

Do not be afraid. If the Lord is calling you to the ordained or consecrated life, do not be afraid. Jesus calls and will give you the grace to respond wholeheartedly. If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, contact Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych.



PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

The **Byzantine Catholic Serra Club of Pittsburgh** is an organization that fosters and promotes priesthood and religious vocations in the Byzantine Catholic Church. They also support Seminarians, Priests and Religious Sisters in their sacred ministry. The Byzantine Serra Club meets monthly. If you would like to join, call William Kress 412-761-1499 or email kb.kress@gmail.com
Join the Serrans in their work to ensure the future of our Church.

THIS WEEK'S USHER TEAM - Team A

OUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH, FEBRUARY 2, 2020:

SUNDAY OFFERING	\$ 668.00
LOOSE CASH	3.00
CANDLES	54.00
MONTHLY	64.00
BCW	93.00
HOLY DAY	45.00
TOTAL	\$ 927.00

CATHOLIC TEACHING

"HE DESCENDED INTO HELL. ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN"

Jesus "descended into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens." The Apostles' Creed confesses in the same article Christ's descent into hell and his Resurrection from the dead on the third day, because in his Passover it was precisely out of the depths of death that he made life spring forth:

Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

CHRIST DESCENDED INTO HELL

The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection. This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Saviour, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there.

Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell" - Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek - because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the Redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into "Abraham's bosom": "It is precisely these holy souls, who awaited their Saviour in Abraham's bosom, whom Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell." Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.

"The gospel was preached even to the dead." The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfilment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption.

Christ went down into the depths of death so that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." Jesus, "the Author of life", by dying destroyed "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Henceforth the risen Christ holds "the keys of Death and Hades", so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. . . He has gone to search for Adam, our first father, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow Adam in his bonds and Eve, captive with him - He who is both their God and the son of Eve. . . "I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. . . I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, "HE DESCENDED INTO HELL. ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN".)

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member, they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only by the pastor.

VISITATION OF THE SICK

The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, person who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Vitalii is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Vitalii whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: BOOK OF JOB



Author: Unknown; Date Written: After 970 BC

Most scholars suggest that Job was written during or after the reign of Solomon, but that the setting of the story is in the much earlier patriarchal period, about the same time as Abraham. The book of Job is included in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. While Job may have been an historical person, the book's purpose is to deeply meditate on the mystery of suffering.

Job is a poetic book with a dramatic structure. It begins with a bargaining match in heaven between God and Satan. The Lord boasts about Job's righteousness, but Satan claims that Job is self-serving, acting righteous only to reap the benefits of God's blessing. So the Lord allows Satan to take away all of Job's blessings: his wealth, his flocks, even his children. When Job remains faithful to God, Satan returns to the bargaining table and God allows him to afflict Job with a terrible skin disease.

The poetic core of the book begins in ch. 3 where we find Job sitting by himself, complaining to God. Soon his friends come to talk to him and the magnificent dialogue begins (4). Job's friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite counsel him. They argue that Job must have sinned against God to bring such suffering on himself so he ought to simply accept the discipline and repent of his sin. Yet Job maintains his innocence before God. He claims his suffering is not a result of his sins.

While Job does not curse God as his wife suggests, he does struggle with his suffering. He curses the day of his birth (3:3) and he accuses the Lord of being unjust (). He claims that God has treated him unfairly (10:5-7). To give vent to his anger and frustration with God, he even wants to sue God in court for his inappropriate treatment (13:18-19). After the three friends fail to console Job, he sums up his case (29-31) and demands that an arbiter or judge hear his case against God (31:35).

Elihu, Job's young friend, shows up to act as the arbiter (32:11-12). He examines Job's case, but decides in favor of God by rejecting Job's right to bring a suit against him (34:23). Then God himself appears and confronts Job (38). The Lord does not answer Job's accusations and complaints directly. Instead he lifts Job's gaze from his miserable circumstances to God's glory. He illustrates the inscrutable nature of his divine wisdom. Job is silenced (40:4-5). He finally repents of the foolish words he spoke and withdraws his legal suit against God (42:2-6). God's appearance is enough for Job.

The major question Job confronts is why the just person suffers. The author gives us the benefit of the heavenly perspective. We know that God is testing Job's character, but Job's friends are convinced that his sins have brought suffering upon him. Job protests his innocence and insists that wicked people often prosper. However he can't see what God is doing so he angrily complains to God. Yet his suffering is not the direct result of his sin. Rather, his suffering is brought on by his righteousness!

