

# Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

*Albanian Archdiocese - OCA*

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

35th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

TONE 2

**Tone 2**  
**Troparion**  
**(Resurrection)**

*When Thou didst descend to death, O Life  
immortal,  
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy  
Godhead.  
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the  
dead,  
all the powers of heaven cried out://  
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”*

**Tone 3**  
**Kontakion**  
**(from the Lenten Triodion)**

*I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father;  
and among sinners I have scattered the riches which  
Thou gavest me.  
And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal:  
“I have sinned before Thee, O merciful Father;  
receive me as a penitent, //  
and make me as one of Thy hired servants!”*

✠ **Prokeimenon** ✠

**Tone 2 (Resurrection)**

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation. (Ps. 117:14)

V. The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death. (Ps. 117:18)

A prokeimenon (or prokimen; plural: prokeimena) is a liturgical verse or scriptural passage sung or read before the apostolic reading. It can serve as an introduction to the theme of the particular reading on feast days. On most Sundays, the prokeimenon of the resurrection, for the tone of the week (from the Octoechos), is chanted.

At the Divine Liturgy, the prokeimenon is proclaimed after the singing of the Trisagion hymn to introduce the apostolos reading. The deacon says, "Let us attend." At this point the Greek and Slavic practices diverge.

**Greek practice:**

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader (facing altar): [chants the first and second lines of the prokeimenon in the appropriate mode/tone]

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader (facing altar): [announces the source of the epistle, e.g., "the reading is from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians"]

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader (turning to face people): [chants epistle in the free-form Byzantine style]

Priest: Peace be to thee that readest.

## ✎ The Epistle Reading ✎

### **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.

### **I Korinthianëve**

Të gjitha më lejohen, por jo të gjitha sjellin dobi; të gjitha më lejohen, por unë nuk sundothem prej ndonjë gjëje. Gjellët janë për barkun dhe barku për gjellët; por Perëndia edhe këtë, edhe ato do t’i prishë. Po trupi nuk është për kurvërinë, por për Zotin, edhe Zoti për trupin. Dhe Perëndia edhe Zotin e ngjalli, edhe ne do të na ngjallë me anë të fuqisë së tij. A nuk e dini se trupat tuaj janë gjymtyrë të Krishtit? Të marr pra unë gjymtyrët e Krishtit, e t’i bëj ato gjymtyrë lavireje? Qoftë larg! A nuk e dini se ai që bashkohet me laviren është një trup me të? Sepse “do të jenë, thotë, të dy në një mish”. Po ai që bashkohet me Zotin, është një shpirt me atë. Largoni kurvërinë. Çdo mëkat që bën njeriu, është jashtë trupit; po ai që kurvëron, mëkaton në trupin e vet. Apo nuk e dini se trupi juaj është tempull i Frymës së Shenjtë që rri në ju, të cilin e keni nga Perëndia, dhe nuk jeni të vetvetes? Sepse u bletë me çmim; lavdëroni pra Perëndinë me trupin tuaj, edhe me shpirtin tuaj, që janë të Perëndisë.

### **1-е Коринфянам 6:12-20**

Все мне позволительно, но не все полезно; все мне позволительно, но ничто не должно обладать мною. Пища для чрева, и чрево для пищи; но Бог уничтожит и то и другое. Тело же не для блуда, но для Господа, и Господь для тела. Бог воскресил Господа, воскресит и нас силою Своею. Разве не знаете, что тела ваши суть члены Христовы? Итак отниму ли члены у Христа, чтобы сделать [их] членами блудницы? Да не будет! Или не знаете, что совокупляющийся с блудницею становится одно тело [с нею]? ибо сказано: два будут одна плоть. А соединяющийся с Господом есть один дух с Господом. Бегайте блуда; всякий грех, какой делает человек, есть вне тела, а блудник грешит против собственного тела. Не знаете ли, что тела ваши суть храм живущего в вас Святаго Духа, Которого имеете вы от Бога, и вы не свои? Ибо вы куплены [дорогою] ценою. Посему прославляйте Бога и в телах ваших и в душах ваших, которые суть Божии.

