

# Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Parish Council President: Matthew Adamcio

V. Rev. Archpriest Andrew Bartek, Rector



Saturday, February 28, 2021

Gospel: St. Luke 15:11-32

Tone 5

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Ven. Basil the Confessor, Companion of Ven. Procopius at Decapolis

## February Bulletin Sponsor:

By Father Andrew, In memory of my Grandmother Justina

### Liturgical & Events Schedule

#### Sunday, February 28

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy / Social

#### Wednesday March 3

Noon: Akathist Hymn

#### Friday, March 5

6:30 pm: Akathist Hymn

#### Saturday, March 6

4:00 pm Great Vespers

#### Sunday, March 7

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy / Meatfare Social (potluck)

**(NEW NOTE):** You must let Fr. Andrew know if you want to attend any service.

### FEBRUARY CANDLE & BULLETIN SPONSORS

**Bulletin:** (\$50) From Fr. Andrew - In memory of his Grandmother, Justina

**Chandelier:** (\$50) From Basil for his parents Anthony & Martha / Fr. Andrew for Fr. James for his b-day (his spiritual Father)

**Altar Candles:** (\$50) From Fr. Andrew - In memory of First Carpatho-Russian Bishop, Metropolitan Orestes

**Candles on the Tomb:** (\$25) From Fr. Andrew In Memory of his relatives deceased in month of Feb.

**Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** (\$25) From Athanasia - In memory of Kurtis, Bobbie, Margaret, Gori, Jeanette, DorothyAnn, Edward, and unborn infants Michael, George, & Alexander.

### TENTATIVE READERS

Sunday, Feb 28	Tim
Sunday, Mar 7	Terri
Sunday, Mar 14	Tim
Wednesday, Mar 17	Natalie
Friday, Mar 19	Terri & Tim
Saturday, Mar 20	Tim
Sunday Mar 21	Terri
Wednesday, Mar 24	Tim & Terri
Thursday, Mar 25	Natalie
Saturday, Mar 27	Tim
Sunday, Mar 28	Terri
Wednesday, Mar 31	Tim & Terri

### MARCH CANDLE & BULLETIN SPONSORS

**Bulletin:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of Metropolitan Nicholas, my ordaining Bishop

**Chandelier:** (\$50) Diane Tryon in loving memory of her father on his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**Altar Candles:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of his father George on the occasion of his birthday

**Candles on the Tomb:** (\$25) Fr. Andrew in memory of my deceased relatives & Pani Jeanette

**Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** (\$25) Terri in memory of her dad John on occasion of 15th anniversary of repose

### PRAY FOR OUR NEW CATECHUMEN

Austin

May God & the Holy Spirit guide him in his journey in the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox way of Life.

110 E Main Street, Marblehead, OH 43440  
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**JANUARY 2021: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY**

**Goal Pledged per month: \$4,825**

**Sunday, Feb. 7:** \$4,880

**Sunday, Feb. 14:** \$1,230

**Sunday, Feb. 21:** \$1,165

**JANUARY, 202: OTHER INCOME**

**Goal for the month in this category: \$2,670**

**Sunday, February 7:** \$115 candles; \$270 Vigils; \$525 in Holy Day donations; \$50 Bulletin; \$50 Chandelier; \$25 Candles on the Tomb

**Week Total:** \$1,035

**Sunday, February 14:** \$45 Candles; \$55 Vigils; \$155 Holy Days; \$100 Chandelier; \$200 Donation

**Week Total:** \$555

**Sunday, February 21:** \$20 Candles; \$115 Vigils; \$230 Holy day donations

**Week Total:** \$365

**Month Total to date:** \$1,955

**RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS RECEIVED**

**Sunday, February 7:** \$750 Building Fund; \$150 Cemetery; \$100 Flower; \$175 in Food Pantry; \$10 Halupki Festival; \$250 Catastrophic Fund; \$150 St Herman's House Special Collection

