

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH
130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI AVENUE * SCRANTON, PA 18504

Contact office: 570.343.6092 † 570.468.4854
stjosephscranton@gmail.com ♦ www.melkitescranton.org

PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron.
Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buck-
ley. Chris Carey. John Coury. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Car-
ol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara
Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Jos. Ed. Bartnicki.
Sue Solsman. SusVieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey.

MEMORY ETERNAL: *Rev. Char. Aboody.*Rev. Mich. Jol-
ly.*Rev. Jos. Francavilla.*Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk*Rev. Frank
Milienewicz*Dn. John Karam.*Marie Abda.*Charlotte &
James Abda.*Marie Abda.*Nancy Abda.*Janice Assaf.*
Thalia Assaf*Paul Bauman.*A.J. Bolus. *Jos. Bolus. *Gary
Bolos.*Nich. Cianci.*Patricia Cimakosky.*Ann Coury.*
Mary Sue Betress.*Cecilia Davidson*Margt. Dillenburg*Eric
Jolly.*Jos. King *Blakely Landell. *Elaine Manuele.*Frank
Milewski, Sr.*Frank Milewski, Jr.*Mary L.Mooty.*Karen
Murray.*Marie Patchoski.*Anth. Simon.*Bill Simon.*Ruth
Sirgany. *Mary A. Walsh.*Gen. Zaydon

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Tuesday :

Compline 0:00 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; following
any service; or by appointment.

HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



Icon of the Publican and Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14)

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

05 FEBRUARY 2023 ♦ TONE 02 EOTHINON 02 † SUNDAY OF PRODIGAL SON/2ND SUNDAY TRIODION

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <u>GREAT DOXOLOGY:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 17</i> |
| <u>ANTIPHON:</u> <i>Presentation</i> | |
| FIRST: | <i>Liturgy Book p. 29</i> |
| SECOND: | <i>Liturgy Book p. 32</i> |
| THIRD: <i>Beatitudes</i> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 125</i> |
| <u>ENTRANCE HYMN:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 38</i> |
| <u>APOLYTIKIA:</u> | |
| <i>Resurrection (Tone 2)</i> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 40</i> |
| <i>Encounter</i> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 157</i> |
| <i>St. Joseph</i> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 47</i> |
| <u>KONTAKION:</u> <i>Presentation of the Lord</i> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 158</i> |
| <i>Prodigal Son</i> | <i>Handout</i> |
| <u>TRISAGION:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 50</i> |
| <u>PROKIMENON:</u> | <i>Liturgy Book p. 55</i> |
| <u>EPISTLE:</u> | <i>1 Corinthians 6:12-20</i> |
| <i>Brethren</i> , all things are lawful for me, but not all things are fitting. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anyone. Food is for the belly, and the belly for food, but God will destroy both the one and the other. Now, the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. For God has 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 the members of a prostitute? By no means! Or do you not know that one who cleaves tot a prostitute becomes one body with her? <i>For the two</i> , it is said, <i>shall be one flesh</i> (Gn.2 : 24). But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee immortality. Every sin a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God therefore in your body and in your soul which both are God’s. | |
| <u>ALLELUIA:</u> | <i>Tone 2</i> |

O God, you granted me retribution and make peoples subject to me
and saved me from my raging enemies.

Therefore I will proclaim you, O Lord, among the nations, and I will sing praise to your name.

GOSPEL:
St. Luke 15:11-32
The Lord told this parable: “A man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.’ And he divided his possessions between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered up all his wealth and traveled to a far country; and there he squandered his fortune in loose living. And after he had spent all, there came a severe famine over that country, and he began to suffer from it. And he went and joined one of the local landowners, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. And he longed to fill himself with the pods the pigs were eating, but no one offered to give them to him. But when he had come to his senses, he said, ‘How many hired men in my father’s house have bread in abundance, while I am perishing with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”’ And he got up and went to his father. But while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heav-en and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the Father said to his servants,

took place. It likely began in the era of St Constantine the Great who sponsored the development of Jerusalem as a Christian site. Sermons on this Feast by the bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407) have come down to us.

Egeria, the Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in 381-384, wrote about witnessing this feast: “The fortieth day after the Epiphany is undoubtedly celebrated here with the very highest honor, for on that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Anastasis, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter. All the priests, and after them the bishop, preach, always taking for their subject that part of the Gospel where Joseph and Mary brought the Lord into the Temple on the fortieth day, and Simeon and Anna the prophet-ess, the daughter of Phanuel, saw Him, treating of the words which they spoke when they saw the Lord, and of that offering which His parents made. When everything that is customary has been done in order, the sacrament is celebrated, and the dismissal takes place.”

The feast soon spread to Antioch and then, to Constantinople and the whole empire. It became particularly important in Constantinople in the sixth century when a plague threatened the city. After a solemn procession on this feast the plague ceased.

When this feast was instituted, the birth of Christ and His baptism at the Jordan were ob-served on the same day, January 6 (as the Armenian Church still does today). The Hypapante was then kept on February 14. When the separate feast of the Nativity on December 25 became common, the Hypapante was moved accordingly.