### **Tone 2**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

V. May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect thee! *(Ps. 19:1)*

V. Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call! *(Ps. 19:9)*



## ✎ The Gospel Reading ✎

**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.'"

**Llukait 15:11-32**

Qoftë unë pra, qoftë ata, kështu predikojmë dhe kështu besuat. Edhe nëse predikohet Krishti se u ngjall prej së vdekurish, si thonë disa veta ndër ju se nuk ka ngjallje të vdekurish? Edhe nëse nuk ka ngjallje të vdekurish, as Krishti nuk u ngjall. Edhe nëse nuk u ngjall Krishti, pa fjalë predikimi ynë është i kotë, edhe besimi juaj i kotë, dhe qenkemi edhe dëshmitarë të rremë të Perëndisë, sepse dëshmuam për Perëndinë se ngjalli Krishtin, të cilin nuk e paska ngjallur, në qoftë pra se nuk u ngjallkan të vdekurit. Sepse nëse nuk ngjallen të vdekurit, as Krishti nuk u ngjall. Po nëse nuk u ngjall Krishti, besimi juaj është i kotë dhe jeni ende në mëkatet tuaja. Pa fjalë edhe ata që fjetën në Krishtin janë të humbur. Në shpresofshim në Krishtin vetëm në këtë jetë, jemi më të mjerët e gjithë njerëzve. Po tani Krishti u ngjall prej së vdekurish; u bë fryti i parë e atyre që kanë fjetur. Sepse sikurse vdekja erdhi me anë njeriu, kështu edhe ngjallja e të vdekurve është me anë njeriu. Sepse sikurse të gjithë vdesin në Adamin, kështu edhe të gjithë do të marrin jetë në Krishtin. Po gjithsecili në radhën e tij: Krishti është pema e parë, pastaj sa janë të Krishtit, në ardhjen e tij për së dyti; Pastaj do të jetë fundi, kur t'ia dorëzojë mbretërinë Perëndisë dhe Atit, kur të asgjësojë çdo kryesi dhe çdo pushtet e fuqi. Sepse duhet të mbretërojë ai, deri sa të vërë gjithë armiqtë nën këmbët e tij. Armiku i fundit që do të asgjësohet është vdekja. Sepse "të gjitha i nënshtroi nën këmbët e tij"; po kur thotë se të gjitha janë nënshtuar, është e qartë se mbetet jashtë ai që i vuri nën atë të gjitha. Edhe kur t'i nënshtrohen atij të gjitha, atëherë edhe vetë Biri do t'i nënshtrohet atij që i vuri të gjitha nën atë, që të jetë Perëndia të gjitha mbi të gjitha. Sepse ç'do të bëjnë ata që pagëzohen për të vdekurit, në qoftë se me të vërtetë të vdekurit nuk ngjallen? Përse atëherë pagëzohen për të vdekurit? Përse atëherë jemi nën rrezik në çdo orë? Përditë vdes – bëj be në mburrjen që kam për ju në Jisu Krishtin, Zotin tonë. Nëse si njeri luftova me bisha në Efes, ç'dobi kam, në qoftë se nuk ngjallen të vdekurit? "Le të hamë e le të pimë, sepse nesër do të vdesim."

