

# Sts. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

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February 20, 2022

## 35TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Today ..... 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
Icon Pledge  
Wed. 23 ..... 7:15pm Bible Study Via  
GoogleMeet  
Sat. 26 ..... 6:00pm Vespers  
Sun. 27 ..... 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
Sunday School &  
Adult Education

**One must be baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian to receive Holy Communion. Guests are invited to receive a blessing at the chalice and partake of the post-Communion bread (Antidoron).**

**Fast Days:** Wednesday and Friday (fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, wine and oil as you are able.)

### Troparion – Tone 2 (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!”*

### Kontakion – Tone 3 (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!”*

**Prayers for those** in our Sts. Peter and Paul community (parishioners, family, friends) can be listed for remembrance in our litanies during the Liturgy. Feel free to give names to Fr. Nicholas - please indicate how each person listed is connected to us (parishioner, family, friend, etc.), as well as why we are praying for them (health, memory, travel, etc.).

**Confessions can be heard** by appointment. If you need, I will come to you during the week. Please do not hesitate to call for a time to drop by the church or to have me visit you.

**Remembrances** for both the living and the dead during the prayers of preparation of the Eucharistic Lamb and during the Augmented Litany should be given the week before the desired remembrance so that the names can be put into the bulletin and given to the Deacons for the prayers. Any names of the living that are not marked as sick or traveling will be listed under general prayers.

## SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

### Church Lectionary

#### Today

1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
Luke 15:11-32

#### Monday

1 John 2:18-3:10  
Mark 11:1-11

#### Tuesday

1 John 3:11-20  
Mark 14:10-42

#### Wednesday

1 John 3:21-4:6  
Mark 14:43-15:1

#### Thursday

2 Corinthians 4:6-15  
Matthew 11:2-15  
1 John 4:20-5:21  
Mark 15:1-15

#### Friday

2 John 1:1-13  
Mark 15:22-25, 33-41

#### Saturday

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17  
John 5:24-30  
1 Corinthians 10:23-28  
Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36

### Reading the Bible in a Year

Feb 20: Joshua 13-16  
Feb 21: Joshua 17-20  
Feb 22: Joshua 21-24  
Feb 23: Judges 1-4  
Feb 24: Judges 5-8  
Feb 25: Judges 9-12  
Feb 26: Judges 13-16

## FEBRUARY/MARCH EVENTS

### February

20 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Icon Pledge*  
23 – 7:15pm Bible Study with  
GoogleMeet  
26 – 6:00pm Vespers  
27 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Meatfare Sunday*  
***Sunday School &  
Adult Education***

### March

02 – 7:15pm Bible Study with  
GoogleMeet

04 – 6:00pm Fun Night  
05 – 6:00pm Vespers  
06 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Forgiveness Vespers*  
*Ladies Society Luncheon*  
08- 7:00pm Canon of St. Andrew  
09- 7:00pm Canon of St. Andrew  
12 – 6:00pm Vespers  
13 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Icon Procession*  
16 – 7:00pm Presanctified Liturgy  
*Pot Luck & Lenten Study*

## Coffee Hour

### ICON PLEDGE

## Flower Donation

## Children's Word

### **Fighting with our brother**

Do you ever fight with a brother or sister? Or maybe with a friend? Maybe you argue or pick on each other, or even punch or pinch. Your parents try to get you to make up with each other, don't they? Your parents don't like the fighting!

In today's Gospel reading, we hear a story you probably already know. Do you remember the story of the young man who left home, did some wrong things, and then came back? Today is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son! This young man had an older brother who was angry when he came back. The older brother saw how his father was so happy. He saw his father run out to the lost son and hug him. Then he saw how his father got ready for a big party to celebrate!

Then the older brother went and complained to his father. After all, he was really upset that he never got any of these things! But his father explained to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was right to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

In the story of the Prodigal Son, the father tries to make things right between the brothers. And that is just what our Father in heaven wants. He wants us to make peace with each other. He doesn't want all that fighting! Let's try not to be jealous or angry at each other, but let's be ready to love our brothers and sisters like our Father loves us!

