

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
22	Simon Younes	28
22	Mozine Ghantouce-Moubayed	24
22	Laurice Abdul-Nour	23
23	Katie Hinn	4
23	Albert Haddad	7
23	Lenia Chamandy	49
23	John Durzi	49
23	Kamal Al-Far	26
23	Ely Georges Hambly	63
24	Violette Abdallah	13
25	Effie Aziz	20
26	Mounif Khouri	26
27	Jabra Shubeita	19

- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Nassar, Valentine, George, Nina, Sonia, George, Elizabeth, Beshara, Samer, Irene and Toni. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- **40 days memorial for Jamil Qaqish** offered by his wife Nahil, his son Fadil and his family. May his memory be eternal.

ETERNAL LIGHT

- **Feb 23:** In loving memory of **Adel Younes** from his family
- **Feb 28:** in loving memory of **Violette & Alex Kodsi** and **Michel Kodsi** from their family
- **Mar 15:** In loving memory of **Yvonne Younes** from her family
- **Mar 21:** in loving memory of **Jeries and Nahil Irbib** from Nadim Irbib and family.
- **April 18:** in loving memory of **Yousef and Sumaya Musallam** from Nadim Irbib and family.

- **Soul Saturday:** Saturday March 7th Divine Liturgy at 10 AM.

- **SOYO meeting** Sunday March 7th 7 pm.

- **Young Adults meeting:** March 9th at 7 pm.

- **Engaged meeting** March 23 7:30 pm

- **Memorial:** if you are planning on doing a memorial for a loved one and you are expecting more than 15-20 people, please consider doing it on a Saturday in the evening. Thank you.

- **PLEDGE FORM 2021:** Please fill your pledge form if you have not done so as to allow us to budget for this year. **Please see attached form.**
- **Kindly Submit your Contribution through the Following Methods: Connect to the Church Website www.stgeorgeto.org Click on Donate**
- **“e-transfer” info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org Account Name: St. George Church**

- **PayPal, or send your Cheque by Mail to: St. George Antiochian Church, 9116 Bayview Ave, Richmond Hill ON, L4B 3M9**
Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice. (Psalm 112:5)
- **If you are not receiving The Word magazine at your home address, please email your information to registrar@antiochian.org. You must be an Orthodox and a member of St. George Church.**
- ***Bible study will resume on Thursday January 14th with a session on the Orthodox Faith from 7-8, and the Gospel of John from 8-9:30.***
- ***House Blessing: Father is blessing homes. Please, don't email the office but Fr. George directly at frdahdouh@sbcglobal.net or call Father.***
- **Bookstore: New icons have just arrived in our bookstore. The Bookstore is located in the church's basement. Icons are great gifts for newborn, new home, your car or your children, and Christmas gifts. Please see Colette El-Hajj or Odette Boutros to see these new icons.**
- **Please, don't forget to send your sacrificial giving to your church of St. George via e-transfer, or you can still bring your envelope with you and place it in the box by the candles. Your sacrificial giving (financial donation/support) will keep our doors open.**
- **Canned Food Drive: please bring non-perishable canned food to donate to the needy and place them in the box outside in the Narthex.**
- **Online Sunday School has begun and is in full swing. You may still register your children at any time. For further assistance contact Amanda Qaqish at orthodoxchristianeducation@gmail.com.**
- **MASKS ARE STILL MANDATORY INSIDE THE CHURCH. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- **Please, sign up to attend the Liturgy on Sunday on Eventbrite. You don't have to sign up for services during the week.**

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

-tone 5 / EOTHINON 5

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

VENERABLE BASIL THE CONFESSOR, COMPANION OF PROKOPIOS OF DECAPOLIS;
HIEROMARTYR PROTERIOS, ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA; RIGHTEOUS KYRA AND MARANA OF BEROEA IN SYRIA;
APOSTLES NYMPHAS AND EUVOULOS; NEW-MARTYR KYRANNA OF THESSALONICA

Deacon: For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

الشماس: مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَثْرُوبُولِيَّةِ بُولْسَ وَالْمِطْرَانِ يُوْحَنَّا
وَفَكَ أَسْرِهِمَا وَعَوْدَتِهِمَا سَالِمَيْنِ، إِلَى الرَّبِّ نَطْبُ.

