

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 28, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE 2016 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT package has been mailed out. Please review the materials and prayerfully consider what your family is able to offer in support God's work in our parish and our larger community. Please return the form as soon as possible. If you did not receive the materials in the mail, they are available at the candle stand.

NEW PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT. When the Parish Council was elected last year, **Deb Sedares**, who has been serving as Parish Council President for onwads of six years, agreed to serve one more year with the expectation someone else would step forward to serve at least for the second year of the term. In a special meeting held this past Tuesday, the Parish Council elected **George Demake** to serve as President. In addition, the Council elected **Margarite Landry** to serve as Secretary.

While she would be the first to say it, Deb is not going anywhere — meaning she will continue to serve our community in the many wonderful ways she always has — each of us can use this moment to thank her personally for the self-sacrificing leadership she has pro-



THE THIRTY FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 15:11-32

(THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON)

TONE 6 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 6

vided. Also, we want to congratulate George. He will need our prayers, even as we offers ourselves to help him as he serves our parish. **God bless Deb! God bless George! Many Years! to both.**

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS is next **Saturday, March 5th**. Liturgy begins at 10:am, preceded by Matins at 9:00am. If you would like to prepare the memorial wheat, speak with Fr. Nick.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular meeting on **Monday, March 7th at 6:30 pm**. Parish Council Members, please let George know if you are unable to attend.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, March 5th, from 9 am - noon**. About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry,

please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki** or **Nicole Apostola**.

THANKS TO THE CLEANING CREW that worked their magic this past Wednesday, and especially **Christine Masterjohn** who coordinates this effort. These periodic "deep cleanings" really make a difference.

WE CELEBRATE A MEMORIALS TODAY for the servant of God **George Soter**, fallen-asleep six months. **May our loving Lord rest his souls with just!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Soter** family in **George's** memory.

GREETERS TEAM 4

DIMITRI SAFFRON AND SEAN FAHEY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:

ILIANA & SEAN FAHEY,

DIMITRI SAFFRON,

CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, March 5 Sat of Souls, Liturgy, 10am
Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
Mon, March 7 Parish Council Meeting, 6pm
Sat, March 12 Pita Baking, 9am-noon
Mon, March 14 Great Lent Begins
Wed, March 16 PreSanctified Lit, St Nicholas, 6pm
Sun, April 24 Palm Sunday
Sun, May 1 Great and Holy Pascha

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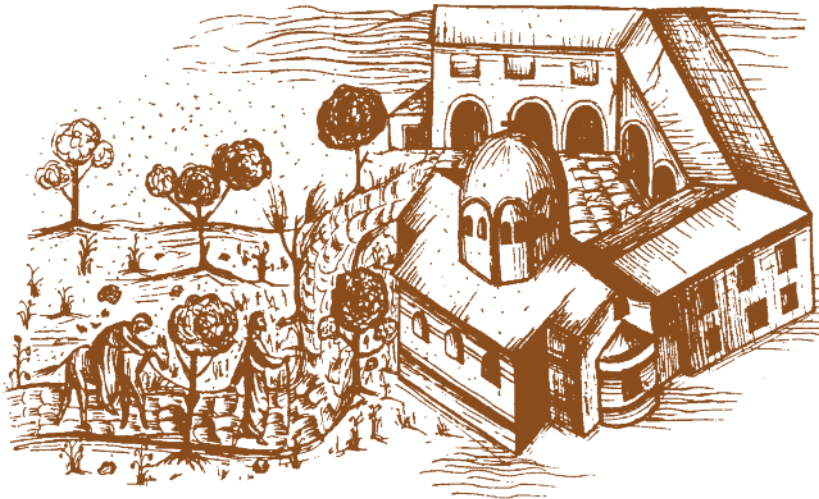
A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

A PRAYER OF
FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LEND AN EAR, LORD, and answer us, for we are poor and miserable! Look after our souls, for we are your friends; save your servants, O God, for we trust in you! Attend to our prayers, and show us a sign of your favor as we struggle for true repentance during this lenten season. Enable us to grow in the spirit of the prophets, to exercise the faith of the apostles, to win the nobility of the martyrs, to attain the wisdom of the fathers, and to imitate all the virtues of the saints, so that with them we may arrive at the paschal mysteries of your only Son.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



THE PRAYER
OF
ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

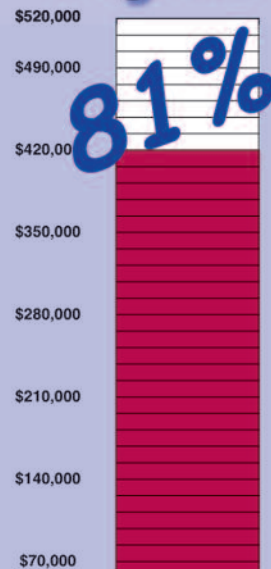
Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Let's Work
Together
to be
Mortgage
Free!

Please Join Us!

