

OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. DEACON ROBERT SPENCER

REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK

*"Enter the Church and repent for your sin; for here is the physician, not the judge.
Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

February 16, 2014

The Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Pamphilios and his companions

THE SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (*PRESIDENT*), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK, MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JENNA NEHME, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Sunday 10 AM & 12:45 PM, before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

Please remember to contact the church if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (6th Tone) Page 53

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 16

The Kontakon of the Prodigal Son (3rd Tone)

In my foolish wretchedness, I ran away from Your glory, and I squandered wickedly the riches You have given me. And so now, like the Prodigal Son, I cry out to You: "I have sinned in Your sight, Merciful Father. Receive me now that I repent and make me as one of Your hired servants."

THE PROKIMENON:

**MAY YOUR KINDNESS, O LORD, BE UPON US,
FOR WE HAVE HOPED IN YOU.**

Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

Today's Readings: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 and Luke 18:10-14

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Joseph Anton (42nd), Alice Nassoura (12th)
and Freida Wihby (11th)



Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Fred Kfoury Jr. (1st Anniversary),
and Fred Kfoury Sr. (14th Anniversary),
by their family



Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Lionel Shakra (15th), Donald Ganem (20th), Paul Kehriarty (18th),
Pauline LeBlanc (7th), Shirkey George (34th), and Sophie Potoczny (17th)

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Archbishop Joseph Tawil (15th Anniversary)

For the repose of Fred Kfoury Jr., by Frances Hastings and family



Next Sunday is the Sunday of the Last Judgment and is also known as Meatfare Sunday - the last day that meat is eaten according to the traditional Lenten fast. The following Sunday (March 2) is the Sunday of Forgiveness, also known as Cheesefare Sunday, the last day that dairy products can be eaten prior to the start of Great Lent. On the evening of Cheesefare Sunday Great Lent begins with the service of the Vespers of Forgiveness.



The Sunday of the Prodigal Son is the second Sunday of the time of Pre-Lent and marks the beginning of Meat-Fare week. 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.

The start of Great Lent is just two weeks away. Have you given any thought to the coming of the holy season? How will you make your return to the Lord? The season offers itself as time to become spiritually focused through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Begin planning now on how you will observe this holy season.

The Saturday of the Dead

The Church has set aside this coming Saturday (the Saturday before Meat-Fare Sunday) as a day to pray for all those who have passed from this life. We will pray for them at a celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning at 10:00 AM. Sign-up sheets will be available in the church that morning for the names of your departed loved who will be remembered at the Liturgy. Come and beseech the Lord to bring all our departed relatives and friends to "a place of light, a place of happiness, a place of peace, where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing."



Hot dogs, fries, and root beer floats are being served up by our youth group following the Sunday Divine Liturgy. Thank you for supporting their efforts!

Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 19 Sunday 11:00 AM: 129

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,135.⁰⁰

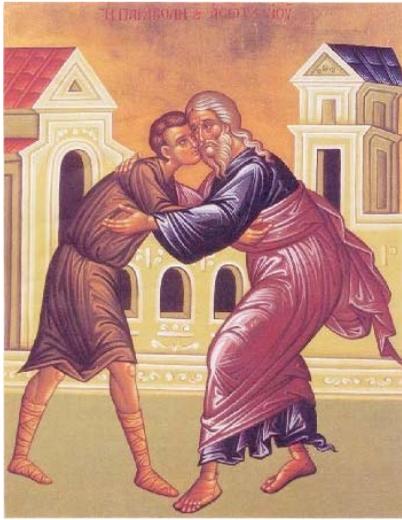
The average Sunday envelope offering last week was \$28.³¹

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 344,477.⁴⁷

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Weekday services will be held in the basement chapel

Tues., Feb 18	8:30 AM	Divine Liturgy: <i>For the health of Christine Freitas</i>
Wed., Feb. 19	7:00 PM	Vespers
Thurs., Feb. 20	8:30 AM	Divine Liturgy: <i>For the health of Anne Gallagher</i>
Sat., Feb. 22	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Saturday of the Dead
Sat., Feb 22	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Last Judgment
Sun., Feb. 23	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Feb. 23	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Last Judgment



The Sunday of the Prodigal Son is

the second Sunday of a three-week period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. On the previous Sunday, the services of the Church began to include hymns from the Triodion, a liturgical book that contains the services from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the tenth before Pascha (Easter), through Great and Holy Saturday. As with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the theme of this Sunday is repentance, and the focus on the parable of the Prodigal Son leads Orthodox Christians to contemplate the necessity of repentance in our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

The parable of the Prodigal Son forms an exact icon of repentance at its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, hunger. Repentance is the return from exile to our true home; it is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the

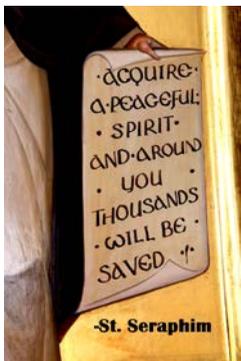
Father's house. But repentance implies action: "I will rise up and go..." (v. 18). To repent is not just to feel dissatisfied, but to make a decision and to act upon it.