• During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. Then, the following:

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF ORDINARY SUNDAYS

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.
Save us, O Son of God, **Who art risen from the dead**; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

هَلِّمُوا لِنَسْجُدَ وَنَرْكَعَ لِلْمَسِيحِ، مَلِكِنَا وَإِلَهِنَا. خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ
اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنَ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلَّ لَكَ. هَلِّلُويَا.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FIVE

Let us believers praise and worship the Word;
coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of
the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure
in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death;
and to raise the dead by His glorious
Resurrection.

لِنُسَبِّحَ نَحْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَنَسْجُدَ لِلْكَلِمَةِ، الْمُسَاوِي لِأَبِ
وَالرُّوحِ فِي الْأَرْزَلِيَّةِ وَعَدَمِ الْإِبْتِدَاءِ، الْمَوْلُودِ مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ
لِخَلَاصِنَا، لِأَنَّهُ سَرَّ بِالْجَسَدِ أَنْ يَغْلُوَ عَلَى الصَّلِيبِ،
وَيَحْتَمِلَ الْمَوْتَ، وَيُنْهَضَ الْمَوْتَى بِقِيَامَتِهِ الْمَجِيدَةِ.

• Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.

KONTAKION FOR THE PRODIGAL SON IN TONE THREE

(On this day the Virgin**)**

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.

إِذْ عَصَيْتُ مَجْدَكَ الْأَبَوِيِّ بِجَهْلٍ، وَبِالْمَعَاصِي بَدَّدْتُ
غِنَاكَ الَّذِي أُعْطَيْتَ، فَبِصَوْتِ الْإِبْنِ الشَّاطِرِ إِلَيْكَ
أَهْتَفْتُ: أَيُّهَا الْأَبُ الرَّؤُوفُ، خَطِئْتُ نَحْوَكَ، فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي
التَّوْبَةَ وَاجْعَلْنِي كَأَحَدِ أُجْرَائِكَ.

THE EPISTLE (For the Sunday of the Prodigal Son)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

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 expedient. All things are lawful for me,
but I will not be brought under the authority of

لِتَكُنْ يَا رَبُّ رَحْمَتُكَ عَلَيْنَا.

إِبْتَهَجُوا أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُونَ بِالرَّبِّ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولْسَ الرَّسُولِ الْأُولَى إِلَى أَهْلِ
كُورِنْثُوسَ.

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 the Lord for the body; and God both raised up 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, do 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 in your spirit, which are God's.

يَا إِخْوَةَ، كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مُبَاحٌ لِي وَلَكِنْ لَيْسَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ يُوَافِقُ، كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مُبَاحٌ لِي وَلَكِنْ لَا يَتَسَلَّطُ عَلَيَّ شَيْءٌ. إِنَّ الْأَطْعِمَةَ لِلْجَوْفِ وَالْجَوْفَ لِلْأَطْعِمَةِ، وَسَيُبِيدُ اللَّهُ هَذِهِ وَذَآكَ. أَمَّا الْجَسَدُ فَلَيْسَ لِلزَّيِّ بَلْ لِلرَّبِّ وَالرَّبُّ لِلْجَسَدِ، وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَقَامَ الرَّبَّ سَيَقِيمُنَا نَحْنُ أَيْضًا بِقُوَّتِهِ. أَمَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ أَجْسَادَكُمْ هِيَ أَعْضَاءُ الْمَسِيحِ؟ أَفَأَخَذُ أَعْضَاءَ الْمَسِيحِ وَأَجْعَلُ مِنْهَا أَعْضَاءَ زَيْي؟ حَاشَى. أَمَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ مَنْ اقْتَرَنَ بِزَانِيَةٍ صَارَ وَإِيَّاهَا جَسَدًا وَاحِدًا؟ لِأَنَّهُ قَدْ قِيلَ: 'يَصِيرُ كِلَاهُمَا جَسَدًا وَاحِدًا.' أَمَا الَّذِي يَقْتَرِنُ بِالرَّبِّ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ رُوحًا وَاحِدًا. أَهْرُبُوا مِنَ الزَّيِّ. فَإِنَّ كُلَّ حَاطِيَّةٍ يَفْعَلُهَا الْإِنْسَانُ هِيَ فِي خَارِجِ الْجَسَدِ، أَمَا الزَّانِي فَإِنَّهُ يَخْطَأُ إِلَى جَسَدِهِ. أَمَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ جَسَدَكُمْ هُوَ هَيْكَلُ الرُّوحِ الْقُدْسِ الَّذِي فِيكُمْ الَّذِي نَلْتَمُوهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ لَسْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ؟ لِأَنَّكُمْ قَدْ اشْتَرَيْتُمْ بِثَمَنِ فَمَجَّدُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَجْسَادِكُمْ وَفِي أَرْوَاحِكُمْ الَّتِي هِيَ لِلَّهِ.

