

*We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.*



# ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

## OCA – Diocese of New York & New Jersey

The Most Reverend Michael, Archbishop of NY & the Diocese of NY/NJ

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Temporary Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson    Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Dean Inferrera

## HYMNS OF THE DAY

### Resurrectional Troparion in Tone 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

### Troparion for The Meeting of our Lord in the Temple in Tone 1

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace! From thee shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those who sat in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder, thou didst accept in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who grants us the Resurrection!

### Kontakion from the Lenten Triodion in Tone 3

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father; and among sinners I have scattered the riches which Thou gavest me. And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal: “I have sinned before Thee, O merciful Father; receive me as a penitent, and make me as one of Thy hired servants!”

### Kontakion for The Meeting of our Lord in the Temple in Tone 1

By Thy Nativity Thou didst sanctify the Virgin’s womb and didst bless Simeon’s hands, O Christ God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

### *Prayer Requests*

#### *For Health of:*

**Katharyn Salcedo**, on her birthday, offered by her father, Sub-Deacon Vlashi.

**Jennifer Inferrera**, on her birthday, offered by the Inferrera family.

**Billy Kuzemchak**, offered by the Kuzemchak family.

#### *In Memory of:*

**Joseph Sheehan**, father of Maribeth, offered by the Romanofsky family.

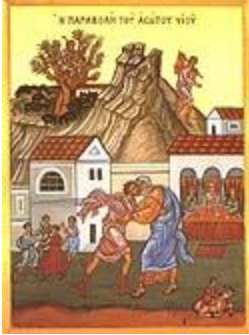
### *Bulletin Sponsors*

**Inferrera Family, Kuzemchak Family & Romanofsky Family**

# SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

FEBRUARY 4, 2018

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



## *Sunday of the Prodigal Son*

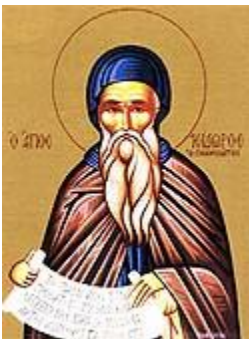
The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to "come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. 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 (Luke 15:11-24).

After the Polyeleion at Matins, we first hear the Lenten hymn "By the Waters of Babylon." It will be sung for the next two Sundays before Lent begins, and it serves to reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel.



## *Afterfeast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple*

The second day of the Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord falls on February 4.



## *Venerable Isidore of Pelusium*

Saint Isidore of Pelusium lived during the fourth-fifth centuries. He was a native of Alexandria, and was raised among pious Christians. He was a relative of Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, and of his successor, Saint Cyril (January 18). While still a youth he quit the world and withdrew to Egypt to Mount Pelusium, which became the site of his monastic efforts.

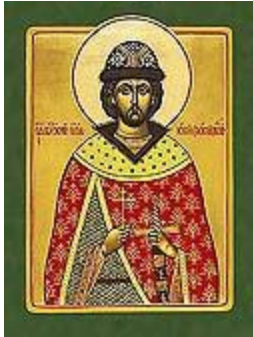
Saint Isidore's spiritual wisdom and strict asceticism, combined with his broad learning and innate knowledge of the human soul, enabled him to win the respect and love of his fellow monks in a short time. They chose him as their head and had him ordained a priest (The earliest sources for his life, however, say nothing of him being an igumen).

Following the example of Saint John Chrysostom, whom he had managed to see and hear during a trip to Constantinople, Saint Isidore devoted himself primarily to Christian preaching, that "practical wisdom" which, in his own words, is both "the foundation of the edifice and the edifice itself", while logic is "its embellishment, and contemplation its crown".

He was a teacher and a willingly provided counsel for anyone who turned to him for spiritual encouragement, whether it was a simple man, a dignitary, a bishop, the Patriarch of Alexandria, or even the emperor. He left behind about 10,000 letters, of which 2,090 have survived. A large portion of these letters reveal profound theological thought and contain morally edifying interpretations of Holy Scripture. Saint Photius (February 6) calls Isidore a model of priestly and ascetical life, and also a master of style.

Saint Isidore's love for Saint John Chrysostom resulted in his support of Saint John when he was persecuted by the empress Eudoxia and Archbishop Theophilus. After the death of Saint John, Saint Isidore persuaded Theophilus' successor Saint Cyril to inscribe the name of Saint John Chrysostom into the Church diptychs as a confessor. Through the initiative of Saint Isidore the Third Ecumenical Council was convened at Ephesus (431), at which the false teaching of Nestorius concerning the person of Jesus Christ was condemned.

