

COME BACK

We hope to see you next week.

Each Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ with our morning Matins service at 8:45am followed by the main Sunday service, Divine Liturgy at 10am. Sunday School for the Children follows Communion.

Fr. Elia would love to speak with you and answer any questions you may have.

Please fill out our Guest Form.

There's also a place where you can let us know any specific needs or concerns and we will lift them up in prayer.

We welcome everyone who would like to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith.



ABOUT COMMUNION

We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the "unity of the Faith" for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.

If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.



Welcome to St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

FEBRUARY 08, 2026

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



4031 Aurora Rd., Melbourne, Florida 32934

Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor & Dean of South Florida Deanery
Phone: (305) 812-4940 , E-Mail: elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com

WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community. We are glad you are worshipping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Eminence Metropolitan SABA within Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table. We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally. Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2026

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SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON &

AFTER-FAST OF THE PRESENTATION (MEETING) OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

My heart hath poured forth a good word; I speak of my works to the king. My tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore, God hath blessed thee forever. (**Refrain**) Glory... Both now... (**Refrain**)

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O mighty One, in Thy comeliness and Thy beauty. Bend Thy bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who wast borne in the arms of righteous Simeon, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

Thine arrows are sharp, O mighty One, in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the peoples fall under Thee. (**Refrain**) A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. (**Refrain**)

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance. I shall commemorate thy name in every generation.

~ During the Little Entrance, after the verses of the Third Antiphon, chant the Apolytikion of the Presentation of Christ. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..." After the Little Entrance, chant these hymns in the following order:

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hades with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee arose the Sun of justice, Christ our God, lighting those who are in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous elder, carrying in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, Who granteth us Resurrection.

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Their aim was to help people attain the fullness of Christ's stature. Through this sense of the importance of nurturing and educating people to become like Christ, the Fathers defended the faith, explained the Bible, and confronted the challenges of the age.

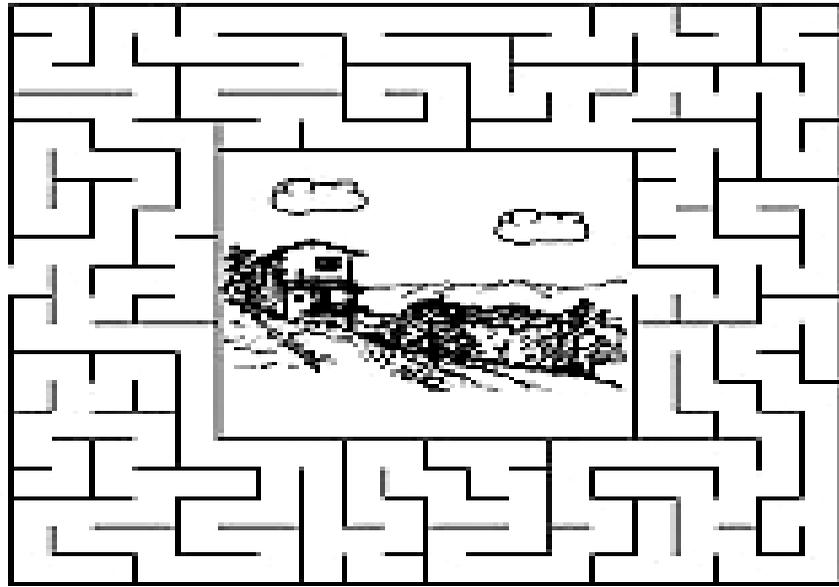
The Church Fathers were not interested in transmitting abstract knowledge but rather delved into the details of people's lives. Saint John Chrysostom, for example, speaks in his sermons about theaters, costumes, and the minutiae of their daily lives, connecting all these points to sound Christian morality. The goal, therefore, was not to write books, but to lead people to the fullness of Christ's stature. Those who study the Gospel may misunderstand it; therefore, it is essential to understand its interpretation so that believers can live it.