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

فَصَلُّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لَوْقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ،

التِّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (15:11-32)

قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ: "إِنْسَانٌ كَانَ لَهُ ابْنَانِ، فَقَالَ أَصْغَرُهُمَا لِأَبِيهِ: يَا أَبَتِي، أَعْطِنِي النَّصِيبَ الَّذِي يَخْصُنِي مِنَ الْمَالِ. فَقَسَمَ بَيْنَهُمَا مَعِيشَتَهُ. وَبَعْدَ أَيَّامٍ غَيْرِ كَثِيرَةٍ، جَمَعَ الْابْنُ الْأَصْغَرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَهُ، وَسَافَرَ إِلَى بَلَدٍ بَعِيدٍ، وَبَدَّرَ مَالَهُ هُنَاكَ عَائِشًا فِي الْخَلَاعَةِ. فَلَمَّا أَنْفَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَهُ، حَدَّثَتْ فِي ذَلِكَ الْبَلَدِ مَجَاعَةٌ شَدِيدَةٌ، فَأَخَذَ فِي الْعَوْرِ. فَذَهَبَ وَانْصَوَى إِلَى وَاحِدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ ذَلِكَ الْبَلَدِ، فَأَرْسَلَهُ إِلَى حُقُولِهِ يَرْعَى خَنَازِيرَ. وَكَانَ يَشْتَهِي أَنْ يَمْلَأَ بَطْنَهُ مِنَ الْخَزْنُوبِ الَّذِي كَانَتْ الْخَنَازِيرُ تَأْكُلُهُ، فَلَمْ يُعْطِهِ أَحَدٌ. فَرَجَعَ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ وَقَالَ 'كَمْ لِأَبِي مِنْ

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.'"