Job is a book of poetry, so it must be understood within the complexities of poetic language. It is important to note when Job is speaking to his friends and when he is talking to God. Though Job's material possessions are restored in the end, the theology of the whole book shows that they are not the substance, but the expression of God's blessing. Jesus later emphasizes this same perspective (Matt 19:29). Jesus also clarifies and agrees with Job's view that sin is not always the cause of personal suffering (John 9:3).

Job is a consoling book in times of suffering. While it does not solve the problem of suffering, it shows us that the complexities of human life are not easy to understand and that God is present with us when we suffer.

GENERAL INFORMATION

For security reasons, during 11:00 AM Sunday Liturgy, **the back door will be locked at 11:15 AM.** Also, please remember during the Weekly Liturgy, the back door will be locked. Please park your car in front of the church.

MARCH 16 AFTERNOON LENTEN VESPER SERVICE AT STS PETER AND PAUL

Since we are having a Fasiangy and making the Haluski in house, I want to ask all of you to head the Soup Meal for after the March 16 Afternoon Vesper. This will all be your event/occasion. This will be easy. The soup, bread, probably a cheese plate etc. is all bought.

The Soup Meal is a special occasion for our church and as it brings the Lenten season of working to bring all of us together and serve the meal to the Bishop and the parishioners as a Lenten spiritual, reflective and giving time on what it means to be a follower of Christ.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

St Peter and Paul Church is accepting requests for 2020 Divine Liturgy's on a first come first serve basis. Please submit your requests in writing with the intention and date requested to St Peter and Paul attention with your offering and place on Sunday collection basket.

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

We have all had the experience of being ashamed of ourselves. We had done, said, or thought something which probably seemed fine to us at the time, but which we later realized was simply terrible. Sometimes when that happens, we catch a glimpse of truth about ourselves that is hard to bear. Sometimes when that happens, we are paralyzed by shame, by a prideful refusal to accept in humility that we are very far from perfect and in constant need of our Lord's mercy and grace. Those who remain stuck in the rut of shame will face great obstacles in finding healing for their souls.

The prodigal son in today's gospel reading provides a wonderful example of how to get over wounded pride and repent of even the most shameful acts. After seeing how horribly he had treated his father, he refused to be paralyzed by shame. He began the journey home, accepted the truth about what he had done, and was ready to accept whatever rejection, criticism, or awkwardness resulted from daring to show his face to the father whom he had rejected. At this point, he had no illusions about himself, his behavior, or how it had impacted others. He knew that he could hope, at the very most, to return to the household as a servant, not a son. Nonetheless, he still took the long journey home.

As we prepare for the spiritual disciplines of Lent, we must all keep the lessons of this parable squarely in mind, for it provides such a powerful image of what happens when we come to our senses and recognize our sins, turn away from them, and turn toward the Lord. The overwhelming mercy of the father in the story is an image of the abundant grace of God. For He does not settle simply with forgiveness, but restores us fully to the dignity of His sons and daughters. He makes us true participants in eternal life by grace, not hired hands with some low level of blessing who somehow sneak into the Kingdom through the backdoor. He does not scold or shame us, but truly welcomes us home with love beyond what we can understand.

The prodigal son's return home was a resurrection from death to life, which is why his father called for such a great celebration. Lent prepares us to follow our Savior to His Cross and the glory of the empty tomb. We must die to sin so that we will be prepared to behold with joy our Lord's victory over death and to enter into eternal celebration of the Heavenly Banquet. There is no shame in preparing ourselves to accept such a great invitation. In fact, the only shame would be if we refused to accept it out of wounded pride.

HOLY EUCHARIST

In the history of Christian thought, various ways were developed to try to explain how the bread and the wine become the Body and Blood of Christ in the eucharistic liturgy. Quite unfortunately, these explanations often became too rationalistic and too closely connected with certain human philosophies.

One of the most unfortunate developments took place when men began to debate the reality of Christ's Body and Blood in the eucharist. While some said that the eucharistic gifts of bread and wine were the real Body and Blood of Christ, others said that the gifts were not real, but merely the symbolic or mystical presence of the Body and Blood. The tragedy in both of these approaches is that what is real came to be opposed to what is symbolic or mystical.

The Church denies the doctrine that the Body and the Blood of the eucharist are merely intellectual or psychological symbols of Christ's Body and Blood. If this doctrine were true, when the liturgy is celebrated and holy communion is given, the people would be called merely to think about Jesus and to commune with him "in their hearts." In this way, the eucharist would be reduced to a simple memorial meal of the Lord's last supper, and the union with God through its reception would come only on the level of thought or psychological recollection.