***House Blessings are here for 2022! Please sign up on the sheet upstairs so that we can begin to organize and schedule House blessings. Please be sure to leave your name and phone number. Alternatively, you can call Fr. Nicholas at 860-861-7468 and he will take your information.***

### SAINT JOHN THE HARVESTER

#### A NICKNAME THAT STUCK

Do you have a nickname? Maybe your friends call you something because of a funny story that happened to you? Sometimes those nicknames can stick with you through your whole life!

On Wednesday, we'll celebrate Saint John the Harvester (Theristis). How did he get that name? Well, Saint John was a monk who, one day, went out into the fields to work. Suddenly, a storm hit, and all the workers ran away to protect themselves. But when they came back, the corn had been cut and tied up. That miracle gave him the nickname, "the Harvester," because through his prayers, they harvested the crops!

Saint John lived a thousand years ago in a part of Italy that had lots of Orthodox Christians (most of Italy is Catholic). He became an abbot of a monastery, and later, the monastery was named after him.

About 25 years ago, some monks from the holy mountain of Mount Athos decided to fix up the monastery of Saint John the Harvester (the one in Italy). So many years later, people still remember Saint John with the nickname "the Harvester," Theristis, because they remember that great miracle from God so many years ago! We celebrate Saint John on Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**The Icon Pledge is TODAY! Please make sure that all pledged icons from last year have been returned! Stay, pledge for some icons and enjoy a great coffee hour!**

## 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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.



***A soldier asked Abba Mius if God accepted repentance. After the old man had taught him many things he said, 'Tell me, my dear, if your cloak is torn, do you throw it away?' He replied, 'No, I mend it and use it again.' The old man said to him, 'If you are so careful about your cloak, will not God be equally careful about His creature?'***

-Abba Mius



## A Prayer for the Week

Dear Lord, I thank You for creating me in Your Image, to be made into Your likeness. You are truly Free, O Lord. And You made me to experience and live in Your Freedom. But I use the free will You have given me wrongly and I end up becoming a slave to my fears or desires or false expectations. And this slavery is deeper than any outward slavery in human history. You call me to a focused and disciplined life SO THAT I will be free. Give me Your grace and strength, especially as we approach Great Lent, to be truly free by using my free will rightly. Amen

## Luke 15:11-32

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.’”

# Of Your Own Free Will

February 15, 2022 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

It seems we humans never tire of talking about Freedom. But what is freedom? During a dark time in human history slavery of one form or another was the norm in human societies. Our own nation, The United States, fought a war with ourselves over this blight on human history. We even now have “Black History Month” in February of each year to raise awareness of the contributions to our common history of these fellow citizens.

I sometimes wonder if our problem with this seemingly endless parade of grievances and counter-grievances lies in the wrong definition of freedom. You see, freedom isn't the ability to choose. No, the ability to choose, or free will, only makes freedom possible. When you exercise your ability to choose wrongly, you enslave yourself to your passions. So freedom is always about choosing wisely. Choosing poorly always leads to addiction and death. We are only truly free when we choose well.

Look at our lesson today in Philemon 1:1-25:

*I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may promote the knowledge of all the good that is ours in Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you – I, Paul, an ambassador and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus – I appeal to you for my child, Onesimos, whose father I have become in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will.*

Today we read the whole “book” of Philemon. What an amazing letter this is from St. Paul to St. Philemon about St. Onesimos. The Apostle writes to the spiritual son, who is a wealthy man and a slave-owner, about a runaway slave who would later become a bishop and a saint himself! Hollywood couldn't tell as good a story!

And look how St. Paul appeals to his spiritual son. He says that he could command Philemon to do the right thing, but that wouldn't be as spiritually profitable for any of them. Rather, St. Paul appeals to Philemon to receive Onesimos back as St. Paul's “son” in the Lord, making Philemon and Onesimos spiritual brothers! Paul even insists that he would rather have kept Onesimos with him while he was in prison but didn't want to do anything without Philemon's consent. Amazing grace and maximum room for action and repentance! and Philemon is now on the hook to exercise his ability to choose!

Let's unpack the implications of Paul's letter to Philemon:

First. Paul deals with reality. We can easily read back into history the current morality of our age and really miss the point here. St. Paul isn't condoning slavery at all. In fact, it was the growth of the Christian faith in the Roman Empire that mitigated the harsh realities of slavery in that culture. But Paul isn't going to pretend either that this accepted cultural situation didn't exist. In fact, Paul will use this very reality to confront both Philemon and Onesimos with the radically different perspectives of the Faith of Christ on relationships between people with different power dynamics.