In the words of our Lord, we also learn of three things through this parable: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The reading of this parable follows the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own sinful condition, we might come to our senses and return to God through repentance. For those who have fallen into great despair over their sins thinking that there is no forgiveness, this parable offers hope. The Heavenly Father is patiently and lovingly waiting for our return. There is no sin that can overcome His love for us.

Finally, this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God's divine purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods and drinks that do not satisfy, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, and a world engulfed in untruth, deceit and sin. It is the exact opposite of the world as created by God and potentially recreated by his Son and Spirit. There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God. The world in which we live is not a normal world, but a wasteland.

As a result of sin in our lives, we lose the joy of communion with God, we defile and lose our spiritual beauty, and we find ourselves far away from our real home, our real life. In true repentance, we realize this, and we express a deep desire to return, to recover what has been lost. On this day the Church reminds us of what we have abandoned and lost, and beckons us to find the desire and power to return. Our Heavenly Father is waiting and ready to receive us with His loving forgiveness and His saving embrace.

The icon of the Sunday of the Prodigal Son shows the prodigal being received by his father upon his return. We are presented with an image of a warm and loving embrace, the son showing his need for his father, an attitude that represents repentance, love, and hope for renewal and restoration. The father is shown full of compassion for his son, having born the burden of his sin and suffering, but now filled with joy that he has returned. *-Edited from goarch.org*



PRAYERS FROM THE TRIODION....

On the Sunday of the Prodigal Son

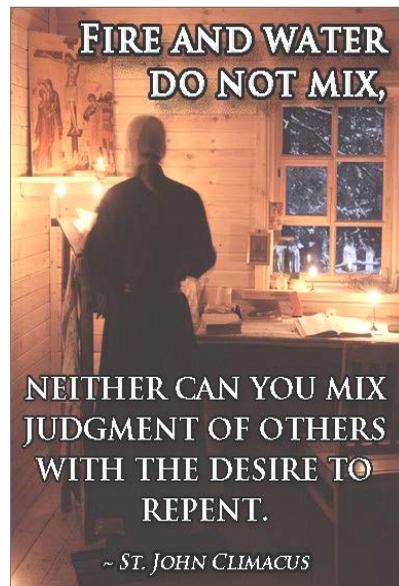
Brethren, our purpose is to know the power of God's goodness: how when the Prodigal Son gave up sin and hastened to his father's house, his kindly father welcomed him and kissed him, and marked him with the signs of honor. He manifested his mystical joy to the inhabitants of heaven by killing the fatted calf in order that we too may do what is right before the Sacrificer, the Father and the Lover of Mankind, and the Victim, the glorious Savior of our souls. – *Sticheron of Vespers*

Wretch that I am, after squandering the riches that that Father gave me, I went to graze with the dumb beasts. I sought their food and hungered, for I had not enough to eat. Wherefore I shall return to the compassionate Father, crying out tearfully: "Receive me as one of your servants as I kneel before your love for mankind, and save me." – *Aposticha of Vespers*

I have wasted and squandered all Your riches, O Lord, and in my wretchedness I have become a servant to the wicked demons. O compassionate Savior, have mercy on the Prodigal. Cleanse me from filth and give me once again the robe of Your Kingdom. – *Exapostilaria of Orthros*

I am wasted with hunger, deprived of every blessing, and exiled from Your presence, O Christ of great compassion. Have mercy on me now, as I turn back in repentance, and save me as I sing Your praises, O Lover of Mankind.

– *Ode 6, Canon of Orthros*



Please pray for the release of Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi and Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim who were abducted on April 22 when gunmen stopped their vehicle near the battleground northern city of Aleppo, where both are based. Please pray also for their deacon who was driving their car and was shot and killed in the attack.

6th Annual St. Francis of Assisi Parish Penny Sale

Held at Sacred Heart Church 265 Main Street in Manchester Sat. Feb 22 8:00am to 7:00pm Sun. Feb 23 9:30am to 5:00pm Over 300 prizes including iPad mini, 12ft Snark Sailboat, Gas Cards, Baskets of Cheer, 50/50 Drawings, *Instant Winner Games, Theme baskets, and Fun for all Ages. Grand Prize Raffle \$1000, \$500, \$250.* Saturday evening Baked chicken dinner. Saturday and Sunday Breakfast, Snack Bar, and Baked Goods.

Breaking the Power of the Passions



RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE OFTEN ACCUSED of having a negative morality. Faithful believers are not to do this or that and there are “temple police” to make sure that they toe the line. Dietary regulations, which are prominent in both Judaism and Islam, are often cited as examples of this “negative morality.” People are not to eat this or that because God has forbidden it. Obeying these rules is seen as a way of glorifying God.

The Apostolic Church did not adopt the idea that certain foods were “unclean,” based in part on St Peter’s vision in Joppa (see *Acts* 10:9-16). “*What God has cleansed,*” Peter was told, “*you must not call common*” (v. 15). In the same way it did not adopt the idea taught by some sects that marriage and sexuality were ungodly. Rather the Church espoused the principle stated by St Paul, “*All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any*” (*1 Cor* 6:12).

