

**Russian Orthodox Church of the
Resurrection of Christ**

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Schedule for the Week of February 24 – Mar 1, 2008

Sunday Feb 24	Sunday of the Prodigal Son Неделя о блудном сыне
Saturday Mar 1	5:15 PM Panihida / Родительская Субб. 5:30 PM Vigil
Sunday Mar 2	Meatfare Sunday Мясопустная, о страшном суде 8:30 AM Nocturns, Confessions 9:00 AM Liturgy / Литургия

*И цветы, и шмели, и трава, и колосья,
И лазурь, и полуденный зной...
Срок настанет – Господь сына блудного спросит:
«Был ли счастлив ты в жизни земной?»*

*И забуду я все – вспомню только вот эти
Полевые пути меж колосьев и трав –
И от сладостных слез не успею ответить,
К милосердным коленам припав.*

Иван Бунин

**Притча о Блудном Сыне
(беседа на Лк. 15,11-32)**

Эта притча ... лежит в самой сердцевине христианской духовности и нашей жизни во Христе, в ней человек изображен в тот самый момент, когда он отворачивается от Бога и оставляет Его, чтобы следовать собственным путем в «землю чуждую», где надеется найти полноту, преизбыток жизни. ...Прежде всего, это вовсе не притча об отдельном грехе. В ней раскрывается сама природа греха во всей его разрушительной силе. У человека было два сына. Младший требует от отца свою долю наследства немедленно. Мы так привыкли к сдержанности, с какой Евангелие рисует эту сцену, что читаем ее спокойно, словно это просто начало рассказа. А вместе с тем, если на минуту остановиться и задуматься, что означают эти слова, нас поразит ужас. Простые слова: Отче, дай мне... означают: «Отец, дай мне сейчас то, что все равно достанется мне после твоей смерти. Я хочу жить своей жизнью, а ты стоишь на моем пути. ...Мне нужна свобода и все плоды твоей жизни и трудов. Умри и дай мне жить!» Разве это не самая сущность греха? Не обращаемся ли мы к Богу так же спокойно, как младший сын из евангельской притчи, с той же наивной жестокостью требуя от Бога все, что Он может нам дать: здоровье, физическую крепость, вдохновение, ум, - все, чем мы можем быть и что можем иметь – чтобы унести это прочь и расточить, ни разу не вспомнив о Нем? (Мит. Антоний Сурожский)

Dates to Remember

- Mar 2 Meatfare Sunday / Мясопустная
- Mar 9 Cheesefare / Forgiveness Sunday
Сыропустная / Прощенное Восикр.
Forgiveness Vespers following Liturgy

Mar 10 Beginning of Lent
Monday Начало Великого Поста

Services daily 8 AM and 6:30 PM

Monday – Thursday, Mar 11 – 13,
Ready of Great Canon of St. Andrew of
Crete – 6:30 PM

- Friday Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
Mar 14 Лит. Преждеосвящ. Даров
6:00 PM

Sunday April 27 - Pascha

THE SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

(Father Andrew Phillips)

On this Sunday the Church tells the parable of the Father who had two sons. Like all parables, it has a symbolic meaning. Who is the Father and who are the two sons

The Father represents God the Father, the Father of all mankind. The elder son represents the Jewish people. The elder son represents the Jews, for alone of all people the Jewish people had kept the memory of God, accurately, faithfully conserving the stories of Creation, the story of the Fall of Mankind and the prophecies of the Coming of a Savior, the Messiah. The Jews, the elder son, had remained with the Father

On the other hand, the younger son represents the Gentiles, that is, the pagan world. At the time of Christ, this meant the whole world except for the Jews. Unlike the Jews, the pagans had confused their memories of God the Creator with all sorts of false stories, myths and legends. They had confused the Creator with creation, and instead of worshipping God, they worshipped stones and rivers, the sun and the moon, kings and queens, thinking that they were gods and so making them into idols. The pagans, the younger son, had journeyed into 'a far country' and there 'wasted their substance'. In other words, they had distanced themselves from God, forgotten His Truth, so wasting their spiritual inheritance. As a result, they suffered from 'a mighty famine', in other words, from spiritual hunger, and so ate with swine,' that is, ate with the illusions of the demons. However, they repented and turned back towards the Father, who welcomed them with open arms, running out towards them to embrace them

This parable is in fact a warning to the Jews. We can see this vividly portrayed in the icons of the parable. There we see the Father showing love and forgiveness towards the repentant son, who lies at His feet, begging forgiveness. The elder son, however, is angry, full of bitterness and jealousy.

Perhaps we feel some sympathy with the elder son. After all, he never wasted his substance, he did remain loyal to the Father. The problem is that the elder son's service was a form of slavery, he did not stay with the Father out of love, but out of self-interest, in expectation of a reward. This was not love freely given, but an obligation fulfilled in the hope of the payment of the hireling.

We can compare this with the attitude of the Father. He instantly forgives all that the younger

son, the pagan world, has done and says: 'Let us make merry'. The attitude of the Father is not gloom, but joy. The elder son, on the other hand, is full of gloom and cannot bring himself to be joyful or express love, because he has no love for his brother. The Father says: 'All that I have is thine', and shares everything. The elder son wishes to share nothing, for he is locked up in pride and self-love. Indeed, the elder son does not want to share in all that the Father has. Yes, he wants to share in His wealth and His property, but he does not want to share in what the Father has above all else - in His merciful compassion and love.

Thus we are reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul, that though we may have all qualities, if we do not have love, then we are nothing. In this way, this parable has a meaning for us. We may have great wealth, but if we have no love, then all our wealth is worthless and our lives are futile and purposeless. We may have a wonderful job, but if we do not use it to create something positive, then it only satisfies our own vanity and has no real significance. We may have a beautiful house or car, but if we use them only to flaunt our riches and feed our selfishness, then they serve no purpose. Where there is no love, there is only the emptiness of futile vanity and the gloom of selfish pride

Therefore, let us too make merry, for Christ the King of Love makes joy even out of the most difficult problems and all we prodigals are able to return at any moment to the Father and be embraced by His love.

Rejoice, God is with us.!

The first stage of grief resembles the return of the prodigal son. For this reason it fills the mourner with dejection and leads him to employ these very words, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son' (Luke 15:21). But the consummation of grief resembles the moment when the heavenly Father runs out to meet him and embraces him. And when the son finds himself accepted with such inexpressible compassion and on account of it is filled with great joy and boldness, he receives the Father's embrace and embraces Him in return. Then, entering into the Father's house, he shares together in the feast of divine felicity.

Let us, then, in blessed poverty also fall down and weep before the Lord our God, so that we may wash away our former sins, make ourselves impervious to evil, and, receiving the blessings and solace of the Comforter, may glorify Him and the unoriginate Father and the Only-begotten Son, now and always and throughout the ages. Amen." (St. Gregory Palamas)