أَجْرَاءَ يَفْضُلُ عَنْهُمْ الْخُبْزَ، وَأَنَا أَهْلِكُ جَوْعًا. أَقُومُ وَأَمْضِي إِلَى أَبِي وَأَقُولُ لَهُ "يَا أَبَتِ، قَدْ أَخْطَأْتُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَأَمَامَكَ، وَلَسْتُ مُسْتَحِقًّا بَعْدُ أَنْ أُدْعَى لَكَ ابْنًا، فَاجْعَلْنِي كَأَحَدِ أُجْرَائِكَ." فَقَامَ وَجَاءَ إِلَى أَبِيهِ. وَفِيمَا هُوَ بَعْدُ غَيْرُ بَعِيدٍ، رَأَهُ أَبُوهُ، فَتَحَنَّنَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَسْرَعَ وَأَلْقَى بِنَفْسِهِ عَلَى عُنُقِهِ وَقَبَّلَهُ. فَقَالَ لَهُ الْابْنُ: "يَا أَبَتِ، قَدْ أَخْطَأْتُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَأَمَامَكَ وَلَسْتُ مُسْتَحِقًّا بَعْدُ أَنْ أُدْعَى لَكَ ابْنًا." فَقَالَ الْأَبُ لِعَبِيدِهِ: "هَاتُوا الْحُلَّةَ الْأُولَى وَالنَّبِسُوهُ، وَاجْعَلُوا خَاتَمًا فِي يَدِهِ، وَجِذَاءً فِي رِجْلَيْهِ، وَأْتُوا بِالْعِجْلِ الْمُسَمَّنِ وَادْبَحُوهُ، فَنَأْكُلْ وَنَفْرَحُ، لِأَنَّ ابْنِي هَذَا كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَعَاشَ، وَكَانَ ضَالًّا فَوُجِدَ. فَطَفِقُوا يَفْرَحُونَ. وَكَانَ ابْنُهُ الْأَكْبَرُ فِي الْحَقْلِ. فَلَمَّا أَتَى وَقَرَّبَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ، سَمِعَ أَصْوَاتَ الْغِنَاءِ وَالرَّقْصِ. فَدَعَا أَحَدَ الْغِلْمَانِ وَسَأَلَهُ مَا هَذَا. فَقَالَ لَهُ: "لَقَدْ قَدِمَ أَخُوكَ، فَذَبَحَ أَبُوكَ الْعِجْلَ الْمُسَمَّنَ لِأَنَّهُ لَقِيَهُ سَالِمًا." فَغَضِبَ وَلَمْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ. فَخَرَجَ أَبُوهُ وَطَفِقَ يَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْهِ، فَأَجَابَ وَقَالَ لِأَبِيهِ: "كَمْ لِي مِنَ السِّنِينَ أُخْدِمُكَ، وَلَمْ أَتَّعِدْ لَكَ وَصِيَّةً قَطُّ، وَأَنْتَ لَمْ تُعْطِنِي قَطُّ جَدِيًّا لِأَفْرَحَ مَعَ أَصْدِقَائِي. وَلَمَّا جَاءَ ابْنُكَ هَذَا الَّذِي أَكَلَ مَعِيشَتَكَ مَعَ الزَّوَانِي، ذَبَحْتَ لَهُ الْعِجْلَ الْمُسَمَّنَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ: "يَا ابْنِي، أَنْتَ مَعِيَ فِي كُلِّ حِينٍ، وَكُلُّ مَا هُوَ لِي فَهُوَ لَكَ. وَلَكِنْ كَانَ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ نَفْرَحَ وَنُسِرَّ، لِأَنَّ أَخَاكَ هَذَا كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَعَاشَ، وَكَانَ ضَالًّا فَوُجِدَ."

- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.*

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by

الكاهن: أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِيُّ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ لِأَجْلِ خَلَاصِنَا، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمِّكَ الْقَدِيسَةِ الْكُلِّيَّةِ

the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated, of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the Venerable Basil the Confessor, companion of Prokopios of Decapolis; Hieromartyr Proterios, archbishop of Alexandria; Righteous Kyra and Marana of Beroea in Syria; Apostles Nymphas and Euvoulos; and New-martyr Kyranna of Thessalonica, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

الطهارة والبريئة من كل عيب؛ وبقدرة الصليب الكريم المحيي؛ وبطلبات القوات السماوية المكرمة العادمة الأجساد؛ والنبى الكريم السابق المجيد يوحنا المعمدان؛ والقديسين المشرفين الرسل الجديرين بكل مديح؛ وأبينا الجليل في القديسين يوحنا الذهبي الفم رئيس أساقفة القسطنطينية، كاتب هذه الخدمة الشريفة؛ والقديسين المجيدين الشهداء المتألقين بالظفر؛ وآبائنا الأبرار المتوشحين بالله؛ وآبائنا الأبرار المتوشحين بالله؛ والقديس (ة) (فلان، فلانة) شفيع (ة) وحامي (ة) هذه الرعية المقدسة؛ والقديسين الصديقين يواكيم وحنة جدي المسيح الإله؛ البار باسيليوس المعترف، رفيق بروكوبيوس الذي من المذن العشر؛ الشهيد في الكهنة بروتوريوس أسقف الإسكندرية؛ البارات كيرا ومرانا السوريات؛ والرسل نيمفاس وإيفولوس؛ والشهيدة الجديدة كيرانا من تسالونيك، الذين نقيم تذكارتهم اليوم، وجميع قديسيك، ارحمنا وخلصنا بما أنك صالح ومحب للبشر.