Being “Under the Power” of Things

No authentically Christian exercise of asceticism, such as fasting, is done to avoid something evil but to keep us free from inappropriate control by anything. Fasting is one strategy for minimizing the power of food or drink (gluttony), material possessions (greed) or sex (lust) over us.

It is often noted that many people in our society do not have a healthy relationship with food, drink or sex. Many rely on these things to fix emotional problems they were never designed to address. The resulting addictions are simply the most harmful examples of our disordered passions having power over us. As people today say, “What you own, owns you.”

The Apostolic Church’s teaching that nothing is “unclean” was perhaps too subtle for some early believers. They felt that, if everything was allowed, unlimited consumption was in order. Paul had to remind them that “Nothing is forbidden” does not mean “consume everything you can.” Rather, he said, “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful*” (*1 Cor* 6:12). The believer’s goal is to be united to God; unlimited consumption does not help us achieve that goal.

St Paul would likely have agreed with Pope Francis’ criticisms of modern prosperity as leading to a “culture of waste.” We are prodded by film, TV and advertising into buying more and throwing away what we tire of. “Consumerism has led us to become so used to an excess” of food and other material goods, the pope says, that we no longer value our humanity, much less our relationship to God. The Church’s answer to consumerism – ancient or modern – is fasting.

How Do We Fast?

Most people see fasting as an act of self-denial, but often mistake just what we seek to deny in this observance. Fasting is not so much a denial of food as it is a denial of the ego. In our prosperous society we are used to having whatever we want whenever we want it. Fasting is a means of challenging this impulse to self-satisfaction. When we observe the Church’s fast days we are allowing others to determine what we may eat and when we may eat it. We fast when the Church fasts and in the manner that the Church prescribes. There are, of course, always exceptions for health and other reasons but in such cases the tradition would have us seek a blessing from one’s spiritual father before mitigating the fast. In that way we would not be determining our own version

of the fast; we would still be following the Church, in the person of our confessor.

Sexual Morality a Kind of Fasting?

The Church, while recognizing that sexuality is, after all, God's idea, seeks to free us from lust as it does from gluttony and greed. It proclaims sexuality as proper to marriage with an openness to conceiving children as integral to marital relations.

Even married couples, however, are subject to the passions. And so refraining from marital relations has always been a part of fasting, as is affirmed by the teaching of the Apostle Paul: "Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (I Corinthians 7:5).

Tired of Fasting?

In 1 Corinthians 6 St Paul evokes three basic principles of the Gospel which underpin any Christian ascetical effort. They are timely reminders for us of why we fast, or live the Christian life at all. ***The blood of Christ is the "price" of our redemption*** – "*For you were bought at a price*" (v. 20): The ultimate reason for any ascetical effort is the union we have with Christ in His saving death and resurrection. We live in the light of Christ's death on the cross which freed us from the rule of sin and death. As the priest prays when beginning the prothesis at the Divine Liturgy, "You redeemed us from the curse of the Law by Your precious blood."

We are united as members of one body in Christ – "*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?*" (v. 15): When our bodies are immersed in the water of baptism we are organically united to Christ. We do not simply admire Him as an inspired teacher; in the Eucharist we are physically one with Him. Therefore our bodies have as important a role in worship as our hearts and minds. Like bows and prostrations, fasting is a form of physically glorifying God.

We have received the Holy Spirit – Our baptism was sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in chrismation, making us Spirit-bearers: "*Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God?*" (v. 19). Our bodies are sanctified vessels set apart for the worship of God as much as any holy chalice.

Worship God by the way you use your body – "... *therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's*" (v. 20): Our liturgical life includes a number of ways in which we glorify God in our bodies. Among the ways we can do so in our daily life are by striving to lessen the power which food and drink, sexuality or entertainment have over us by regularly fasting on Wednesday and Friday, recalling Christ's betrayal and His passion, and during the Church's fasting seasons, particularly the Great Fast.

With St. Paul, we urge all to leave the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. We all are sinners in need of *metanoia* (repentance) in order to be rid of sin, the passions, and everything that enslaves us with regard to food and drink, clothing, pleasure, jealousy, anger, hatred, pride, obstinacy, calumny, amusements, and superficiality. He who commits sin is not free, but is the slave of sin. Great Lent is a time of purity, holiness, prayer, and liberation from sin, evil and corruption: a time very pleasing to God, a time of salvation, and a spiritual springtime preparing us to shine with the light of the glorious Resurrection. We exhort the faithful to take on the discipline of fasting and abstinence that our fathers and ancestors always practiced. My brothers and sisters, "repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" -*Bishop Nicholas Samra*

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Betty Bilodeau, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Danielle Caron, Meghan Connors, Lucy Corriveau, Julie Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Nicholas Daniak, Lynn Dargie, Marie Dargie, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Anne Gallagher, Loretto Gauvin, Edmond George, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Cameron Kosinski, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, James McCloskey, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Virginia Pichette, Jean Poleatewich, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Robert Siwik, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.



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