**Sunday, February 14:** \$20 St Herman's house

**Sunday, February 21:** \$25 Building Restoration; \$100 St Herman's House (Special Collection)

**40 DAY REMEMBRANCE**

**Feb. 28:** Rosie Foster / Police officer from Toledo / Archpriest Joseph Gibson / Mitred Archpriest Daniel Ressetar / Mary Trader

**March 7:** Archimandrite Alexander [Cutler] / Jane / William Alber / Anna Schofield

**March 14:** Two FBI agents killed in FL / Mitred Protopresbyter Daniel Hiubiak

**March 21:** Christopher Ghareeb

**VIGILS - FEBRUARY 21, 2021**

**Tim Glovinsky (1)** Birthday blessings for dad

**Susan Guzy (2)** Health & peace to mom; Special intentions

**Laura Kovach (4)** For healing of Joe, Andrew, and JC; For health of Betty, Ben, Julia, Andrea, Wendy, Mark, Dana, Bodhi, Wayne, and David; In thanksgiving for all good things; Special intentions.

**Sandy Martin (1)** Special intentions

**Jim Mazur (1)** Special intentions

**Diane Tryon (1)** Birthday blessings to Uncle Bill

**Twarek (8)** For God's grace and blessings on our country; In loving memory of Jonathan Walbert; Health and recovery of Ann Turinsky, Bob Snyder, JC Geisman; God's blessing to Cole; Health of Jewel and Morgan and their unborn babies; God's blessings and good health to Ezra Bottoms; Health and recovery of Jim, Cheryl and Laura; Health of Matt, Wayne, Tom, Ron, Mary, Loren, Joe, Sonya, David, Julia, Tom, Jason, Margi & Joe, Betty, MaryAnn & Bob, Judy, Chuck, Bohdi, Liz, Diane, Stella, Jake, Helen; Special intentions

**LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE FOR FEBRUARY 2021**

**Monday & Tuesday-** Services cancelled

**Saturday, Feb. 6:** 7 attended Vespers

**Sunday, Feb 7:** 12 attended Liturgy / 10 Communicants

**Wednesday, Feb. 10:** 4 attended Akathist

**Saturday, Feb. 13:** 7 attended Vespers (1 guest)

**Sunday, Feb. 14:** 13 attended Liturgy / 9 Communicants

**Saturday, Feb. 20:** 7 attended Vespers

**Sunday, Feb. 21:** 19 attended Liturgy (3 guests) / 16 Communicants



# PRAYER LIST Updated 2-25

**HIERARCH'S:** His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman

**CLERGY:** John Duranko (Father's home pastor); James Gleason (Father's Spiritual Father); Moses Barry; Gregory Grivna; David Hanes; Emilian Hutnyan; Joseph Von Klarr; Vladimir Lecko; Peter Pawlack; Peter Tutko; John Zabinko / Deacon Paul Gansle

**MATUSHKII:** Pani Patricia Duranko; Virginia Lecko; Maura McCarntey; Snezana Ruzic; Sonya Tutko; Margaret Zabinko

**PARISHIONERS & THEIR FAMILIES:** Jonah Adamcio; John Beadle (Elchisco); Kristen (Cassell Daughter); Maryann Cook (cousin to Twarek); John Richard Elchisco; Michael Glovinsky; Shirley Gresh (Glovinsky); Ben Grosik (Hritsko cousin); Judy Hritsko; Julia Guzy; Joseph Habegger (brother-in-law Kovach); Ellie Hritsko (Aunt); Charisee (Hileman); Betty Kovach (Jim's mother); Terri Lariccia (Fr's cousin); David LaValle (Fr's cousin); Helen Lis (fr David's mom); Child Stephanos (Loizos); Jim Mazur; Child Stella Miller (Elchisco); Katelyn Pipenur (Hileman niece); Earl Rindfleisch (Tina's dad); Helen Jean Rofkar (Elchisco); Joe Rose; Sonya Rose; Ron Royhab; Maryann Royhab; Patricia Schirtzinger (Christi's mom); Steven Schirtzinger (Christi's brother); Christy Schutt (Joe's sister); Dacia Snider (Hileman); Christi Soski; Doris Toth (Hritsko cousin); Peter Truta (Jean's cousin); Diane Tryon; Greg Tyron; Tom Twarek; the child Bodhi (Grandson Cassell)