Light to the Gentiles

In the Western Church candles are blessed on this feast and a candlelight procession held in honor of the “Light to enlighten the Gentiles.” This practice actually began in Jerusalem, as Egeria attests.

When the feast was instituted in Constantinople the procession was introduced there as well. Today some Slavic Churches bless candles on this day but the procession has disappeared from this feast in the Byzantine Churches.

From a Homily of Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 636 AD)

In honor of the divine mystery that we celebrate today, let us all hasten to meet Christ. Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light.

Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the One who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of His eternal light. Our candles also show how bright out souls should be when we go to meet Christ.

The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the True Light in her arms and brought Him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the True Light as we hasten to meet Him.

The Light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Day-spring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the Light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through Him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radi-ant by this Light.

Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness.

COME TO EXPEL THE DARKNESS

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE DOWN your Christmas tree? In our society some people throw theirs out on December 26! In the Christian East, however, many wait until today, the feast of the Infant Christ's Encounter (*Hypapante*) with His people in the persons of Simeon and Anna. This feast celebrates the event recorded in St Luke's Gospel: "*Now when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*" (Lk 2:22). While there they meet Simeon and Anna who recognize God's decisive presence in this Child. Through them Christ encounters for the first time those who were awaiting the Messiah's coming.

The passage brings several questions to mind:

1 –What is "her purification"?

Jewish custom at the birth of a child was that a mother *must be purified* after 40 days. According to the Torah, "*The LORD said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites: "A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over"'*" (Lev 12:1-4).

In Jewish law any participation in the intimate experiences of life and death, including the spilling of blood – the carrier of life – makes a person ritually unclean, that is, incapable of performing ceremonial act such as temple worship. Ceremonial uncleanness is not a question of moral impurity but a recognition that the worship of God transcends the earth and its ways. Someone touched by childbirth or death required purification in specified ways.

2 – Why is a child "presented to the Lord"?

Again according to the Torah, "*Every firstborn of man among your sons, you shall redeem*" (Ex 13:13). The first of everything (crops, animals, etc.) was to be offered to God in sacrifice: an acknowledgement that it comes from Him and is His. Children could be "redeemed" by offering a gift to the temple in exchange for the child. Orthodox Jews still observe this rite today, exchanging five silver shekels (or their equivalent in local currency) for the child.

3 – Why do we stress "the Encounter"?

The encounter with Simeon and Anna takes us beyond the practices of the Torah to the mystery of God's saving plan. As St. Luke tells it, "*it had been revealed to him [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*" (Lk 2:26). He takes the Christ child in his arms and prays what we call the Cantic of Simeon: "*Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel*" (Lk 2:29-32). We repeat this cantic at the end of every day (vespers) and on completing the Divine Liturgy, as well as when any child is presented in church forty days after its birth.

Simeon is then joined by Anna who thanks God that she has seen this moment "*and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem*" (Lk 2:38).

This Encounter celebrated the coming of the One for whom the Jews longed, the Messiah, and recognized that the Gentiles too would be enlightened through Him.

Our Celebration of This Feast

As might be expected, this feast originated in Jerusalem where the event it remembers

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

'Fetch quickly the best robe and put it on him, and give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet; and bring out the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and has come to life 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 close to the house, he heard music and dancing. And calling one of the servants he asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe.' But he was angered and would not go in. His father, therefore, came out and began to beg him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Look, these many years I have been serving you, and have never disobeyed any of your orders; and yet, you have never given me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours comes, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes; you have killed for him the fattened calf!' But he said to him, 'Son you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours; but we were bound to make merry and rejoice, for this your brother was dead, and has come to life; he was lost and is found.'"

HIRMOS:

Liturgy Book p. 77/164

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 5th

PRODIGAL SON SUNDAY

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Potluck Brunch

Religious Education

Saturday, February 11th

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 12th

MEAT-FARE SUNDAY

Last week for Easting Flesh Products

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 18th

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 19th

CHEESE-FARE SUNDAY

Last week for eating Dairy products

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Parish Potluck & Ice-cream Social

Forgiveness Vespers

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

4 February: Deceased Members of the Shehahdi & Barron Families from Marie Barron

5 February: Special Intention Daniel Offutt
11 February: Special Intention of Daniel Offutt

12 February: Thalys Assaf from St. Joseph Ladies Society

LOOKING FOR THE HOME

EVERY YEAR ON THIS SECOND SUNDAY of the Triodion we hear the Lord’s story which we call the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In fact there are three important characters in this parable, recorded in Luke 15: the Prodigal, the loving Father and the older brother. Some commentators feel that the older brother is the most important figure in the story because of the occasion on which the Lord told this parable. To find this context we must look at the first verses of the chapter which precede it, which are not read this Sunday:

“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So He told them this parable...” (Lk 15:1-3).