On the other hand, however, the Eastern tradition does use the term "symbols" for the eucharistic gifts. It calls the service a "mystery" and the sacrifice of the liturgy a "spiritual and bloodless sacrifice." These terms are used by the holy fathers and the liturgy itself.

The Church uses such expressions because in Church what is real is not opposed to what is symbolical or mystical or spiritual. On the contrary! In the Church view, all of reality—the world and man himself—is real to the extent that it is symbolical and mystical, to the extent that reality itself must reveal and manifest God to us. Thus, the eucharist in the Church is understood to be the genuine Body and Blood of Christ precisely because bread and wine are the mysteries and symbols of God's true and genuine presence and manifestation to us in Christ. Thus, by eating and drinking the bread and wine which are mystically consecrated by the Holy Spirit, we have genuine communion with God through Christ who is himself "the bread of life" (Jn 6.34, 41).

I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh (Jn 6.51).

Thus, the bread of the eucharist is Christ's flesh, and Christ's flesh is the eucharistic bread. The two are brought together into one. The word "symbolical" in Church terminology means exactly this: "to bring together into one."

Thus we read the words of the Apostle Paul:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, until He comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread and drinks the cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor 11.23–26).

The mystery of the holy eucharist defies analysis and explanation in purely rational and logical terms. For the eucharist—and Christ Himself—is indeed a mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven which, as Jesus has told us, is "not of this world." The eucharist—because it belongs to God's Kingdom—is truly free from the earth-born "logic" of fallen humanity.

DEANERY PENITENTIAL VESPERS SCHEDULED

The Great Fast Deanery Vespers will be celebrated, each Sunday during The Great Fast Season at 4:00 p.m. preceded by The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation at 3:30 p.m.

The following churches have been selected to host a different week:

March 1	St. Andrew Church, Gibsonia	Homilist: Fr. Thomas Schaefer Confessor: Fr. Robert J. Karl
March 8	SS. Peter & Paul Church, Duquesne	Homilist: Fr. Christiaan W. Kappes Confessor: Fr. Frank A. Firko
March 15	SS. Peter & Paul Church, Braddock	Homilist: Fr. Robert J. Karl Confessor: Msgr. Russell A. Duker
March 22	Holy Ghost Church, McKees Rocks	Homilist: Alexander C. Wroblicky; Confessor: Fr. Andrew J. Deskevich
March 29	St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Munhall	Homilist: Fr. Frank A. Firko. Confessor: Fr. Valerian M. Michlik

This will be a great penitential practice of prayer & self-denial if you wish to take it upon yourselves. Please make an effort to join us. Fellowship of meatless soups and bread will be served following the liturgical services

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



Dear parishioners who currently receive the BCW please submit your envelope provided for you. We are working on our new list for 2019. The cost is \$15.00 and the deadline is end of February. Only those who submit and pay for subscription will receive. Any questions please call the office number.

IMPORTANT PARISH EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH



Sunday, February 23, 2020

Immediately following liturgy, we will have a Fašiangy (Slovak Marti Gras).

Menu: Haluski, Kielbasi, Hot Dogs and Dessert

✓ There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthax/Vestibule. **You must sign up to attend.**

For Lent (which starts February 24th) we will be having a Lenten Charity Jar.

Every Sunday, please place bills or loose change as a Lenten contribution to the Homestead Jubilee Kitchen. Please make this Lenten season a spiritual, reflective and giving time on what it means to be a follower of Christ. **Fasting, Prayer, And Concern for Those in Need**

Sunday, March 16, 2020

Saint Peter & Paul Braddock will be hosting the Lenten Vesper Services at 4PM and will be serving Soup, Bread, etc. immediately following. **All are welcome to attend.**

As the Parish that is hosting the Vesper Service/Soup Meal that Sunday, we need volunteers to head up/prep/serve the meal. Everything is bought, no cooking is required.

✓ A volunteer sign up sheet will be in the Narthax/Vestibule.

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS! ST. ELIAS AND ARCHIEPARCHIAL EVENTS

Monday	February 24	<i>Great Fast Begins</i>
Friday	February 28	First Lenten Kitchen – 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m
Friday	March 6	Lenten Kitchen – 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m
Friday	March 13	Lenten Kitchen – 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m
Friday	March 20	Lenten Kitchen – 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m
Friday	March 27	Lenten Kitchen – 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m
Friday	April 3	Lenten Kitchen – 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m

In our menu: Baked Fish Dinner, Fried Fish Dinner, Fish Sandwich, Shrimp Dinner, Pirohi, Mac & Cheese, Noodle Haluski and Bake Sale.