Next, Paul puts the onus on Philemon to actively press out the implications of his claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ. And he does this by insisting that Philemon deal with the reality of the change that has now come to our relationships because we follow Christ. Paul makes it clear that, as Philemon's spiritual father, he could demand obedience. But Paul takes another route in insisting that the right exercise of our ability to choose is more beneficial to everyone involved than mere power. Paul insists that Philemon deal with Onesimos as a fellow brother in Christ. That reality trumps all other social constructs!

Finally, Paul insists that Onesimos go back to Philemon. Not as a slave to slave-owner, but as brother to brother. This invites Onesimos to also exercise his ability to choose to see Philemon in a different light as well. All involved are invited, out of love and fatherly desire to deal with the new life in Christ, to confront this radically changed situation.

Today, do you understand freedom as merely your ability to choose, or are you ready to confront this reality that, if you are going to be free as God created you to be free, you are going to have to exercise your ability to choose based on wisdom and not simply your desires? Being Orthodox on Purpose means choosing well!

## **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.

## **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 заколот 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 заколот 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.

## **I Korinthianëve 6:12-20**

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.

## **Llukait 15:11-32**

Përsëri tha: Një njeri kishte dy bij. Edhe më i vogli nga ata i tha të atit: Atë, jepmë pjesën e pasurisë që më takon. Edhe ai ua ndau pasurinë. Edhe pas pak ditësh më i vogli i mblodhi të gjitha, e mërgoi në një vend të largët; edhe atje shpërndau pasurinë e tij duke shkuar jetë në shturje. Edhe si i prishi ai të gjitha, u bë një zi e madhe në atë vend, edhe ai filloi të mos kishte. Atëherë shkoi e u ngjiti pas një qytetari të atij vendi, dhe ky e dërgoi në arat e tij të kulloste derra. Edhe dëshironte të mbushte barkun e tij me lendet që hanin derrat; po askush nuk i jepte. Edhe si erdhi në vete, tha: Sa mëditësve të tim eti u tepron bukë, ndërsa unë po humbas nga uria! Do të ngrihem e do të shkoj tek im atë, dhe do t'i them: O atë, mëkatova në qiell dhe përpara teje, edhe nuk jam më i denjë të quhem biri yt. Më bëj si një nga mëditësit e tu. Edhe u ngrit e erdhi tek i ati. Edhe kur ai ishte ende larg, i ati e pa edhe pati dhembshuri, edhe u sul dhe iu hodh në qafë atë, edhe e puthi fort. Edhe i biri i tha: O atë, mëkatova në qiell dhe përpara teje, dhe nuk jam më i denjë të quhem biri yt. Po i ati u tha shërbëtorëve të tij: Nxirrni stolinë e parë dhe vishjani, edhe i vini unazë në dorën e tij dhe sandale në këmbët. Edhe sillni viçin e ushqyer dhe thereni, edhe le të hamë e të dëfrehemi. Sepse ky biri im që i vdekur, e u ngjall përsëri; edhe që i humbur, e u gjet. Edhe zunë të dëfreheshin. Edhe djali më i madh ishte në arë; edhe si erdhi afër shtëpisë, dëgjoji këngë e valle. Edhe thirri një nga shërbëtorët dhe e pyeste: Ç'janë këto. Edhe ai i tha se ka ardhur yt vëlla, edhe yt atë theri viçin e ushqyer, sepse i erdhi shëndoshë. Edhe ai u zemërua dhe nuk donte të hynte brenda. I ati pra, doli e i lutej. Edhe ai u përgjigj e i tha të atit: Ja tek po të shërbej kaq vjet, edhe kurrë nuk e shpërfilla urdhërin tënd; edhe kurrë nuk më dhe një kec, që të dëfrej bashkë me miqtë e mi. Po kur erdhi ky yt bir që hëngri pasurinë bashkë me të përdalat, i there viçin e ushqyer. Edhe ai i tha: O djalë, ti je përherë bashkë me mua, edhe gjithë të miat janë të tuat. Dhe duhej të dëfreheshim e të ngazëlloheshim, sepse ky yt vëlla që i vdekur, e u ngjall përsëri; edhe që i humbur, e u gjet.