

:: Fr. Alexander Schmemmann on the Return from Exile ::

*The Following is an excerpt from **Great Lent**, chapter 2: Preparation for Lent*

[Today] we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 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....

Do you have an announcement for our bulletin? Please call or email Fr. Andrew no later than Friday each week for anything to be included in Sunday's bulletin.



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of Spring Valley**

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**Sunday, February 28, 2016
Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

Matins: 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy: 10:00 AM

Epistle Reader: George Forsa

Holy Bread/Coffee Hour: Matthew and Olly Rowan

Next Sunday's Coffee Hour: Ladies of St. George

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6): When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Troparion of St. George the Great Martyr (Tone 4): Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: Intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion for the Prodigal Son (Tone 3): Foolishly I sprang away from Thy great fatherly glory, and dispersed in wicked deeds the riches that Thou didst give me. With the Prodigal I therefore cry unto Thee now: I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. But receive me in repentance; make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

THE EPISTLE

For Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us; Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (6:12-20)

Brethren, all things are lawful to me, but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the authority of anything. Foods are for the belly, and the belly for foods; but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and Lord for the body; and God both raised up for the Lord, and will also raise us up through His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid! 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. Flee fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body, but whoever commits fornication sins against his own body. Or, did you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have received from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's.

THE GOSPEL

For Sunday of the Prodigal Son

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.'"

Birthdays this Week:

Ron Ford, March 4

Are we forgetting anyone? Please let Fr. Andrew know.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

This week's events and services:

- **Today:** Children's Sunday school downstairs, immediately after Holy Communion.
- **This Wednesday, March 2: Lenten Service Exchange with Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church.** *We have been invited to participate in the Stations of the Cross service at Nativity Church (formerly St. Anthony's) in Spring Valley. The service begins at 6:30. Fr. Spillman and others will then join us for our first Lenten Akathist service on March 18.*
- **Saturday, March 5: NO VESPERS**
- **Next Sunday, March 6: Sunday of the Last Judgment and Meat-Fare.** Matins, 9am and Divine Liturgy, 10am. Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Ladies of St. George. *Please note for those able to fast, next Sunday is the last day for meat until Easter (May 1).*

Looking ahead:

- **Monday, March 14:** First day of Great Lent. *Lenten services will be held Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings beginning on this date.*
- **Sunday, April 24:** Palm Sunday
- **Sunday, May 1:** Holy Pascha

Lenten Confessions: Now that the season of Lenten Triodion has begun, this would be a good time to meet with Father for the sacrament of Confession. I will be available before and after evening services, and after Sunday Liturgy. I recommend Confession at least four times a year, and as a bare minimum, once during Lent. (And of course if you'd prefer to go to another priest, that is perfectly fine. Just let me know!)