**OTHER REQUESTS:** Mark Britton (Hritsko); Joel Butcher (Son); Ernest Cornwell (Hritsko); James Crane (Hritsko); Baby Finn (Cassell); Child Ezra Bottoms; Bredan (Child from Norwalk); Marge Dziama Fr's Dziama's daughter (former pastor); Mary Dziak (Twarek); Ruthe Flewelling, (Former parishioner); Ben Franklin (Kovach); James Geisman (Twarek); Theodore Geletka (Choir director St. Michael's Broadview Heights); Donald Gresh (Glovinsky); Madelyn (Trudy); Elliot Joy (Former Police chief's son); Andrea Joy (Kovach); Ann Marie Krynock (Timko); Melinda Kuzara (Archbishop's list); Jake Lipstraw (Twarek); Mark Ludvik (Guzy); Mark Masica (Kovach); Pauline Meath (Fr's friend); Karen Muzyka (Fr's friend); Charlie Nowak (Twarek); Sandy Scafaria (Hileman); Arby Shenesky (Pastor B. Daughter); Bob Snyder (Twarek); Gary Steyer (Twarek); Janice Timko; Philip Andy Timko; George Timko; Cheryl Wieber (Twarek); Chuck Wiedenhof (Twarek); Loren Welch (Fr's friend)

**MILITARY:** Alex, Nathan Brown, Craig Cassell, Jake Ellithorpe, Jordan Fulton

**CAPTIVES:** Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo), Archbishop John Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo, The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria; Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world



## BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND

Our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is coming!

Fund Purpose: To collect funds to pay for the restoration, repair and beautification of the building and parish room. This will avoid using general funds which are earmarked for budgetary items.

Please consider contributing generously to the *Building/Restoration Fund*.

## For Your Prayers

**Julia Guzy (97)**  
1601 Church Rd  
Marblehead, OH 43440

**Diane Tryon**  
109 Joslyn Street  
Arcadia, OH 44804

Please remember our shut-ins, especially now during this National crisis.

## Metropolitan Tikhon Congratulates Newly Elected Serbian Patriarch Porfirije

In a letter dated February 18, 2021, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, congratulated His Holiness the newly elected Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia. The text of the letter, which also appears in PDF format, reads as follows:

Your Holiness, Dear Brother and Concelebrant in the Lord's Mysteries,

I write to you today to congratulate you and offer my prayers on the occasion of your election as Patriarch of Serbia. Axios! Many years, Your Holiness!

As you take on the yoke of this sacred ministry, I pray that our Heavenly Father may always nourish you as you do His Holy Will in sustaining and establishing His Kingdom here on earth. May the Son ever be your example, as you labor in humility and obedience to "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14). And may the Holy Spirit, by whose Divine Grace and Will you were elected, empower you always as you fulfill the primatial service.

Please be assured of my fraternal prayers for you and your flock, accompanied by the prayers of all the hierarchs, clergy, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America. Through the example and intercessions of our common saints, Nikolai of Zhicha and South Canaan, Mardarije of Libertyville, Sebastian of Jackson, and others, we are confident that the close bonds between the elder Church of Serbia and the younger Orthodox Church in America will remain strong, at this time and always.