The mental makeup of people today has become more focused on knowledge than on living it. Modern man approaches God with his intellect, not his heart. Schools of faith and theology have always existed, and sermons have been fundamental to worship services since the beginning of Christianity. The error lies not in seeking religious knowledge, but in pursuing it without concern for its application and lived experience. Believers today, due to the ease of information dissemination, are susceptible to the temptation of seeking religious knowledge more than living it, and this leads to the inflation of the intellect at the expense of the heart, rendering the religious institution dry and lifeless. Isn't this one of the reasons why so many are turning to monasteries in search of a living, not a packaged, faith? Indeed, many are now seeking inner peace in religious practices from the Far East devoid of Christ.

The benefit would be far greater if we helped people live in Christ and share His teachings in an understandable way, rather than simply filling them with religious information.

Kid's Corner

Help the Prodigal Son find his way home.



The Parable of the Lost Son
Luke 15:11-32

APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah in his condition, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. Becoming a dweller in the wilderness, and an establisher of the universe by thy prayer O Father Anthony. Wherefore intercede thou with Christ our God to save our souls.

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Thou Who didst sanctify the Virgin's womb by Thy birth, and didst bless Simeon's hands as was meet, by anticipation hast even now saved us, O Christ God. But grant peace in the midst of wars unto Thy commonwealth and strengthen the hierarchs whom Thou hast loved, O only Friend of man.

THE EPISTLE

The Lord is my strength and my song. The Lord has chastened me severely.

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:12-20)

Brethren, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food; but God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (15:11-32)

The Lord spoke this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on 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, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Upcoming Events

This Week
Sunday, 2/8 8:45 am: Matins Service,
 10:00 am: Divine Liturgy,
 followed by Fellowship Hour, Sunday
 School & Parish Council monthly meeting
Monday, 2/9 5:30 pm: Great Vespers
Wednesday 2/11 5:30 pm: Daily Vespers
Saturday, 2/14 4:00 pm: Catechism Class
 5:30 pm: Great Vespers
 followed by Confessions
Sunday, 2/15 8:45 am: Matins Service,
 10:00 am: Divine Liturgy,
 followed by Fellowship Hour, Sunday
 School & Antiochian Women Monthly Meeting Also
 Starting FFHP Program .

If you don't see your Birthday and/or Anniversary,
 please let Yuliya know so she can update our list --->

Fasting Calendar

No Fast 2/1-2/10; 2/12, 2/14. 2/15

Refrain from meat, fish, dairy, and eggs 2/11

Refrain from meat, fish, oil, wine, dairy, and eggs 2/13

Dairy, eggs, fish, oil and wine are allowed. Refrain from meat 2/16 - 2/22

Great Lent Fast is 2/23- 4/11

THANK YOU BEATRIX AND ALEX FOR TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR

WE NEED SPONSORS FOR MARCH PLEASE

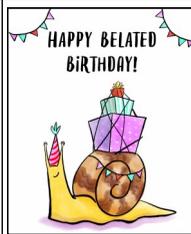
PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE CALENDAR IN THE NARTHEX TO PREPARE AND

SERVE FOOD FOR OUR COFFEE HOUR.

FEBRUARY 15 - MEAT FARE POTLUCK

FEBRUARY 22 - PANCAKE BREAKFAST,

FUNDRAISER SERVED BY SUNDAY SCHOOL



Happy Belated Birthday
 to all who was born
 in January.
 We pray that you had a
 wonderful Celebration.
 May God grant you
 many years!

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

02: Isaac Vaughn B-day
 04: Alyssa Stumpf (Karas) B-day
 06: Stuart Zolton B-day
 Samuel Brown
 Marsha Good
 11: Adrian Matos
 14: Jeffrey and Holly Dick Wedding Anniversary
 15: Susan Perers B-day
 17: Lilly Munoz B-day
 23: Mike and Janet Gorczyński Wed. Anniversary
 24: Clay (Richard) Gardenhire B-day



If you are working on
 decluttering, please
 consider donating it to
 the Church. We will be
 collecting unwanted gently
 used goods the whole month of
 February. All proceeds from the
 Garage Sale will go to our Sun-
 day School Fund
 For Questions, ask Yuliya.

