions, as the act of "pleading guilty" to a legal indictment. Confession and absolution are seen as being of a juridical nature. But something very essential is overlooked - without which neither confession nor absolution have any real meaning or power. This "something" is precisely the feeling of alienation from God, from the joy of communion with Him, from the real life as created and given by God. It is easy indeed to confess that I have not fasted on prescribed days, or missed my prayers, or become angry. It is quite a different thing, however, to realize suddenly that I have defiled and lost my spiritual beauty, that I am far away from my real home, my real life, and that something precious and pure and beautiful has been hopelessly broken in the very texture of my existence. Yet this, and only this, is repentance, and therefore it is also a deep desire to return, to go back, to recover that lost home. ...

One liturgical peculiarity of this "Sunday of the Prodigal Son" must be especially mentioned here. At Sunday Matins, following the solemn and joyful Psalms of the Polyeleion, we sing the sad and nostalgic Psalm 137:

*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, and we wept when we remembered Zion... How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy...*

It is the Psalm of exile. It was sung by the Jews in their Babylonian captivity as they thought of their holy city of Jerusalem. It has become forever the song of man as he realizes his exile from God, and realizing it, becomes man again: the one who can never be fully satisfied by anything in this fallen world, for by nature and vocation he is a pilgrim of the Absolute. This Psalm will be sung twice more: on the last two Sundays before Lent. It reveals Lent itself as pilgrimage and repentance-- as return.

*from Great Lent, by Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann*

**Also this week:** Ven. Martinian of Caesarea in Palestine (February 13); Repose of St. Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Teacher of the Slavs (February 14); St Onesimus, Apostle of the Seventy (February 15); Martyrs Presbyter Pamphilus, Deaco Valens, Paul, Seleucus, Porphyrius, Julian, Theodulus, Elias, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Samuel, and Daniel at Caesarea in Palestine; St Nicholas, Equal of the Apostles and Archbishop of Japan (+1912) (February 16); Greatmartyr Theodore the Tyro (the Recruit) (February 17); MEMORIAL SATURDAY; Leo the Great, Pope of Rome (February 18).

**\* REGULAR FASTING THIS WEEK \***

**Epistle:** I Corinthians 6:12-20 (Sunday)

**Gospel:** Luke 15:11-32 (Sunday)

### Troparion – Tone 1 (Sunday)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, /  
While the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, /  
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, /  
Granting life to the world. /  
The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: /  
"Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! /  
Glory to Thy Kingdom! ///  
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

### Kontakion – Tone 3 (Triodion)

Foolishly have I run away from Thy glory, O Father, /  
Wasting in sin the wealth that Thou gavest me. /  
Therefore with the words of the Prodigal I cry unto Thee: /  
I have sinned before Thee, compassionate Father. ///  
Accept me in repentance and make me as one of Thy hired servants.

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