Priest: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

الكاهن: بصلوات آبائنا القديسين، أيها الرب يسوع المسيح إلهنا ارحمنا وخلصنا.

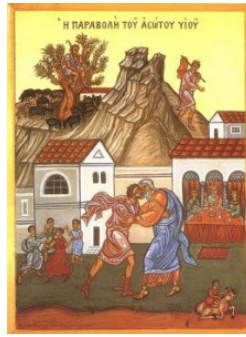
Choir: Amen.

الجوق: آمين.

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Homily for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son in the Orthodox Church

[Fr. Philip LeMasters](#)



1 Corinthians 6: 12-20

St. Luke 15: 11-32

Today is known in the church as the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Now just two weeks from the beginning of Great Lent, we are reminded today of who we are: beloved children of God who need to come to our senses and return to our loving, forgiving Father. No matter what we have done, no matter how we have diminished ourselves, no matter how broken we have made our relationship with God, He patiently awaits our return, runs to greet us, and welcomes us back into His family with joy and celebration.

We can be sure that the prodigal son in today's gospel didn't think that his father would react that way to him. After all, he had asked his father for his inheritance, which was like telling the old man that he should drop dead so the son could have his money. The son traveled far away, quickly wasted his money with partying and immorality, ended up as a servant taking care of pigs, and was so hungry that he wished he could eat the pigs' slop.

Then the young man came to himself, realized how miserable his life was, and decided to return home in hopes of becoming a servant to his father. He realized that he had sinned against his father, that he wasn't worthy to be called his son anymore, and wanted only to be a hired hand. No self-respecting father in that time and place could be expected to do more for such a rebellious and disrespectful son. The young man would have been fortunate to have been taken back into the household even as the lowliest servant.

But the father won't hear of it. In a way that must have shocked everyone, he runs to greet his son, embraces and kisses him, gives him fine clothes, slaughters a calf, and throws a big party. The father did not judge, condemn, or reject his son; instead, he rejoices that a beloved child who was lost has returned home, that one who was dead to him has been restored to life.

This story of the prodigal son should shape all the repentance that we do in our lives, whether in Lent or not. For it reminds us Who God is and who we are. As in this parable, there are no limits to our Lord's mercy, no restraints on His compassion or forgiveness. Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ was born, baptized, taught, worked miracles, was crucified and resurrected, and ascended into heaven for our salvation. He came as the Second Adam to restore us as the children of God, to put us in our proper place in the family of heaven as those created in the divine image and likeness.

Despite what some of us may be tempted to believe, the Father is not a harsh, stern, hateful judge who is out to get us. Likewise, the Son did not come to condemn and punish, but to save. We should have no fears about Him rejecting our repentance, no matter what we have done. He accepted and blessed everyone who came to Him in humble repentance during his earthly ministry, including tax-collectors, a woman caught in adultery, Gentiles, the demon-possessed, and His own apostles who denied and abandoned Him. Christ even prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him. His abundant mercy and compassion extend to us and to all who call upon Him from the depths of our hearts.

This story also holds a mirror up to us. It reminds us that, like the prodigal son, we have foolishly rejected our true identity as the beloved children of God. We have chosen our own pride, our own self-centered desires,

our habits and preferences, over a healthy relationship with our Heavenly Father. And we have born the consequences of our decisions and actions by making ourselves and others miserable.

St. Paul reminded the Corinthians that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. How horrible, then, for them or us to use our bodies in immoral ways for sexual intimacy outside of marriage. Our bodies are members of Christ and destined for the life of the heaven, and we harm and diminish ourselves when we view them simply as instruments for pleasure. The union of man and woman is for growth in holiness and love through the blessed covenant called marriage, which is an image of the relationship between Christ and the Church in which husband and wife wear the crowns of the Kingdom. When man and woman join their bodies in other ways, they choose their passions over holiness and the glory of their identity as God's children. The misery of disease, broken hearts and families, scarred childhoods, and the horror of abortion are often the results.

This was also the problem of the prodigal son. He abandoned his father in order to make his life one wild party, and ended up in a pig sty so wild with hunger that he envied the food of the swine. And since the Jews considered pigs to be unclean, the Lord makes clear that this fellow had truly hit rock bottom.