Saint Isidore lived into old age and died around the year 436. The Church historian Evagrius (sixth century) writes of Saint Isidore, "his life seemed to everyone the life of an angel upon the earth." Another historian, Nicephorus Callistus (ninth century), praises Saint Isidore thus: "He was a vital and inspired pillar of monastic rules and divine vision, and as such he presented a very lofty image of most fervent example and spiritual teaching."



### ***Right-believing George the Great Prince of Vladimir***

Holy Great Prince George was a son of Great Prince Vsevolod, nicknamed "Big Nest." He was born in the year 1189, and he assumed the great princely throne of Vladimir in 1212. He was distinguished for his military valor and his piety. In the year 1237 the Tatar (Mongol) Horde of Batu descended upon the Russian land. Saint George was compelled to leave the capital city in charge of his sons, and went north to meet up with the other princes.

On March 4, 1238 the Battle at the River Sita was fought, in which the Tatars destroyed the small but valiant company of the Great Prince. The saint himself fell in this fight, and Bishop Cyril buried his body at the Rostov cathedral. Two years later, it was transferred to Vladimir's Dormition cathedral with great solemnity.

The Church glorification of the saint occurred in 1645.



### ***Venerable Cyril the Abbot and Wonderworker of Novoezersk, Novgorod***

Saint Cyril of New Lake was born into a pious family. The Lord marked him as one of the chosen even before he was born. Cyril's mother was praying in church during the Divine Liturgy, and the infant in her womb cried out, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth!"

From the time of his childhood the saint was fond of solitude and prayer, and he dreamt of monastic life. At fifteen years of age Cyril secretly left his parental home, intending to enter the Pskov Caves monastery. He did not know the way to the monastery, and took nothing from home for the journey. He went his way, putting all his trust in the Lord and His All-Pure Mother. Twenty versts from the city the youth met a magnificent monastic Elder, who led him to the monastery. As he left, he blessed him with the words, "May God bless you, my child, and grant you the angelic schema, and may you be a chosen vessel of the Divine Spirit." Having said this, the Elder became invisible. The boy realized that this had been a messenger from God, and he gave thanks to the Lord.

The igumen Saint Cornelius (February 20) saw with his clairvoyant eye the grace manifest in the young man. He provided him with much guidance and tonsured him into the monastic schema with the name Cyril. The fifteen-year-old monk astonished the brethren with his efforts. He emaciated the flesh through fasting and prayer, and zealously fulfilled obediences. Day and night he was ready to study the Word of God. Even then he thought to end his days in solitude in the wilderness.

The boy's parents mourned him as one dead, but once an Elder of the monastery of Saint Cornelius came to them and told them about their son and his life at the monastery. The joyful news confirmed in Cyril's mother her love for God. She spoke with her husband about leaving to the monastery her portion of the inheritance, then left the world and became a nun with the name Elena (Helen). She died in peace a short time later.

The saint's father came to the monastery, and Igumen Cornelius told Cyril to meet with him. The saint was troubled, but not daring to disobey the igumen, he fell down at his father's feet, imploring forgiveness for secretly leaving home. The father forgave his son, and he himself remained at the monastery. Saint Cornelius tonsured him into monasticism with the name Barsanuphius, and gave him to his son for instruction.

Three years later, he peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His son continued to toil more fervently for the Lord, disdaining his own will, and in was obedient not only to the igumen, but also to the brethren. He thirsted to go about all the Russian land, venerating its holy shrines and to find for himself a wilderness place for a life of silence.

With the blessing of Saint Cornelius, Saint Cyril left the monastery in which he had grown strong spiritually, and he went to the coastal regions, roaming through the forests and the wild places, eating tree roots and berries. The saint spent about twenty years in this difficult exploit of wanderer, and he went to the outskirts of Moscow, Novgorod and Pskov, but he never entered any house nor did he accept alms. He wandered about during the day, and spent his nights at prayer on church porches, and he attended the church services.

Once while at prayer, Saint Cyril saw a heavenly light indicating the direction where he should found a monastery. He set off on his way at once, and having reached the Tikhvin monastery, he spent three days and three nights there in ceaseless prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos. The Mother of God appeared to him in a dream.

Showing Her approval of him, She said, “My servant Cyril, pleaser of the Most Holy Trinity, go to the Eastern region of White Lake, and the Lord My Son will show you the place of rest for your old age.”