### От Луки 15:11-32

Еще сказал: у некоторого человека было два сына; и сказал младший из них отцу: отче! дай мне следующую [мне] часть имения. И [отец] разделил им имение. По прошествии немногих дней младший сын, собрав всё, пошел в дальнюю сторону и там расточил имение свое, живя распутно. Когда же он прожил всё, настал великий голод в той стране, и он начал нуждаться; и пошел, пристал к одному из жителей страны той, а тот послал его на поля свои пасти свиней; и он рад был наполнить чрево свое рожками, которые ели свиньи, но никто не давал ему. Придя же в себя, сказал: сколько наемников у отца моего избыточествуют хлебом, а я умираю от голода; встану, пойду к отцу моему и скажу ему: отче! я согрешил против неба и пред тобою и уже недостойн называться сыном твоим; прими меня в число наемников твоих. Встал и пошел к отцу своему. И когда он был еще далеко, увидел его отец его и сжалился; и, побежав, пал ему на шею и целовал его. Сын же сказал ему: отче! я согрешил против неба и пред тобою и уже недостойн называться сыном твоим. А отец сказал рабам своим: принесите лучшую одежду и оденьте его, и дайте перстень на руку его и обувь на ноги; и приведите откормленного теленка, и заколите; станем есть и веселиться! ибо этот сын мой был мертв и ожил, пропадал и нашелся. И начали веселиться. Старший же сын его был на поле; и возвращаясь, когда приблизился к дому, услышал пение и ликование; и, призвав одного из слуг, спросил: что это такое? Он сказал ему: брат твой пришел, и отец твой заколол откормленного теленка, потому что принял его здоровым. Он осердился и не хотел войти. Отец же его, выйдя, звал его. Но он сказал в ответ отцу: вот, я столько лет служу тебе и никогда не преступал приказания твоего, но ты никогда не дал мне и козлёнка, чтобы мне повеселиться с друзьями моими; а когда этот сын твой, расточивший имение своё с блудницами, пришел, ты заколол для него откормленного теленка. Он же сказал ему: сын мой! ты всегда со мною, и всё мое твое, а о том надобно было радоваться и веселиться, что брат твой сей был мертв и ожил, пропадал и нашелся.

### Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



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.

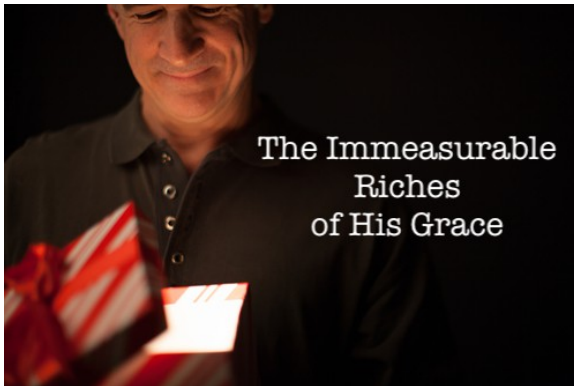
Starting tomorrow, the weekday readings summarize the events of Holy Week. On Monday we read Saint Mark's account of the Entry into Jerusalem. On Tuesday we read how Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray the Lord. On the night before His death Christ tells His disciples that one of them will betray Him. He also predicts that they will desert Him, and that Peter will deny Him three times. On Wednesday the Gospel describes how Judas betrayed the Savior with a kiss. Thursday's Gospel tells how Jesus was questioned by Pilate. On Friday we read the narrative of Christ's crucifixion and death.

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		
<p>Newly-Departed Paul Andrew Costa Newly-Departed Anastas Suli, Newly-Departed Andrew, Newly-Departed Shane, Alice-Mary, Roy, Eugene, Roy, Anastasia</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p><i>February 12 – 19</i> Bp. Luke (A) Boris Mogelavich (B) Sophia Shaloka (B)</p> <p><b><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></b></p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. Often, people will donate these candles in honor of a loved one or along with special prayers. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><b><u>Church Lectionary</u></b></p> <p><i>Today</i> 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Luke 15:11-32</p> <p><i>Monday</i> 1 John 2:18-3:10 Mark 11:1-11</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Tom, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Milorad, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena</p>		<p><i>Tuesday</i> 1 John 3:11-20 Mark 14:10-42</p> <p><i>Wednesday</i> 1 John 3:21-4:6 Mark 14:43-15:1</p>
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Juliya and the child to be born of her, Isaac, Jemima and the child to be born of her, Ansley and the child to be born of her, Sandra, the Cropley family, David David, Christina, Elias, Carolyn, Rivera and the child to be born of her</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p> <p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p> <p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• care for our spiritual well-being,</li> <li>• unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith,</li> <li>• commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name.</li> </ul> <p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p><b><u>February</u></b> 12 Souper Bowl Sunday 19 Stephen Murianka 26 Ladies Lenten Luceon</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><i>Thursday</i> 1 John 4:20-5:21 Mark 15:1-15</p> <p><i>Friday</i> 2 John 1:1-13 Mark 15:22-25, 33-41</p> <p><i>Saturday</i> 1 Corinthians 10:23-28 Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36</p>
		<p><b><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></b></p> <p>Feb 12: Deuteronomy 13-16 Feb 13: Deuteronomy 17-20 Feb 14: Deuteronomy 21-24 Feb 15: Deuteronomy 25-29 Feb 16: Deuteronomy 30-34 Feb 17: Joshua 1-4 Feb 18: Joshua 5-8</p>