With fraternal love and prayers, I remain

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

## Zacchaeus and the Salvation of Sinners By Father Lawrence Farley

Zacchaeus lives in the Church, abiding as an image of us all. In some sense, everyone of us is Zacchaeus, for everyone of us is a sinner at heart. That is why Zacchaeus is invoked and his example recalled every time the priest enters someone's home to invoke the presence and blessing of Christ upon it (such as at the Theophany season, and when a new house is first blessed). Christ entered a good many people's homes during His brief ministry, including the home of Simon Peter and of the ruler of the synagogue, and yet these visits are not invoked liturgically as was the visit to the home of Zacchaeus. That is because Zacchaeus stood out among people. Most people were decent folk, fallen, yet trying their best to do the right thing. They had a sound moral compass, and even when they strayed a bit, they tried not to stray too far or for too long a time. Zacchaeus was different. Zacchaeus was a sinner—that is, someone without apparent moral compass. He did not at all mind straying, and he had evidently lost his own moral compass a long time ago.

For that is what the word "sinner" (Greek *amartolos*) meant. It did not denote someone who was merely fallen and mortal, but the lowest of the low. The word described a person with a certain social status—or, more accurately, a certain lack of social status. Prostitutes were sinners, traitors and collaborators were sinners. Thieves and bandits were sinners. And tax-collectors of that time were sinners, and Zacchaeus, as a chief tax collector, was one of the worst. He was described in Luke 19:1f as "rich", and doubtless he had grown rich in the same way as most tax-collectors did—namely by cheating decent folk and enriching himself at their expense. Poverty-stricken widows and their children went to bed hungry because of Zacchaeus and people like him.

Little wonder then that the locals were scandalized, shocked, and traumatized when Jesus stopped under the sycamore tree which Zacchaeus had climbed and announced publically that He had decided to stay at his house. Christ's visit would bestow status and honour upon the house which received Him, and everyone thought that no one deserved the honour less than Zacchaeus. What about the local head of the town, or perhaps the ruler of the synagogue? Why should they be passed over and snubbed—and ***Con't Page 6***

## ***MARCH Celebrations***

NAME'S DAY	BIRTHDAYS	
3-4: Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa 3-17: Archbishop Alejo of Mexico	1- Marilyn Calzone 2- Lori Batura 3- Tony Monastra 7- Tamera Blackford 8- Rachel Adamcio 8- Ruth Sheller 11- Jason Monschein 16- Paul Bojan	16- Claudia Zile 22- Ariana Holmes 23- Mason Monschein 26- Rachel Sumner 30- Bobbie Royhab 30- Fred Cassell 31- Greg Mazur

*If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.*

### **Archbishop Paul's Travel Schedule:**

**February 8 to March 7**

**Holy Assumption, Canton, OH,**

February 26th to 28th

**Ss. Peter & Paul, Lorain, OH,**

March 5th to March 7<sup>th</sup>, Meatfare Sunday

Fr. Basil Stoyka to be awarded the St. John of Chicago Cross

**Holy Trinity Cathedral,**

March 13th to 14th

Sunday of Forgiveness, Forgiveness Vespers

Beginning of Great Lent

**Ss. Peter & Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI,**

March 19th to 21st

### ***CATASTROPHIC RELIEF FUND***

Purpose of fund: To provide some small financial assistance to a parishioner, family member or community member who has suffered a catastrophic event.

Funds will be offered at the discretion & blessing of the Rector and the discretion of the Board.

This money can also be used for outreach programs in the parish

Thank you and God bless!

## ***MARCH Reposed***

1- George Danchisen (2018) 3- Anna Stoyka (2018) 4- Andrew Mazur (2001) 6- Frank Guzy (2002) 11- Ella Mazur (1918) 13- Metropolitan Nicholas (2011) 13- Richard Michael Benya (1983) 13- George Malchisky Sr (1980) 17- Frank Holodnak (1961) 23- Eva Pondillo (2001) 23- Ella Mazurik (1985)	23- Francis Mitchell (2008) 23- Barbara Ann Wasylenko (2017) 25- Pani Janette Moriak (1997) 25- David Chikerotis (2019) 29- Todd Pollack (2019) 29- Carolyn Woodward (2000) 30- John Rofkar (2019) Michael Elchisko (1909) Helen Millie (1910) George Danchisen (1912)
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## *Fr. Lawrence Con't*