The saint proceeded to White Lake, weeping copious tears at the miraculous vision. On the lake he saw a small island, from which a pillar of fire rose up to the sky. There, beneath a centuries old spruce tree, Saint Cyril built a hut, and then set up two cells: one for himself, the other for future brethren. The hermit also constructed two small churches, one in honor of the Resurrection of Christ and the other in honor of the Mother of God Hodigitria. He underwent many temptations from invisible enemies, and from idlers roving about, but he overcame everything by brave endurance and constant prayer. News of his holy life spread everywhere, and brethren gathered around him.

There were many instances of healing through his prayers, and the Lord also granted His saint the gift of foresight. Sensing his impending end, Saint Cyril summoned the brethren. With tears of humility the saint instructed his spiritual children one last time, until his voice gave out. For a long time then he was silent, but suddenly he cried out with loud sobbing, “I go to the Lord into life eternal, but I entrust you to God the Word and His Grace, bestowing an inheritance and sanctification upon all. May it help you. But I beseech you, do not become lax in fasting and prayers, guard yourself from the snares of the Enemy, and the Lord in His ineffable mercy will not condemn your humility.”

Having said this, the saint gave a final kiss to the brethren, received the Holy Mysteries, signed himself with the Sign of the Cross, and with the words “Glory to God for everything!” he gave up his pure soul to the Lord on February 4, 1532.

### ***Venerable Abraham and Coprius of Pechenga, Vologda***

Saints Abraham and Coprius of Pechenga in 1492 founded the Savior wilderness monastery at the River Pechenga, in Gryazovetsk district, 21 versts from Vologda. It required great work to bring in the necessities to the wilderness spot, in order to build the monastery and set everything in proper order. The blessed toilers did not spare themselves, zealously living in asceticism until their death.

### ***Martyr Jadorus***

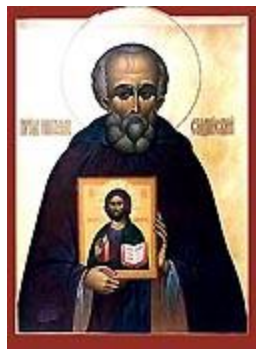
Saint Jadorus suffered martyrdom with Saint Isidore (not Isidore of Pelusium) in the reign of Decius (249-251).



### ***Hieromartyr Abramius the Bishop of Arbela in Assyria***

The Hieromartyr Abramius, Bishop of Arbela, suffered during a persecution against Christians in Persia under the emperor Sapor II. When they demanded that the saint renounce Christ and worship the sun, he answered, “How foolish to forsake the Creator and instead worship creatures! Isn’t the sun just a creation of my God?”

After this, they fiercely beat and tortured him. Saint Abramius prayed during torture, echoing the words of the Savior: “Lord, do not count this sin against them, for they know not what they do!” The hieromartyr was beheaded by the sword in the village of Felman.



### ***Venerable Nicholas the Confessor the Abbot of Studion***

Saint Nicholas the Confessor, Ighumen of the Studion Monastery, lived during the ninth century. He was born on the island of Crete in the village of Kedonia into a Christian family. When he was ten, his parents sent him to Constantinople to his uncle, Saint Theophanes (October 11), who was a monk at the Studion monastery. With the approval of Saint Theodore (November 11), the head of the Studion monastery, the boy was enrolled in the monastery school. When he finished school at sixteen years of age, he was tonsured a monk. After several years, he was ordained a priest.

During this time there was a fierce persecution, initiated by the Byzantine emperor Leo the Armenian (813-820), against those who venerated the holy icons. Saint Nicholas and Saint Theodore the Studite were repeatedly locked up in prison, tortured in various ways, and humiliated. However, they zealously continued to defend Orthodoxy.

Under the holy Empress Theodora (February 11), who ruled the realm while her son Michael was still a minor, icon veneration was restored, and a time of relative peace followed. Saint Nicholas returned to the Studite monastery and was chosen its head. But this calm did not last very long.

The Empress Theodora was removed from the throne, and the emperor’s uncle, Bardas, a man who defiled himself by open cohabitation with his son’s wife, came to power. The attempts of Patriarch Ignatius (October 23) to



restrain the impiety of Bardas proved unsuccessful. On the contrary, he was deposed from the patriarchal throne and sent into exile.

Unwilling to witness the triumph of iniquity, Saint Nicholas left Constantinople. He spent seven years at various monasteries. Later on, he returned as a prisoner to the Studite monastery, where he spent two years imprisoned, until the death of the emperor Michael (855-867) and Bardas. When the emperor Basil I the Macedonian (867-886) ascended the throne, Saint Nicholas was set free, and again became igumen on the orders of the emperor. Because of his life as a confessor and ascetic he received from God the gift of healing, which continued even after his repose in the year 868.