ARCHDIOCESE ASSESSMENT 2026

IN 2026 OUR PARISH WILL BE SENDING THE ARCHDIOCESE ASSESSMENTS ON A
 MONTHLY BASIS IN THE AMOUNT OF ABOUT \$1100.00
 TO DEFRAY THIS AMOUNT (\$50.00 per baptized soul) WE ASK YOU TO PAY YOUR
 ASSESSMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



Please pray for the healing of Gregory Warner, Joni DeBaldo, Georgia Davis, Laney Ricketts,
 Michealle Carey, Debbie Thieme, Adriana Theodoropoulos, Beverly Delida, Alix Hall,
 Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula, Susan Moran,
 Susan Perers, Ceara Jacobs, William Snell, Vasilika Yardines, Faouzi Najjar, Marie Williams,
 and His Grace Bishop Nicholas

The Fathers of the Church

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper) (Isper)

The Church has many saints, but not all of them are called “Church Fathers.” This title is given to a specific group of them. A “father” is the person capable of nurturing people in Christ, of giving birth to them and/or raising them. Hence, “Church Father” is given to the saint who has fulfilled the conditions of holiness, so to speak—that is, who has been deified, united with God, and become a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. He is included among the Church Fathers if, in addition to holiness, he possesses the ability to teach and defend the faith. Therefore, we find that most of the Church Fathers, the teachers, were highly proficient in both the sciences of this world and the of life in Christ. These great saints studied and mastered the most important sciences of their time, and simultaneously, they lived with God. They harnessed the high secular sciences to serve the propagation of spiritual sciences, that is, life with the Lord, so that they became pure instruments in which the Holy Spirit dwells. There were Fathers who, through their spiritual and worldly knowledge, were able to convey the Gospel of Christ in the language of their time; that is, they spoke of Christ to the people of their era through their culture, concepts and terms so that they could understand. And there were spiritual fathers who progressed in their relationship with God and were enlightened by Him, becoming vessels of the Holy Spirit, and He spoke through them. Some remained unknown, others became known through their guidance, and some were clearly revealed by God after their passing. There are examples of such fathers even today, from all these categories.

The common characteristic we observe in the Holy Fathers, whose writings we study, is that they possessed the worldly culture of their time and were known for their intellect. Saints Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, and Maximus the Confessor, to name but a few, possessed brilliant minds and a high level of worldly culture. But this intellectual aspect was not separate from an enlightened heart enriched by the Holy Spirit. They were authentic teachers, and at the same time, they were sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

It is essential to remember this point because we are always susceptible to being drawn to one extreme or the other. We see currents that emphasize knowledge and others that emphasize a life of piety. The Fathers were not extreme in either direction, but gave each side its due, teaching that virtue lies in the middle ground between two extremes. Thus, the requirement of holiness was present among them alongside the requirement of secular knowledge. A deeper examination of this phenomenon is necessary because the Christian world, in general, is witnessing an unbridled focus on reason, "scientific research" and "academia." These things are not inherently bad, for Christianity must address modern man in his own language, not in a language he does not understand, otherwise the Gospel will be lost. However, the problem arises when this focus is placed at the expense of life in Christ. Then we fall into the trap of acquiring what is called today "religious sciences," and the issue becomes cultural, not experiential. Therefore, we observe, from time to time, conflicting currents within the Church, some emphasizing only the spiritual life, and others focusing exclusively on Christian culture and thought. This conflict may be overt or covert. The need remains crucial to cultivate a patristic sensibility that allows us to read them correctly and understand the spirit of their approach, not merely its letter.

It is essential to understand here that most of the Church Fathers were not academic professors in the modern sense of the word, but rather pastors, preachers, spiritual guides, physicians of the soul who treated people's spiritual ailments, or defenders of the faith against heresies. Much of their writing consists of articles or educational sermons addressed to the congregation, or apologetics explaining the Orthodox faith, demonstrating deviations from it and confronting heresies. Most of these writings were transcribed directly by their listeners. The Church Fathers did not deal exclusively with an intellectual elite, nor did they seek purely religious knowledge, although some of them, depending on their circumstances, engaged in dialogues or debates with philosophers or intellectuals, bearing witness to their faith.