ARCHEPARCHY OF PITTSBURGH CHURCH MUSIC DAY



On Saturday, February 22, the Archeparchy will hold a Church Music Day at Saint John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall: Morning (9-12): A meeting of Archieparchial cantors and assistant cantors, the first since 1997, to discuss the state of our church music and ways we can foster the singing in our parishes.

Afternoon (2-4): A presentation and sing-along for all clergy, cantors, and faithful, covering the Lenten and Holy Week hymns in the proposed comprehensive hymnal for our church, and teaching basic harmonization of our plain chant.

JOAN SKINTA AT CARE CENTER

Woodhaven Care Ceeter, c/o Joan Skinta Room 107, 2400 McGinley Rd., Monroeville Pa 15146

WHO WAS PRODIGAL SON?

Introduction

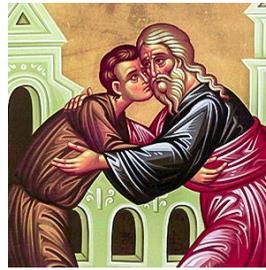


Icon of the Feast

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 Byzantine Christians to contemplate the necessity of repentance in our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

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.

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.

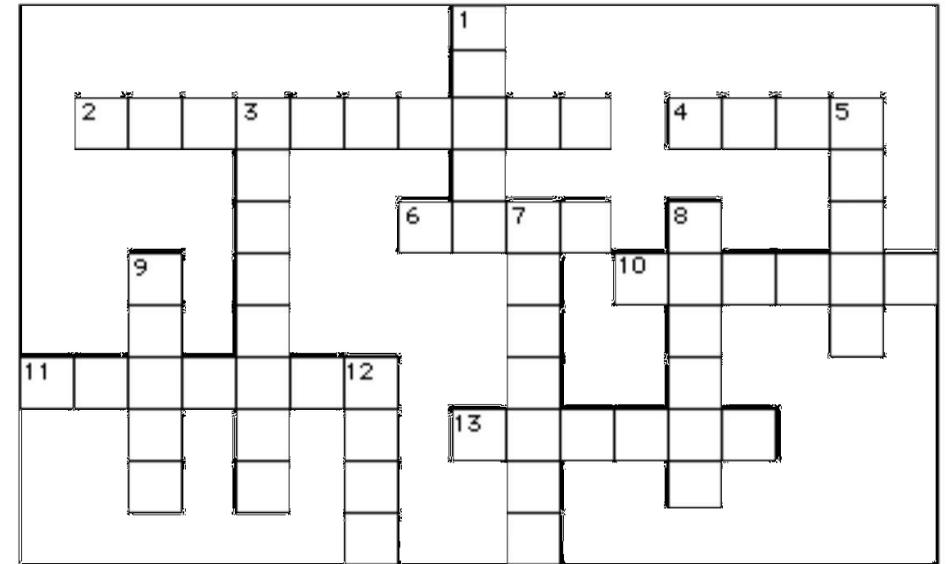


Finally, this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God's divine purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods and drinks 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. This is why in the Slavic tradition of the Byzantine Church the reading of Psalm 137 is added to the Matins service for this and the following two Sundays. This nostalgic lament of the Hebrew exiles states: "By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered

Zion. On the willows we hung our harps, for how could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalm 137).

Here we can see the challenge of life in this world and the alienation from God that can happen when sin reigns in our lives. 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 PRODIGAL SON (LUKE 15:11-32)



- 4 ACROSS "A certain man had two ____." LUKE 15:11
- 11 ACROSS The ____ son gathered all together and journeyed to a far country. LUKE 15:13
- 3 DOWN There he wasted his possessions with ____ living. LUKE 15:13
- 10 ACROSS "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe ____ in that land." LUKE 15:14
- 5 DOWN He was sent to the fields to feed _____. LUKE 15:15
- 13 ACROSS He said to himself, "I will arise and go to my _____." LUKE 15:18
- 2 ACROSS "When he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had _____." LUKE 15:20
- 6 ACROSS "The father said to his servants, 'Bring out the _____ robe and put it on him.'" LUKE 15:22
- 12 DOWN "Put a _____ on his hand." LUKE 15:22
- 7 DOWN "And _____ on his feet." LUKE 15:22
- 8 DOWN "Bring the _____ calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." LUKE 15:23
- 1 DOWN "For this my son was dead and is _____ again." LUKE 15:24
- 9 DOWN "He was lost and is _____." LUKE 15:24