for Zacchaeus, of all people? No wonder Luke reports (with his customary economy of words) that “everyone grumbled, saying, ‘He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner’” (Luke 19:7). But Christ saw more than simply a sinner. He saw a sinner who so wanted to reach out for something more that he was even willing to make himself look ridiculous by climbing into a tree (something no adult conscious of his dignity would ever do). Christ responded to that inarticulate reach. When Zacchaeus, sacrificing his dignity, reached down, Christ reached up, and the contact between them changed everything. Zacchaeus changed his whole life, so that salvation came to his house that day. Christ came into the world to save Zacchaeus. He came into the world to save sinners.

We note that in Orthodoxy today we do not use the word “sinner” in this way. We confess that we are all sinners. In our glossary, the word “sinner” no longer describes just the lowest of the low. We use it to describe everyone, including ourselves, and our prayers are as a result full of penitential words and phrases. We speak of “God’s righteous chastisement which impends against us”, and of His righteous wrath. God may not express His righteous wrath or chastise us, but our prayers confess that He would be just and fair if He did. We are “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3), properly deserving punishment, even if in His patience God does not punish. Why the change of terminology? Is the Church morbid when it takes a term describing the lowest of the low and makes it its universal self-designation?

No; the Church is not being morbid, just perceptive. When we look away from the outer circumstances, and the crowd and the concern over other’s status and look into our own hearts, we see the same brokenness and darkness that afflicts the worst of sinners. The Church is not being morbid; it just knows that given the right (or wrong) circumstances, anyone is capable of anything. It looks at the sinner, the prostitute, and the gang member and says quietly, “There but for the grace of God go I”. Deep inside we are all busted. The inner machinery which God constructed to produce a righteous life is no longer working. We plug it in, turn it on, and it does not produce a righteous life. Instead it produces laziness, lust, anger, resentment, greed and a host of

other products we don’t like and didn’t ask for. In a word it produces sin, which is why the Church says that deep inside we are no better than the notorious sinners.

But let’s be honest. Most of the time, we don’t feel like we are sinners. We feel we are pretty good: “I’m okay; you’re okay”. In fact I recently heard one lady being interviewed on the radio who said (with no apparent sense of irony), “I can’t regret anything I’ve ever done, but everything I’ve done has helped make me into the person I am today.” Wow. So, no sense of sin here, and no confession that she is a sinner. But she is not so very different from most people in our culture, for our culture has effectively lost its sense of sin. Prior to the last generation or so, all people everywhere knew that they were in need of forgiveness from God or the gods or whatever transcendent tribunal governed the world. Now this sense of needing pardon has been lost, and our liturgical prayers talking about “God’s righteous chastisement” can sometimes seem to us a little strange. We cast about to redefine God and suggest that maybe He doesn’t have wrath after all.

What’s the answer? I suggest prayer. If you have the courage, try this: ask God to reveal to you the true state of your heart. Of course He will not do it fully, or you would burst into tears, take to bed, and sink into clinical depression. But He might do it as much as He thinks you can bear, and give at least a little glimpse into your true state. If we do see how sinful we actually are, that will produce two results. One: it will make it easier to forgive those who hurt us. After all, if we are such sinners, how much can we really hold it against others when they sin? Two: it will give us a sense of gratitude for His forgiveness and His love. Every Sunday at Liturgy we receive Holy Communion, and divine forgiveness through the Chalice. As sinners, we are completely unworthy of such love, and yet it is poured out lavishly upon us anyway. How can we not be grateful? Maybe that is why the Church holds the example of Zacchaeus before us as Great Lent approaches. Lent is about repentance and forgiveness, and it will be good to know how little we deserve the forgiveness we so constantly receive.