### *St. Evagrismos the disciple of St. Shio*

Saint Evagrismos was born to God-fearing and pious parents who read the Holy Scriptures to him from the earliest years of his childhood. When he reached manhood, Evagrismos became ruler of Tsikhedidi.

One day Evagrismos went hunting in the Sarkineti Mountains where Shio of Mgvime had settled. While he was hunting, his companions dispersed in various directions, and he was left alone to survey his surroundings. There he beheld a bird, resembling a dove, on its way to bring food to Fr. Shio, and noted the place where it landed.

The next day he located the hermit's cave dwelling.

Astonished at Fr. Shio's strict asceticism, Saint Evagrismos was filled with holy envy, having a desire to emulate the hermit, and he told him, "God is truly alive. I will not leave you, I will not go back." Saint Shio advised him to be wary of such an impulsive decision, since it would be quite difficult for a man who had grown up in luxury to suddenly begin a new life in the wilderness. But Evagrismos answered him firmly, "Even if it means I must die here with you today, I will not depart from this place."

In order to test his faith, Saint Shio entrusted Evagrismos with his staff and instructed him, saying, "Put my staff in the Mtkvari River; it will part the water and clear a path for you to cross. Secure your home and return to me. On your return when you reach the Mtkvari, use my staff again to clear a path for yourself. If it fails, then continue on your way as before. That would mean that it is not God's will to fulfill your desire."

Evagrismos obediently took Saint Shio's staff and touched it to the water of the Mtkvari. The river parted, and he crossed confidently to the other side.

Having returned to the palace, Evagrismos distributed all his possessions to the poor, secured his home, and set off again to find Fr. Shio. He performed the same miracle on his return: the river parted in two, and the faithful Evagrismos passed through.

Fr. Shio tonsured Evagrismos into the monastic life, and the former ruler settled near the holy father's cave. There he learned to be patient and watchful and how to pray, while acquiring other virtues as fruits of his ascetic labors.

Saint Shio anticipated that the number of monks in the wilderness would multiply, and he built a church for them in a place that God had revealed. The great gifts of the holy fathers were soon made known, and many pilgrims journeyed to the Sarkineti Mountains to receive their blessings. When King Parsman heard, belatedly, that his beloved army chief had been tonsured a monk, he became sorrowful and personally traveled to Saint Shio's wilderness. His hope was to bring Evagrismos back into the world, but the blessed father responded with monastic composure: "O King! Why are you disturbing me, a man born to serve God, by asking me to become like a dog who returns to his own vomit (c.f. Prov. 26:11)?"

The news of Saint Shio, Evagrismos, and the other holy strugglers spread throughout Georgia, and many laymen were inspired to enter the monastic life.

After many years Saint Shio grew old, and he gathered the brotherhood of monks around him. "You must choose one from among you to lead this community. From now on I will labor in the well that I have prepared for my grave," he told them. The brothers were exceedingly sorrowful at having to part with their beloved teacher, and in vain they pleaded with him to remain at the monastery. At last they asked Fr. Shio to appoint a successor, and he chose Evagrismos as the monastery's next abbot.

The humble, gracious Evagrismos objected to this appointment, considering himself unfit to fulfill such a difficult responsibility. He begged Saint Shio to reconsider his decision, but the elder simply responded, "If you consent to our will, you will receive a joyous reward from God: when He returns in His glory, He will repay you for your obedience."

At last Saint Evagrismos accepted his teacher's counsel, and he directed the monastery's activity with the help of God from that day forward.

# GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

## Epistle Reading

### Prokeimenon, Tone 2:

The Lord is my strength and my song. / He is become my salvation. (*Psalm 117:14*)  
vs. The Lord hath chastened me sorely, but He hath not given me over unto death. (*Psalm 117:18*)

### Prokeimenon, Tone 3(*Song of the Theotokos*):

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. (*Lk 1:46-47*)

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## The reading from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians:

**Brethren,** "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. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which belong to God.

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### Alleluia, Tone 2:

May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the Name of the God of Jacob protect thee! (*Psalm 19:2*)  
vs. Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call to Thee! (*Psalm 19:10*)

### Alleluia, Tone 8:

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!  
(*Lk 2:29*)

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## Gospel Reading

### The Reading is from Luke

**The Lord said 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 the 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 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.'"



### *Daily Inspirations by Abbott Tryphon*

#### **A Relationship**

*The God of Christianity is one Who invites us into a relationship*



One of the primary differences between Islam and Christianity has to do with the basic view of the nature of God. Islam teaches total surrender to a god who demands submission. There is no invitation to enter into a relationship, freely, nor is there room for an individual to choose, or not choose, to love his Creator, for the god of the Muslims is far above his creation. In Islam there is no real possibility of having a personal relationship with their god.

By contrast, the God of Christianity is one Who invites us into a relationship that is personal, and like all personal relationships based on love, we are free to choose, or not, to commune with a God Who is, by His very nature, in relationship. Our God is worshiped in Trinity, and this image of the Trinity is the basis of the image of the Church, which is one of mutual love. The God we worship in Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is One God, and our response to the invitation from this One God, is to enter into communion with our nous, our soul, and our body, our own triune nature.

There is no force behind this invitation, for we are free to choose, or not, just as any relationship based on love allows both parties to be free to choose, or not. Our obedience is a religious act that must be free, and it must be based on love.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught using parables, precisely because he was inviting us to freely choose to follow him, and to keep the commandments. He showed us the way to eternal life, not by giving commands as the Son of God, but by being a loving teacher Whose wisdom was imparted in a way that left the choice up to us. His Apostle Peter demonstrated this same style of teaching when he told his fellow disciples that he was going fishing. Peter didn't say they were going fishing, but only that he was going fishing, thus leaving his friends with a choice. They were free to go fishing, or not.

Muhammad, by contrast, gave his followers specific laws that must be followed, including total submission to god, and should they ever renounce Islam, they would face a penalty of death. This lack of freedom in the teachings of Muhammad has its roots in his failure to teach about the notion of person.

In Christ we have the image of the Pantocrator, a fresco that is traditionally the primary focus in the dome of an Orthodox temple. The Pantocrator is He Who holds all things in His hands, through His love and forbearance. This God of Christianity does not punish, He educates, just as Christ educated his disciples through the use of parables.

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### *Orthodox Quote of the Day*

Those without a good disposition will not be enlightened and will be misled during the years of apostasy. For whoever does not have divine Grace, does not have spiritual clarity, just like the devil.

**Elder Paisios of Mount Athos**  
**Spiritual Counsels Vol. II Spiritual Awakening 199**

# PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

[The Annual Parish Meeting of the parishioners is scheduled today for Sunday February 4th, after coffee hour.](#) All members of the parish are invited to attend this important meeting.

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

### Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>

9:30 am: No Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom  
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K -  
Grade 3

### Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm: Vespers

### Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>

9:30 am: Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom  
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K -  
Grade 3

### Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm: Vespers

### Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>

9:30 am: Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom  
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K -  
Grade 3

### Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Request & Bulletin Sponsor:** Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

**Memorial Candles:** Candles can be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

**Private Confessions:** Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times.

**General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

**Receiving Holy Communion:** Holy Communion is offered to those baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the reception of the Sacrament by prayer and fasting. Blessed Bread is available for all our visitors at the very end of the Divine Liturgy.

**Pannikhida Service:** The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

**Special Announcements** for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail: [OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com](mailto:OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com)

**The Living Clean Group** of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

**The Grey Book Step Meeting Group** of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.





## Daily Reflection The Meeting of the Lord



*“Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And inspired by the Spirit (ἐν τῷ πνεύματι, in the Spirit) he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel.’” (Lk 2: 25-32)*

On the great feast of The Meeting (Ὑπαπαντή) of our Lord, we celebrate the encounter, or “meeting,” of two sides: 1. Humanity, in the person of Simeon, and 2. Divinity, in the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. Both sides “are brought” to the meeting-place, the temple, by and in “obedience” (from “ob” + “audire,” meaning, “to listen in”) to God’s voice, expressed in His Spirit and His law.

In our many “meetings” or encounters with Christ, particularly in the mystery of the Eucharist, we also encounter this mystery, of both human and divine “obedience.” We, from our human side, “lift up our hearts” and open them up to “listen in” to God’s grace, handing ourselves over to be transfigured in a special “meeting,” or Holy Communion, with the Lord. And He, on His part, “listens in” to our prayer, to the prayer of the Church, and comes to meet us, again and again, by His Spirit. Thank You, Lord, for coming into our “temple” to meet us, again and again, as a light for revelation to us Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel!

"Do not fear the conflict, do not flee it, where there is no struggle, there is no virtue, where faith and love are not tempted, it is not possible to be sure whether they are really present. They are proved and revealed in adversity."

- *St John Chrysostom* -

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