PREPARATION FOR GREAT LENT
RETURN FROM EXILE (The Sunday of the Prodigal Son)

On the Second Sunday of preparation for Lent, we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15: 11-32). Together with the hymns of 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. I received from God wonderful riches: first of all life and the possibility to enjoy it, to fill it with meaning, love, and knowledge; then in Baptism-the new life of Christ Himself, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the peace and the joy of the eternal Kingdom. I received the knowledge of God, and in Him the knowledge of everything else and the power to be a son of God. And all this I have lost, all this I am losing all the time, not only in particular "sins" and "transgressions," but in the sin of all sins: the deviation of my love from God, preferring the "far country" to the beautiful home of the Father.

But the Church is here to remind me of what I have abandoned and lost. And as she reminds me, I remember: "I have wickedly strayed away from Thy fatherly glory," says the Kontakion of this day, "and wasted with sinners the riches Thou gavest me. Then do I raise the prodigal's cry unto Thee, O bountiful Father: I have sinned against Thee; take me back as a penitent, and make me as one of Thy hired servants." And, as I remember, I find in myself the desire to return and the power to return: " ... I shall return to the compassionate Father crying with tears: Receive me as one of Thy servants"

One liturgical particularity 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.

Announcements



February 8th
February 15th
February 22nd

Epistle Readers
Nicholas Ferren
Carry Matos
Corbin Dick



Collection Plate Donations
All the cash from collection plate goes to our untouchable building fund to build a bigger Church. Please use envelopes from the podium if you want to donate to our general operating account or other projects.

Blessing of Homes 2026

Fr. Elia is doing House Blessings by request, only if you fill the Request Form on the info table
Please keep in mind that Fr. Elia is available only on the weekend.

UPCOMING SUNDAY CALENDAR

Below lists the upcoming Sundays from February 1st until Holy Pascha, which falls on April 12th this year. We invite you to join us each week for Sunday Liturgy to celebrate this special commemoration of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.
Please mark these special dates on your calendar.

February 1	Pharisee & Publican
February 8	Prodigal Son
February 15	Meatfare Sunday (Last Judgement)
February 22	Cheesefare Sunday (Forgiveness Sunday)
February 23	Beginning of Great Lent
March 1	1st Sunday of Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy)
March 8	2nd Sunday of Lent
March 15	3rd Sunday of Lent (Sunday of the Cross)
March 22	4th Sunday of Lent
March 25	Feast of the Annunciation (Wednesday)
March 29	5th Sunday of Lent & Celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation
April 5	PALM SUNDAY
April 10	GOOD FRIDAY
April 12	HOLY PASCHA
April 19	THOMAS SUNDAY



**SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON
2ND SUNDAY OF THE TRIODION
(FEBRUARY 8TH)**

There are so many times throughout my day that people ask me to pray for people. Whether an email, phone call or in person - it is a daily occurrence. I have always felt that this is such an important part of my ministry. But the truth of the matter is that prayer is something not just for the priest.

Praying for others is a central part of our daily lives as Orthodox Christians.

We need to pray daily. You may be so busy throughout your day that you feel that you don't have time to pray.

I remember listening to a sermon of a bishop who said,

"I have so much to do today, I must spent at least an hour a day in prayer".

You see, prayer gives us strength; Prayer gives us peace; Prayer gives us patience;

Prayer gives us humility; Prayer allows us to put focus in our lives.

Saint John of Kronstadt, a wonderful 20th century saint of our Church writes,

"When you prayer, endeavor to pray more for others than for yourself alone.

When you pray for others it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God,

and arouses love for God and our neighbor. If you make a habit of praying

for the salvation of others, God will give you an abundance of spiritual gifts,

the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But be careful, for there is a great difference

between repeating names apathetically and remembering them heartily.