**First and second finding of the Honorable Head of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist of the Lord, John Commemorated on February 24**

After the Beheading of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John (August 29), his body was buried by disciples in the Samaritan city of Sebaste, and his venerable head was hidden by Herodias in an unclean place. Saint Joanna (June 27), the wife of King Herod's steward Chuza (Luke 8:3), secretly took the holy head and placed it into a vessel and buried it on the Mount of Olives in one of Herod's properties.

After many years, this property passed into the possession of a government official who became a monk with the name of Innocent. He built a church and a cell there. When they started to dig the foundation, the vessel with the venerable head of John the Baptist was uncovered. Innocent recognized its great holiness from the signs of grace emanating from it. Thus occurred the First Finding of the Head. Innocent preserved it with great piety, but fearful that the holy relic might be abused by unbelievers, before his own death he again hid it in that same place, where it was found. Upon his death the church fell into ruin and was destroyed.

**Sunday of the Prodigal Son Commemorated on February 28**

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.

During the days of Saint Constantine the Great (May 21), when Christianity began to flourish, the holy Forerunner appeared twice to two monks journeying to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to the holy places, and he revealed the location of his venerable head.

The monks uncovered the holy relic and, placing it into a sack of camel-hair, they proceeded home-wards. Along the way they encountered an unnamed potter and gave him the precious burden to carry. Not knowing what he was carrying, the potter continued on his way. But the holy Forerunner appeared to him and ordered him to flee from the careless and lazy monks, with what he held in his hands. The potter concealed himself from the monks and at home he preserved the venerable head with reverence. Before his death he placed it in a water jug and gave it to his sister.

From that time the venerable head was successively preserved by devout Christians, until the priest Eustathius (infected with the Arian heresy) came into possession of it. He beguiled a multitude of the infirm who had been healed by the holy head, ascribing their cures to the fact that it was in the possession of an Arian. When his blasphemy was uncovered, he was compelled to flee. After he buried the holy relic in a cave, near Emesa, the heretic intended to return later and use it for disseminating falsehood. God, however, did not permit this. Pious monks settled in the cave, and then a monastery arose at this place. In the year 452 Saint John the Baptist appeared to Archimandrite Marcellus of this monastery, and indicated where his head was hidden. This became celebrated as the Second Finding. The holy relic was transferred to Emesa, and later to Constantinople.



**The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

## 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (Epistle)

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

### Prayer of St. Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. *(Full Prostration)*

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.  
*(Full Prostration)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Full Prostration)*

O God, cleanse me, a sinner *(12 times)*.  
And recite prayer one more time.



## Luke 15:11-32 (Gospel)

Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with 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, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’” And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”



## FOCA to Start Great Lent in Prayer

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) is inviting all to join together in prayer and reflection as the season of Great Lent begins. Following the success of the St. Andrew Akathist, the organization plans on doing a similar gathering by hosting a virtual “Akathist of Repentance”.

“This past year has been one unlike any other. We have experienced isolation, separation and anxiety while trying to protect ourselves and others from the pandemic surrounding us,” noted Archpriest Nicholas Wyslutsky, the Spiritual Advisor for the national organization. “In effort to bring the faithful of our church together in some way the FOCA will sponsor a “Virtual” Akathist service to bring us all together.”

The service will be hosted in one location but clergy from across the country will concelebrate from their own churches and homes. The service will be live streamed via St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Youtube channel. In addition to prayer, His Eminence Archbishop Paul of Chicago and the Midwest will be offering remarks as Orthodox Christians begin this holy season.

“It is our hope that this will be not just an FOCA event but one that embraces and gathers all the faithful of the Church. In that spirit, please encourage all your friends and family to join us that evening. We invite all the clergy of the church to consider participating in the service with us.”

The celebration will take place on March 12, at 8:00 P.M. (EST) and will be led by Archbishop Paul of Chicago. The faithful who would like to join can do so via the St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Youtube channel.



## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FAITH FROM THE OCA WEBSITE

### Experience of God and Communion with God

#### Question:

You also keep speaking about the experience of God and communion with God. Do you really believe that these things are possible for men?

