

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 5. Ven. Basil the Confessor, Companion of Ven. Procopius at Decapolis (750). Bl. Nikolai, Fool-for-Christ at Pskov (1576). Hieromartyr Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria (457). Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos in Pamphylia (250). Ven. Marina (Marana), Cyra (Kyra) and Domnica (Domnina), of Syria (ca. 450). Venerable Domnica (ca. 450). John Cassian the Roman (435). Devpeteruv Icon of the Mother of God (14th c.).

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Luke 15:11-32

On the third Sunday of preparation for Lent, we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son. 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. ... 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 ... 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 ... 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 ... 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.

-- by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, an excerpt from *Great Lent*

SCHEDULE

Sunday, Feb. 28	9:30am Third Hour
<i>Prodigal Son</i>	9:45am General Confession
	10:00am Divine Liturgy
Sunday, March 7	9:30am Third Hour
<i>Last Judgment</i>	9:45am St. Xenia Prayers
	10:00am Divine Liturgy

Welcome to all our visitors.

Whether you are attending in person or watching from home, we are happy to have you join us in worship.

INCREASED CAPACITY FOR CHURCHES – NJ Governor Phil Murphy has announced that religious services will be allowed to run at 50% capacity, effective immediately. Archbishop Michael has given his blessing for HTOC to **increase our maximum to 60 persons.**

VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR was a very successful first-time event. There were 15 attendees, including Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff who joined the Zoom meeting from the UK. Thanks to Gene Bohensky for offering his personal Zoom account.

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFO

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CHURCH ATTENDANCE- Please contact Patty Kaufman (201) 400-5124 or patriciakaufman@hotmail.com if you would like to attend any of the services in person *and if you would like to receive Communion*.
IMPORTANT: Per NJ COVID guidelines congregants must wear masks at all times except when receiving the Eucharist, and social distancing must also be observed when choosing a seat.

Sunday of the Prodigal Son Kontakion — Tone 3

*I have recklessly forgotten Your glory, O Father; / and among sinners
I have scattered the riches which You had given me. / Therefore, I cry
to You like the Prodigal: / “I have sinned before You, O
compassionate Father; / receive me a penitent and make me as one of
Your hired servants.”*

*“Do not do anything without signing yourself with the sign of the
Cross! When you depart on a journey, when you begin your work, when
you go to study, when you are alone, and when you are with other
people, seal yourself with the Holy Cross on your forehead, your body,
your chest, your heart, your lips, your eyes, your ears. All of you should
be sealed with the sign of Christ’s victory over hell. Then you will no
longer be afraid of charms, evil spirits, or sorcery, because these are
dissolved by the power of the Cross like wax before fire and like dust
before the wind.”*

+ Elder Cleopa

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Offering the Fullness of the Christian Faith

Orthodox Church in America

Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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Mitred Archpriest George Hasenecz, Attached

Carol Wetmore, Choir Director



Sunday of the Prodigal Son

February 28, 2021