No matter what our particular set of temptations may be, we should all admit that we are in the place of the prodigal son. We have not lived faithfully as the sons and daughters of the Lord. We have chosen our own will over God's, we have asked for our inheritance—namely, whatever good things we can get—and then used them however we pleased. In thought, word, and deed, we have often done our best to live as though God is dead, as though He is no longer our Father and we are no longer His children.

Lent is the time set aside in the church calendar to come to our senses, to recognize the truth of what we have done to ourselves, and begin the journey back to the Lord. But we have a major advantage over the prodigal son. We know that our Heavenly Father wants nothing more than to restore us to His family. He wants nothing more than to forgive, heal, and bless us; to return us to our proper dignity as sons and daughters of the Most High.

You see, Lent is not about getting God to change His mind about us; instead, it is about us changing our minds and lives in order to return to God. No amount of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving will alter anything about the Lord; but these tools are useful in helping us see the truth about our sinfulness and in opening our lives to the mercy which Jesus Christ always extends to repentant sinners.

But we have to be careful here. Some of us hear words like “sinfulness” and “repentance” and immediately think of God as harsh, unforgiving, and out to punish us. We may be terrified of God and think that He wants us to be miserable. So we obsess about our failings, judge ourselves as hopeless cases when we aren't perfect, and end up taking the joy out of life.

The good news is that God did not create us for a joyless life of despair, but to share in the blessedness of His life. The eternal Son of God became one of us to heal our broken humanity and bring us into the joy of the Kingdom. We pray, fast, give alms, and forgive our enemies as ways of embracing His healing, of accepting His gracious transformation of our lives.

Like the man in the pig sty, we also need to come to our senses, see the truth about God and ourselves and act accordingly. It is only our own stubborn refusal which holds us back from entering into the joy of the Lord. Let's use this coming Lent to get over that stubbornness, swallow our pride, and return home to a Father who loves us more than we can even imagine. He has sent His only begotten Son to restore us to the dignity of His beloved sons and daughters. This Lent, let us run home to Him.

Fasting *By Fr. Thomas Hopko*

Jesus Himself fasted and taught His disciples to fast.

And when you fast, do not look dismal like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men, but your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
(Matthew 6:16-18)

The purpose of fasting is to gain mastery over oneself and to conquer the passions of the flesh. It is to liberate oneself from dependence on the things of this world in order to concentrate on the things of the Kingdom of God. It is to give power to the soul so that it would not yield to temptation and sin. According to St. Seraphim, fasting is an "indispensable means" of gaining the fruit of the Holy Spirit in one's life (cf. Conversation with Motovilov), and Jesus Himself taught that some forms of evil cannot be conquered without it (Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29)

Man does not fast because it pleases God if His servants do not eat, for, as the lenten hymns of the Church remind us, "the devil also never eats." (Lenten Triodion) Neither do men fast in order to afflict themselves with suffering and pain, for God has no pleasure in the discomfort of His people. Neither do men fast with the idea that their hunger and thirst can somehow serve as a "reparation" for their sins. Such an understanding is never given in the scriptures or the writings of the saints which claim that there is no "reparation" for man's sin but the crucifixion of Christ. Salvation is a "free gift of God" which no "works" of man can accomplish of merit. (cf. Romans 5:15-17, Ephesians 2:8-9)

Men fast, therefore, and must fast, only to be delivered from carnal passions so that the free gift of salvation in Christ might produce great fruit in their lives. Men fast so that they might more effectively serve God who loves them and has saved them in Christ and the Spirit. Fasting without effort in virtue is wholly in vain.

Why have we fasted, and Thou seest it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and Thou takest no knowledge of it?

Behold, in the day of your fast, you seek your own pleasure and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and fight...Fasting like yours ... will not make your voice to be heard on high.

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness...to let the oppressed go free...is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them...

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall protect you. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; then you shall cry, and He will say: Here I am. (Isaiah 58:3-9)

"Fasting in the body, o brethren, let us also fast from sin." This is the Church's song in the lenten season of fasting. It is also the teaching of the saints.