The Lord then tells not one but three parables about the joy over a repentant sinner: the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin and the story of the Prodigal. The Lord’s aim in each of them is to confront the self-righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes who saw themselves as properly observant Jews in contrast to those who collaborated with the Roman occupiers (the tax collectors) or those who ignored the precepts of the Law (the sinners). Thus each of the characters in the parable represents one of figures in the above three verses. We have the Rebel son, who represents the sinners, the Conformist son, who embodies the respect for the Law and tradition which characterizes the scribes and Pharisees, and the welcoming Father who is Christ Himself. The Rebel is truly a prodigal, disrespecting his father by demanding what would come to him at his father’s death – in effect, saying “I wish you were dead.” As we know, he goes off and eventually loses everything. Finally he decides to return to his father, who receives him with love.

The Second Brother

The focus of the tale now turns to the Conformist brother who has done everything by the book but is every bit as lost as his brother ever was. As Fr Henri Nouwen tells us in his reflection, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, (1992, p. 71): “Outwardly the elder son was faultless. But when he confronted his father’s joy at the return of his younger brother, a dark power erupts in him and boils to the surface. Suddenly there becomes glaringly visible a resentful, proud, unkind selfish person, one that had remained deeply hidden.”

Without realizing it, the older brother has gone off to a “strange land” just like the Rebel. He was no longer the faithful son of his father everyone thought he was. As his father’s eldest son, his place would be at the center of the festive gathering, seeing that everyone was welcomed and cared for. Hospitality was – and remains to this day – one of the most important activities in a Middle Eastern household. Refusing to take part made the Conformist the exact opposite of what he appeared to be: the faithful image of his father. He had no cause to look down on his brother; he too had fallen victim to “the tyranny of the passions” (St. Maximos the Confessor) and publicly insulted his father by his actions. He not only refused to stand at his father’s side before the guests; he even caused his father to leave them in order to deal with his son’s feelings.

Like the Pharisee in last week’s Gospel parable, the Conformist brother represents the scribes and Pharisees who are outwardly faultless. They observe all the precepts of the Law but look down on those who do not. The Lord Jesus does not tell them to ignore the Law, but to complete it with mercy and compassion. Elsewhere we find Him berating the Pharisees for this very reason: *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others”* (Mt 23:23).

Are We Scribes and Pharisees?

The brothers in this parable represent two types found in our society today. There are inde-

pendent individualists who are determined to “fulfill themselves,” to make their own way according to their own lights. There are also people who conform to the expectations of their family or society, seeking to earn the approval of their peers or the powers-that-be.

In the Church there are always people who equate being a good Christian with doing all the “right” things. Consciously or unconsciously, they use their acts of external righteousness to mask their unrighteous hearts. In the words of Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, Cyprus (the “Father Maximos” of *The Mountain of Silence*), “...we went to the shrines, we venerated, we took out our money and placed it in a box, we left our candles, our oil, our prayers, our names, our prosphoron, everything... But our hearts did not change at all. Having completed our duties, we are the same as we were before. We are ready to attack one another, ready to testify against each other, ready to be sour just as we were before. Our hearts do not change... I confess to you from my own experience that I have not seen worse enemies of the Church than ‘religious’ people” (from *Therapy for the Sickness of Pharasaism*). As the Lord said, “these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.”

What Happens Next?

The parable ends without an ending. We are not told how the older brother responded to his father because the goal of the parable is that we examine what we would do. St John Chrysostom said, “Almost any noble person can weep with those who weep but very few of us can rejoice with those who rejoice.” Very few of us can really rejoice in the salvation of another... But how happy is the man who can rejoice in the salvation of his brother, who rejoices over his brother’s repentance more than his own well-being.”

The approaching Great Fast gives us an opportunity to care for the salvation of others. People attend the Liturgy or Lenten services who are not worshippers during the rest of the year. Do we invite our less fervent fellow-parishioners to worship with us during this season? Do we welcome them as returning brethren with love? Or do we say things like, “Oh, look who’s back – so you remembered how to get here!” A better approach might begin by reflecting on the attitude of the loving Father in today’s parable, an icon of Christ Himself.

St. Cyril of Alexandria on the Parable

“What is the object of this parable? Let us examine the occasion which led to it; in this way we shall learn the truth. The blessed Luke said a little before concerning Christ, the Savior of us all, ‘Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’” Since the Pharisees and scribes were making an outcry on account of His gentleness and love for mankind, wickedly and impiously blaming Him for receiving and teaching people whose lives were impure, Christ set before them this present parable to show them clearly that the God of all requires even the person who is thoroughly steadfast and firm, who knows how to live in a holy manner, and has attained the highest praise for his sober conduct to be earnest in following His will, that when any are called to repentance – even if they are the most blameworthy – he must rejoice and not give way to a loveless irritation on their account.”

.... *“For sometimes people are indignant at this, and even say, ‘This man, who has been guilty of such and such actions... has been inscribed among the sons of God, and honored with the glory of the saints!’ Such complaints come from an empty narrowness of mind, not conforming to the purpose of the universal Father. For He greatly rejoices when He sees those who were lost obtaining salvation, and raises them up again to that which they were in the beginning, giving them the garment of freedom...”*

“It is our duty, therefore, to conform ourselves to that which God wills: for He heals those who are sick... He seeks those who were lost; He raises as from the dead those who had suffered spiritual death. Let us also rejoice and, together with the holy angels, praise Him who is good, and the Lover of mankind.”