## The Immeasurable Riches of His Grace

February 8, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell



“All is gift.” This phrase captures both the simple and profound message that embodies the mystery of living a Eucharistic life. You may ask “What does that mean?” And I understand. We moderns are far removed from a world where mystery and wonder and story dominated our human society. And we are impoverished by this reduction of true mystery in our lives.

Although, I will say that our modern world is slowly being re-enchanted because the younger generation is seeing the bankruptcy of mere materialistic life. This means we Orthodox have a window of evangelistic opportunity IF we embrace a normal Orthodox life that is defined by the centrality of the Eucharist.

Living a Eucharistic Life is all about not denying the truth that what we don't see is as real as what we do see! But there must be a warning here as well. This re-enchancement isn't a neutral good. There is evil in the world that also draws men and women to worship false gods, demons masquerading as gods, to draw us away from Jesus Christ. Just a glance at the Grammy Awards show is a perfect example of a demonic influence on society.

Eucharistic life is a life lived on the firm foundation of true gratitude, a life lived in a thankful way; a life lived free of bitterness, false expectations, and slavery to passions. Interested?

Look at our Lesson today in Ephesians 2:4-10:

*BRETHREN, God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God: not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

St. Paul wants to make it clear to the Ephesians that their renewed life of faith and their eternal life is due to God's mercy and grace. They haven't "earned" God's mercy. It's a gift! And a gift is just that: a gift! You see one of the great threats to the Christian life in the earliest days of the Church was a false notion that you had to obey the law of Moses along with your faith in Christ to receive salvation. The people who taught this false message were called "Judaizers" because they said you had to become Jewish before you could be Christian. These folks were disturbed by all the Gentiles coming to faith in Christ and they wanted to make sure these Gentiles adopted their Jewish practices. St. Paul, a Jew himself and a former teacher of the Law, rejected this message and emphasized that this new life won for us by Jesus was a gift to the whole world; for everyone!

And Paul emphasizes this precisely so that no one could boast that they earned their salvation! Because that leads to one of the most deadly spiritual illnesses that the Fathers called "prelest" or spiritual pride. Over and over again the Fathers warn us against such an illness that deludes us into believing we have somehow "achieved" great spiritual power or strength by our own efforts as if God now is "obligated" to treat us well because we've "earned" His favor. The Christian message says with St. Paul "I am the chiefest of sinners" and allows us no place to put our confidence in our own efforts to "get God to be good to us." God IS good to us even when we are against, or as is more often the case, dismissive of, Him! God loved us even when we were "dead" in our spiritual lives!

So, our motivation to follow Him changes from the narcissistic "what's in this for me" mentality that leads to prelest, to the loving and grateful Eucharistic motivation of thankfulness that He has given me His salvation. I live as I do from gratitude, not from expectation! And that central motivation of gratitude means I never take the gift for granted. It means I diligently open the gift and explore the gift and value the gift by the way I place my Faith as the central insight of my life and all other aspects of my life are informed and formed by my Faith. That is

the natural result of truly being grateful for the GIFT of God's grace!

And nowhere do we see this better illustrated than in the life of the saint we remember today. St. Theodore was a Commander in the Roman military and a devout Christian. His soldiers under his command respected and loved their commander for his goodness and dedication. Because of his stellar reputation, his being a Christian was reported to the pagan Roman Emperor, Licinius. When the emperor asked Theodore to burn incense to the pagan gods, Theodore asked the emperor to give him the statues of his favorite pagan gods so he could take them home and "properly honor" them. The emperor was thrilled at the thought that he could turn Theodore away from Christ so he gladly gave the saint several gold and silver statues of the gods. When Theodore brought them to his home, he immediately broke the statues up and distributed these precious metals to the area poor. This was Theodore's way of showing the "proper" respect to false gods! When the emperor heard that a poor man was walking around with the head of the goddess Artemis, he ordered the saint beheaded! Because of the saint's faithfulness, many became believers through his witness!