Pray for them with the same ardor and zeal as you would pray for yourself."

Make time today to commune with the one who created you! Make time today to pray for others! Make time today to pray for the forgiveness of your sins! Make time today to pray. I guarantee . . . it will be worth every minute! 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 "Pray without ceasing; give thanks; for this is the will of God." Have a Blessed Day!

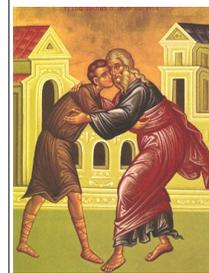
In Christ,

Fr. Elia Shalhoub

Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor

Pledges and Offerings:

Please do not forget your contributions to the Church. This year, without the Fund raising activities your church will face difficulties in meeting expenses. The approximate monthly expenses are \$8,000.00, without unexpected expenditures. If you have not done so already, please consider an offering.



TODAY'S FEAST: SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

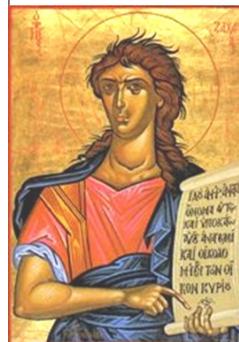
Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man.

THEODORE THE COMMANDER & GREAT MARTYR

The holy Martyr Theodore was from Euchaita of Galatia and dwelt in Heraclea of Pontus. He was a renowned commander in the military, and the report came to the Emperor Licinius that he was a Christian and abominated the idols. Licinius therefore sent certain men to him from Nicomedia, to honor him and ask him to appear before him. Through them, however, Saint Theodore sent back a message that it was necessary for various reasons, that Licinius come to Heraclea. Licinius, seeing in this a hope of turning Saint Theodore away from Christ did as was asked of him.

When the Emperor came to Heraclea, Saint Theodore met him with honor, and the Emperor in turn gave Theodore his hand, believing that through him he would be able to draw the Christians to the worship of his idols. Seated upon his throne in the midst of the people, he publicly bade Theodore offer sacrifice to the gods. But Theodore asked that the emperor entrust him with the most venerable of his gods, those of gold and silver, that he might take them home and himself attend upon them that evening, promising that the following day he would honor them in public. The Emperor, filled with joy at these tidings, gave command that Theodore's request be fulfilled.

When the Saint had taken the idols home, he broke them in pieces and distributed the gold and silver to the poor by night. The next day a centurion named Maxentius told Licinius that he had seen a pauper pass by carrying the head of Artemis. Saint Theodore, far from repenting of this, confessed Christ boldly. Licinius, in an uncontrollable fury, had the Saint put to many torments, then crucified. While upon the cross, the holy Martyr was further tormented -- his privy parts were cut off, he was shot with arrows, his eyes were put out, and he was left on the cross to die. The next day Licinius sent men to take his corpse and cast it into the sea; but they found the Saint alive and perfectly whole. Through this, many believed in Christ. Seeing his own men turning to Christ, and the city in an uproar, Licinius had Theodore beheaded, about the year 320. The Saint's holy relics were returned to his ancestral home on June 8, which is also a feast of the Great Martyr Theodore.



ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET

The Prophet Zacharias was the son of Barachias, and a contemporary of the Prophet Aggeus (Dec. 16). In the days of the Babylonian captivity, he prophesied, as it says, in the book of Ezra, "to the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezra 5: 1); he aided Zerubbabel in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. In the book of Ezra he is called more fully "Zacharias the son of Addo (or Iddo)" but in his own prophetic book he is called more fully "Zacharias, the son of Barachias, the son of Addo the Prophet" (Zach. 1:1). When the captives returned from Babylon, he came to dwell in Jerusalem in his old age. His book of prophecy is divided into fourteen chapters and has the eleventh place among the books of the minor Prophets. Sozomen reports that under the Emperor Honorius, Zacharias' holy relics were found in Eleutheropolis of Palestine. The Prophet appeared in a dream to a certain Calemerus, telling him where he would find his tomb. His body was found to be incorrupt.