...in fasting one must not only obey the rule against gluttony in regard to food, but refrain from every sin so that, while fasting, the tongue may also fast, refraining from slander, lies, evil talking, degrading one's brother, anger and every sin committed by the tongue. One should also fast with the eyes, that is, not look at vain things...not look shamefully or fearlessly at anyone. The hands and feet should also be kept from every evil action.

When one fasts through vanity or thinking that he is achieving something especially virtuous, he fasts foolishly and soon begins to criticize others and to consider himself something great.

A man who fasts wisely...wins purity and comes to humility...and proves himself a skillful builder. (St. Abba Dorotheus, 7th c., Directions on Spiritual Training)

Saint Paul himself fasted, and in his teaching on food insists that men fast and do so in secret, without mutual inspection and judgment.

Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:17-19)

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 - and 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. (I Corinthians 6:12-13)

Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains, pass judgment on him who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?

He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of him for whom Christ has died ... for the Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God...the faith that you have keep between yourself and God...whatever does not proceed from faith (whether eating or abstaining) is sin. (cf Romans 14)

The spiritual fathers, as strictly ascetic as they were, are very clear in their teaching about fasting. They insist with the Lord and the scriptures that men must fast in order to be free from passions and lust. But they insist as well that the most critical thing is to be free from all sin, including the pride, vanity and hypocrisy which comes through foolish and sinful fasting.

...eating beyond the point of being satisfied is the door of madness through which lust enters, for the belly is the queen of passions which man serves as a slave.

But you, firm in this knowledge, choose what is best for you, according to your own powers...for the perfect person, according to Saint Paul ought both "to be full and be hungry...and do all things through Christ who strengthens (Philippians 4:12-13)

Thus a man who strives for salvation...must not allow himself to eat to fullness...but should still eat all kinds of food so that on the one hand he avoid boastful pride and on the other not show disdain for God's creation which is most excellent...Such is the reasoning of those who are wise! (St. Gregory of Sinai, Instruction to Hesychasts)

St. Isaac of Syria says, "Meager food at the table of the pure cleanses the soul of those who partake from all passion...for the work of fasting and vigil is the beginning of every effort against sin and lust...almost all passionate drives decrease through fasting."

For the holy fathers taught us to be killers of passions and not killers of the body. Partake of everything that is permissible with thanksgiving, to the glory of God and to avoid boastful arrogance; but refrain from every excess. (The Monks Callistus and Ignatius, 14th c., Directions to Hesychasts)

If such is the teaching to hesychast monks, it is certainly applicable to all Christians as well. The whole essence of the matter is put simply and clearly in these two short stories from the fathers of the desert.

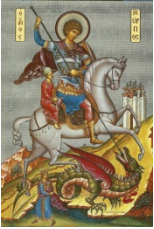
A certain brother brought fresh loaves of bread and invited his elders. When they had eaten much, the brother, knowing their travail of abstinence, began humbly to beg them to eat more. "For God's sake, eat this day and be filled." And they ate another ten. Behold how these that were true monks and sincere in abstinence did eat more than they needed, for the sake of God.

Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, called the abbot Hilarion to see him. A portion of fowl was set before them and the bishop invited the abbot to eat. The old man said, "Forgive me, Father, but since the time I took this habit I have never eaten anything that has been killed."

And Epiphanius said to him, "And from the time I took this habit I have let no man sleep who has anything against me, and neither have I slept holding anything against anyone."

And the old man said to him, "Forgive me, Father, for your way of life is greater than mine." (The Sayings of the Fathers)

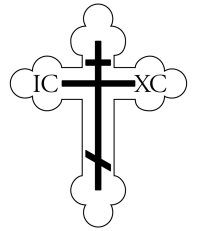
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St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

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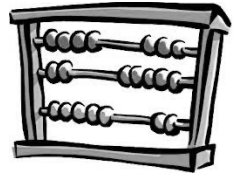
2021 ANNUAL DONATION PLEDGE FORM



“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully...for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

“Honour the Lord from your righteous labors, and offer Him the first fruits from the fruits of your righteousness.” Proverbs 3:9

St. George needs your help. The cost to operate and maintain our church is going up and your financial pledge allows us to budget effectively.