Today, what are you doing in your life to keep this new life of Faith at the top of your priorities? Are you constantly aware of His Gift to you? Do you know how to live a Eucharistic life? You have been given all things as a Gift. Don't take this Gift for granted! Live the Normal Orthodox life of dedication, faithfulness, and devotion to Christ!

**In truth enlisted with the King of the Heavens, you did become for Him a noble commander, O trophy-bearer and Great Martyr Theodore. With the weaponry of faith did you arm yourself wisely and did utterly destroy all the hordes of the demons, as a triumphant athlete of the Lord; wherefore we ever do faithfully call you blest.**

## **January/February** **Events**

### **February**

12 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Souper-Bowl Sunday*  
*Icon Pledge*

15 – 7:15pm Bible Study via  
GoogleMeets

19 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

22 – 7:15pm Bible Study via  
GoogleMeets

26 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
Forgiveness Vespers  
*Ladies Lenten*

### *Luncheon*

27 – 7:00pm Canon of St. Andrew

28 – 7:00pm Canon of St. Andrew

### **Can't join us in person?**

We stream our services on our  
YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxchurch01810>

## **SOUPER-BOWL SUNDAY & ICON PLEDGE**

**It's Here!**

**It's Super bowl Sunday!**

**Spend Your Post-Liturgical, Pre-Game  
Time Filling Up On Delicious Soups  
And Bidding On Icons To Take Home  
To Enrich Your Prayer Life For The  
Next Year!**

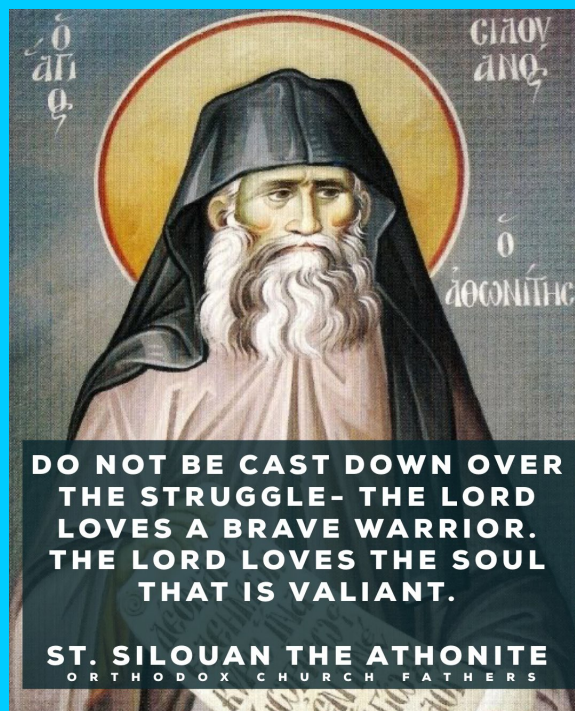
**Enjoy a variety of homemade soups  
while perusing a wide selection of  
beautiful icons!**

**Take home soup to nourish the body  
and an icon to nourish the soul!**

## Another Note About Our Calendars...

They're in! Please feel free to pick up your calendar at your earliest convenience!

### None can be Saved without Compassion for Others



We must not be so self-consumed as to have no compassion for others. Saint Basil tells us that a man who has two coats or two pair of shoes, when his neighbor has none, is a thief. In the Holy Scriptures we read, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell in it (Psalm 24:1).” No one can be saved, according to Saint John Chrysostom, without giving alms and without caring for the poor. We are but stewards of what belongs to God, and must share the gifts of God’s creation with one another as much as we can. To store up earthly possessions, according to Christ, is the epitome of foolishness, and a rich man shall hardly be saved (Luke 12:15-21).

When we turn our attention towards the needs of others we cease to be consumed with self. In this turning of the heart towards those in need, we are turning our hearts to God. “Verily I say unto you, Since you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me (Matthew 25:40).” In our fasting, increased time spent in prayer, and acts of alms giving (charity), we are energized in our battle against the passions, and our hearts become at rest in Christ.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon