

Return from Exile

Excerpt from Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

On the third Sunday of preparation for Lent, we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11–32). Together with the hymns on this day, the parable reveals to us the time of repentance as man's *return from exile*. The prodigal son, we are told, went to a far country and there spent all that he had. A far country! It is this unique definition of our human condition that we must assume and make ours as we begin our approach to God. A man who has never had that experience, be it only very briefly, who has never felt that he is exiled from God and from real life, will never understand what Christianity is about. And the one who is perfectly "at home" in this world and its life, who has never been wounded by the nostalgic desire for another Reality, will not understand what is repentance.

Repentance is often simply identified as a cool and "objective" enumeration of sins and transgressions, as the act of "pleading guilty" to a legal indictment. Confession and absolution are seen as being of a juridical nature. But something very essential is overlooked-- without which neither confession nor absolution have any real meaning or power. This "something" is precisely the feeling of *alienation from God*, from the joy of communion with Him, from the real life as created and given by God. It is easy indeed to confess that I have not fasted on prescribed days, or missed my prayers, or become angry. It is quite a different thing, however, to realize suddenly that I have defiled and lost my spiritual beauty, that I am far away from my real home, my real life, and that something precious and pure and beautiful has been hopelessly broken in the very texture of my existence. Yet this, and only this, is repentance, and therefore it is also a deep desire *to return*, to go back, to recover that lost home....

To Our Visitors:

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Just a reminder, however: the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a manifestation of the *unity of the Body of Christ*. As such, only those who are members in spiritual good standing of the Orthodox Church – and who have prepared themselves for the Sacrament – may partake of the Holy Chalice. However, *everyone* is welcome to come up with our people at the end of the service to receive blessed bread.

Please be sure to join us at Coffee Hour following Services.

Ss Constantine & Helen

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Pacific



February 28, 2016

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

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Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Commemoration of: Basil the Confessor; Kyranna, New Martyr of Thessaloniki; John Cassian the Confessor

Apolytikia - Entrance Hymns

Angelike thinamis (Hymn of the Day) Tone 6

Tu Stavru Su (Hymn of the Church) Tone 8

Having seen in the sky the form of Your Cross and, like Paul, having received his calling not from men, Your apostle among Kings, Lord, placed his reigning city in Your hand, which forever you guard in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, for You alone love mankind.

Kontakion

Tis patroas doxis Sou Tone 3

*I revolted senselessly * out of Your fatherly glory; * I have squandered sinfully * all of the riches You gave me. * Hence to You, using the Prodigal's words, I cry out, * I have sinned before You, merciful loving Father. * O receive me in repentance, * I pray, and treat me * as one of Your hired hands.*

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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.

Gospel Reading

Luke 15:11-32

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.'"

This Week

Today, 2/28– Sunday of the Prodigal Son; Adult Religious Education: A Series on Keeping the Faith with Dr. Arakaki 12 to 12:45 p.m. in the Bookstore; Fr. Alexander en route to Metropolis Clergy-Laity and Clergy Retreat today.

Monday thru Friday, 2/29 to 3/4– Fr. Alexander off Island

Tuesday, 3/4- Moms and the Orthodox Family 10 to 12 p.m.;

Saturday, 3/5– Saturday of Souls: Orthros 8:30 a.m., Liturgy 9:30 a.m., followed by Memorials. Commemoration Forms are available in the Narthex.

Sunday, 3/6– Meat-Fare/Judgment Sunday; Adult Religious Education: "Putting Others First" 12 to 12:45 p.m. in the Bookstore

- ✘ **Food and Pastries for Sale**– Philoptochos has items available for purchase. Please see details posted on the kitchen door as you reach the top of the social hall stairs.
- ✘ **Moms and the Orthodox Family**- Moms and Grandmothers are welcome to join us for fellowship every Tuesday, 10 a.m. to Noon, unless services are scheduled. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to discuss matters of faith along with challenges and dynamics faced in parenting.

"Remember, never to fear the power of evil more than your trust in the power and love of God."

~Hermas, one of the Seventy