#### Answer:

If communion with God is not possible, then there is no Christian Faith and certainly no Orthodoxy.

The entire faith of the Church is built on the fact that “God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us.” This biblical line is solemnly sung at every Morning Service in the Orthodox Church.

God has revealed Himself! He has not merely told some things about Himself, or communicated some data about His divine existence and purposes. He has shown forth Himself and has given Himself to men for divine communion.

According to Orthodoxy, there is no other meaning to the life of man except in communion with God. God is the end of all longing, the fulfillment of all desires, the source and the goal of man’s very humanity made in God’s divine image and likeness.

Through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, man comes to living communion with God the Father Himself. There is no other meaning and purpose to the Church and to life itself.

Man and all creation with him must come to be divine by sharing the being and life and action of God Himself. All of the attributes of divinity—as one saint put it—must become ours; eternal life, truth, goodness, holiness, purity, joy... all perfections summed up in the greatest which is Love. For God is Love! This is the meaning of life, and it is certainly possible for men to attain it. At least, once more, according to the Orthodox Faith.

## FISH FRY

St. Mary's Byzantine Church in Marblehead will be holding a fish Fry on Friday's from 4-6pm for take out only at the church during their Great Fast.

Menu: Breaded Perch & Tartar Sauce, Cole Slaw, Cheesy Potatoes & a roll (The last 3 fish fry's will occur during our fast. Just tell Restaurant & they will substitute the dairy portion of the meal)

Cost: \$12 and will be provided by the Latitude Cafe.

Bakery Available for purchase. / Raffle Basket tickets also available for sale.

Pre-orders only. Call Restaurant @ 419-702-7004 If no answers leave a message with name & # of dinners. Deadline is always noon on Thursday.

Place order with restaurant but pick dinners up at the church.

**Dinner Dates:** March 5, 12, 19, 26, 31

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### Practice virtue, as we still remain humble and flee from pride

Ode 5 Verse from the Triodion

Let us make haste to follow the Pharisee in his virtues and to emulate the Publican in his humility, and let us hate what is wrong in each of them: foolish pride and the defilement of transgressions.

This past Sunday marked the beginning of the Lenten Triodion. The gospel reading was from Luke concerning the Pharisee and the Publican. It is a simple and straightforward reading that warns us of how virtuous living can be corrupted by self-love and pride, leading to contempt of God and our fellow man. The Pharisee's prayer is not a prayer. The Pharisee prayed "with himself." He basically instructed God to look at him and all the good he had done, while also showing contempt for his neighbor, the Publican: "Thank God I am not like this man over there." His virtues were undermined by his prideful contempt of God and his fellow man. The Publican offered nothing of any self-righteousness in his petition. He was bowed

down, almost kissing the ground, saying "Lord be merciful to be a sinner." What the Pharisee did not see in himself, the Publican did. The Publican acknowledged his enslavement to a life separated from God, crying out and lamenting his unworthiness. The canon verse says it all. How do we embrace the virtue of the Pharisee and emulate the Publican in his humility? We hear the following from the epistle of James:

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. (James 1:16-18)

All that is good comes from the Father of lights. Let us not get deceived into thinking that the good that has its source in God the Father somehow becomes a possession of ours, for which we can take credit. I have remarked in many a sermon that one of the first words a child learns (probably after mom and dad) is the word "mine." Once that happens, that very young toddler is on the road to becoming a prideful Pharisee. So how do we overcome this? Only by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. We have to daily remind ourselves of the words from James' letter.

Remind your children daily that life is a gift from God and all that we have that is good comes from God. We have no rights to anything.

Discipline your child when he starts to brag about his good deeds at the expense of making himself out to be better than others.

Repeat the following verse from the gospel as often as possible. "He who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Explore with your children what this means to them. How do they live these words?

The blessing of the Lord be upon you,

The unworthy +Paul