Mortgage Fund
Progress



AND, HE CAME TO HIMSELF

THIS is the second Sunday of the Tridion, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). By way of preparing us for Great Lent and assisting us on our journey, the holy fathers have given us this Gospel reading as another example of repentance. As with the parable of the Publican and Pharisee, we are asked to draw from this story hope and faith in God's love for us.

In one important respect this parable is very much like that of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It has entered into our cultural imagination and vocabulary, even for those people who would be hard-pressed to know its scriptural context. The story of the Prodigal coming home remains a powerful image of repentance and forgiveness, of return and acceptance.

There are three important 'players' in this story: the father, the elder son, and the younger son. It is not an uncommon dynamic: sibling rivalry, youthful excesses, rebellion against parents. The elder is being groomed to be the heir. From the story we can see that he takes this role seriously. He is hardworking and diligent. The younger son is a 'lost soul.' He is every parent's sleepless night. He resents his brother and chafes at his father's love.

Out of the blue the younger son demands of his father his inheritance (v. 12). There is a subtle 'knife' here. The son wants his inheritance before his father is even dead. In a sense, he is cutting himself off from his father as though he were already dead. Nonetheless, his father grants his request and divides his wealth, giving his younger son what would have been his only after he were gone.

The younger son gets his 'freedom.' (Don't we often equate money with freedom?) Because he has the means, now



he can do whatever he wants. And he does so, that is until the money runs out. Having now found the limits to his 'freedom' the younger son has to find some way to support himself. The only work he can find is to feed pigs (v. 15); this would be no more palatable to him then, than it would be to us today. This was his 'down and out' moment. Feeling the pangs of hunger, and envious of what the pigs themselves were eating, "he came to himself" (v. 17).

I believe that the whole parable turns on this one phrase. Having been stripped of everything, but especially his dignity, the younger son finally can see himself clearly — he comes to himself. This is the first step toward real repentance, to see ourselves as we really are. It is also a dangerous moment, because it can lead us in either of two directions: to despair or to change.

Instead of despairing, this young man chooses to go back to his father and beg for forgiveness. We know he's sincere because he decides that he's not worthy of 'sonship.' Rather, he will ask his father simply to give him a job, to

treat him like a hired servant (v. 18-19).

The Lord says that his father, even when the young man "was still far off ... saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him" (v. 20). Dismissing the son's pleas concerning his sins, the father rejoices at his return and restores everything.

The elder brother, when he returns home from working in the fields, and finding that his profligate brother had come back, was understandably angry and resentful. He blows up at his father, furious at the easy way he welcomed back this brother. The resentment he felt from years of having been the faithful son, doing his father's will, always doing the "right thing," comes out in a torrent of anger and hurt (v. 28-30).

The father tries to comfort his eldest son, even as he tries to teach him compassion and love, and encourages him to accept his brother, once dead to them, and now alive (v. 32).

This story is so powerful because we know these people intimately. *We* are the prodigal who needs to turn back and be embraced and loved by our Heavenly Father. *We* are the hardworking older child in need of learning compassion, forgiveness, and how to welcome back those who want to change. *We too* are the parent who grieves at the foolish and wayward ways of our children, standing at the window, waiting for them to come home. In this one story we find ourselves, but most importantly, we also find our way back home, but only if we first come to ourselves.

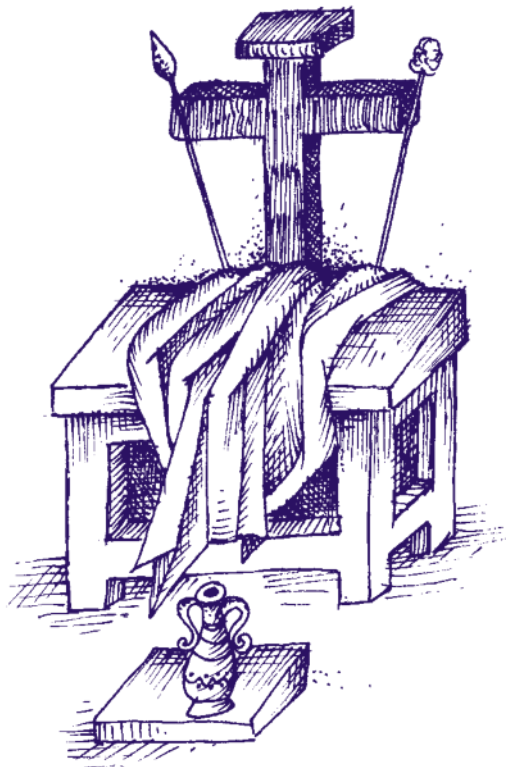
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES 2016

Wednesday, March 16, 2016
St. Nicholas Church

Wednesday, March 23, 2016
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, March 30, 2016
St. George Cathedral



Wednesday, April 6, 2016
St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, April 13, 2016
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, April 20, 2016
St. George Cathedral

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.