FAMILY INFORMATION (Please complete a separate form for each tax contributor)

Name: _____

Address: _____

TEL: _____

Email: _____

By providing my email address I agree to receive emails from St George Antiochian Orthodox Church. You can withdraw from such emails at any time.

Why Pledge?

- It is a way of offering thanks to God from the fruits of our labours
- So the church can manage a budget
- To be able to vote

In thanks for all the many blessings God has bestowed upon me, and my family, I pledge to make the below annual donation.

(A) Archdiocese dues:

(# of baptised household members ____ x \$35) (A) \$ _____

(B) Donation to St George Antiochian Orthodox Church:

Small weekly amounts make donations easier:

\$10 / week = \$520 annually; \$20 / week = \$1,040 annually;

\$50 / week = \$2,600 annually; \$100 / week = \$5,200 annually;

10% of your income or what you can afford as thanks to God (B) \$ _____

Total Annual Pledge (add (A) + (B)) (A + B) \$ _____

Your pledge can be paid through your church envelopes, in a single lump sum payment or in multiple payments. Cheques should be made payable to St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church.

We thank you for your generosity and may God bless you.

This form is for annual donations but covers multiple years, not just the current year. You may increase or decrease your pledge at any time by completing a new form or by contacting the church office.

Signed

Date

Frequently Asked Questions About Pledging

1) Do I get to vote at the annual parish meeting?

As per church constitution, only those who have completed a pledge form and fulfilled their pledge are eligible to vote at the annual parish meeting.

2) Why is St. George asking for pledges instead of just tray offerings?

Largely this is so that we can effectively plan and budget expenditures based on cash flows. Just like in your own household where you need to budget and time your expenses with your cash inflows to ensure you have money on hand, the church also needs to do the same to pay its bills. Pledges help us to do that.

3) Why do I have to commit to a dollar amount?

Knowing what each parishioner will pledge permits the creation of a proper budget.

4) Is there a minimum dollar amount I have to pledge?

No, there is no minimum. The church only asks that you give God a priority in your life. Remember that all you have is the result of God's blessings upon you. Giving back to God is a way of honouring Him and thanking Him for all of those blessings.

5) How often do I have to make payments towards my pledge?

The church will accept whatever frequency you can manage but the more often they are made the more cash flow the church has on hand to meet its regular expenses. Payments can be made through your church envelope, a single lump sum payment or multiple payments. The examples on the form show how even small weekly amounts can make pledging easier.

6) What if my circumstances change and I cannot financially fulfill my pledge?

That is okay. The church understands that circumstances change. No one will come to collect money from you although we may mail a general reminder notice regarding pledge payments. The church only asks that you give God a priority in your life.

7) Does this pledge cover this calendar year only?

No, while you are pledging an annual amount, this is a perpetual pledge that carries over year to year. That way you do not have to keep filling out this form each year.

8) What if I want to change my pledge amount?

You can increase or decrease your pledge amount by simply completing a new pledge form or by contacting the church office.

Only those who have completed a pledge form and fulfilled their pledge are eligible to vote at the annual parish meeting as required by our church constitution.

Join us every second Tuesday of the month for our popular online event: Q&A with Father. This event is hosted and moderated by St. George YAM where they carefully select a featured guest speaker to discuss topics stemming from their area of expertise.

Our next event is on Tuesday, March 9th 2021 from 7:00-8:00pm over zoom and is featuring Fr. Paul Tadros, on the topic of the marginalized, vulnerable, and Christ's Church.

All are welcome, feel free to share the invitation. RSVP through Eventbrite.
Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/130697659217>

You can also connect with YAM on WhatsApp, Facebook, or their website.

WhatsApp: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/JLvtY6DgPXI8VlIxBzilF6>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1638490759549749>



St. George Young Adults Ministry Hosts

Fr. Paul Tadros

St. Silouan Orthodox Church + Mission



"Give Me This Stranger"

7pm Tuesday Mar. 9

Zoom Mtg ID: 828 1100 0866

Passcode: yam

Contact: youngadultministryto@gmail.com