

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

And 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 falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet 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 unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, 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 elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.(KJV)

God's Holy Church provides the Sunday of the Prodigal Son each year as Great Lent is approaching. This is a time of preparation for Great Lent. The Church wants each person to know he or she is welcome to return to God.

The Gospel for today applies to all persons. Everyone during the course of the year departs to a far country from the Living and Loving God. Every person engages in sin and wastes talents and gifts from God.

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son is a call to return, to repentance and to live a God-pleasing life. Careful self-examination and personal honesty will reveal to each person the sins committed beyond measure.

An honest reading of God's commandments and teachings will let each person know transgressions that have been committed. God's love and mercy will wipe these sins and transgressions away when repentance occurs.

The younger son in the Gospel thought he could live well away from his father. He took his inheritance and wasted it. The younger son became poor and hungry. He came to his good sense and returned to his father.

The loving and welcoming father was filled with joy on the return of his younger son. The Living, Loving and all Merciful God welcomes sons and daughters returning to their home in the Church.

No barrier is too great as to prevent a person from returning to God. God welcomes each person with the desire to repent and begin anew. The Lord Jesus Christ rejoices, embraces and loves individuals choosing to return to Him.

God's Holy Church has preserved and proclaimed the welcoming message of the Sunday of the Prodigal Son down through the centuries. God's love is all enduring and all embracing.

Faithful sons and daughters remaining in the Church have an opportunity to share in the joy when a person returns and repents. Attentive believers know to demonstrate the humility learned from the publican in last Sunday's Gospel.

The Church in wisdom encourages attentive believers to look carefully within the heart, mind and soul. As Great Lent approaches, believers are called to firmly reject and refrain from actions and thoughts perilous to the soul

Prayer and fasting are to increase as Great Lent draws near and the journey to Pascha gets fully underway. Each person is expected to voluntarily participate in Great Lent and the journey to Pascha.

The Church sets forth teachings learned through the ages that are beneficial for a full life in Jesus Christ. Great Lent is the period to become transformed in Jesus Christ. Investing in Great Lent is an investment in the Kingdom of God.

The joy experienced at Pascha will be proportionate to the investment made in the days leading to Pascha. Each person knows his or her sins. Each person has the benefit of the teachings of God's Holy Church.

Prayer, fasting and charitable works are integral to Great Lent and the journey to Pascha. The father in the present Gospel and the returning son experienced great joy.

Paschal joy is rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ rising from the dead. The joy associated with the returning son in the present Gospel offers a foretaste of Paschal joy.

Today be mindful of personal sin and the presence of the Loving God. Keep the mind, heart and soul focused on living in God-pleasing ways. Be firm in rejecting sin and faithful in turning to the Lord God.

During the days ahead increase love for the Lord God and become more prayerful through fasting. Share love with others in daily life. Welcome each person God brings into daily life as the father welcomed his younger son.

Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord. Sunday of the Prodigal Son. St. Parthenius
February 7/20, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic