

## SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



*Icon of Saint John Chrysostom -- January 27th*

**January 27, 2013**

**SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON;**

**THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF OUR HOLY FATHER JOHN CHRYSOSTOM,**

**ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

**TONE 2**

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 28 – FEBRUARY 3**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2 – THE ENCOUNTER OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST WITH THE HOLY AND  
RIGHTEOUS SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AND THE HOLY PROPHETESS ANNA**

**9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy**

**James Janke; Req: Mary Janke**

**6:00 PM – Great Vespers**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3 – POSTFEAST OF THE ENCOUNTER; SUNDAY OF MEATFARE – OF THE FEARSOME AND LAST  
JUDGMENT; THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AND THE HOLY  
PROPHETESS ANNA**

**8:45 AM – Divine Praises**

**9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy**

**For All Parishioners**



**House Blessings**

It is our custom to have our homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed please let Fr. James know. If you have any questions about house blessings, what is involved, why we bless our homes, etc., please speak with Fr. James.

**Catechetical Video Series**

Next Sunday, after the Divine Liturgy we continue showing a series of catechetical videos. The first series to be shown will be “Catholicism” by Fr. Robert Barrons.

**Please attend! Будьмо Уважні!**

**Welcome to Our Visitors**

We warmly welcome all those who are visiting from near and far. Please consider staying for a bite to eat at our coffee hour following the service. But even if you have to run, we thank you for worshipping with us today, and we wish you a blessed remainder of your visit!

**Please Note:**

When you are away, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

**Sunday offering for January 20**

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$20.00	1
\$23.25	1 (loose)
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	4
\$60.00	1
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$200.00	1
\$800.00	1
\$773.00	15 Parishioners

**Parishioner Total: 1603.25**

**Average / parish household (40): \$39.10**

**Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00**

**Shortfall: (\$521.75)**

## The Rite of Forgiveness – Sunday, Feb. 10th

Great Lent begins this year on Monday, Feb. 11th. The Sunday before the Great Fast is called Forgiveness Sunday, for on this day we ask each other's forgiveness, remembering that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. Please don't miss it.

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### LEARNING TO LOVE

*By Jordan Bajis*

The call of the Church is to continually realize what it is: the Body of Christ. We need to agree with God's perspective concerning what He has done with humankind through Christ, and then rediscover what it means to be a people who live in the communion of His love. The Church is a family, an organism, a community, and unless the world is able to see this reality by the way we love one another, our own message of Life will mock us... The Church is first and last a manifestation of God's love. If we are to manifest this Church, we must love in divine measure (John 13:35).

The first step in meeting this challenge to love demands that we come against our own apathy. In our society, we have re-defined "love" to mean "warmly tolerate." As long as someone does not ask too much of us in our relationships, and as long as the exit from intimacy re-mains accessible, we can be "loving." In other words, as long as we do not "hate" our brethren, we "love" them. This is not the love of communion. Christian love is not indifferent. It commits itself to others tangibly, practically, and daily. It re-quires interpersonal risk, it takes the initiative to heal, and it desires to meet the genuine needs of others. If we long to love with this kind of integrity and sincerity, we will love the way God does: in Community and communion

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### Last Sunday's Bulletin

If you haven't yet picked up last Sunday's bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org).



### A PRAYER OF A SICK PERSON

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, Physician of souls and bodies, who didst become man and suffer death on the Cross for our salvation, and through Thy tender love and compassion didst heal all manner of sickness and affliction; do Thou O Lord, visit me in my suffering, and grant me grace and strength to bear this sickness with which I am afflicted, with Christian patience and submission to Thy will, trusting in Thy loving kindness and tender mercy. Bless, I pray Thee, the means used for my recovery, and those who administer them. I humbly pray Thee, look upon my weakness, and deal not with me after my sins, but according to the multitude of Thy mercies. Have compassion on me, and deliver me from this sickness and suffering I am undergoing. Grant that my sickness may be the means of my true repentance and amendment of my life according to Thy will, that I may spend the rest of my days in Thy love and fear: that my soul, being helped by Thy grace and sanctified by Thy Holy Mysteries, may be prepared for its passage to the Eternal Life, and there, in the company of Thy blessed Saints, may praise and glorify Thee with Thine Eternal Father and Life-giving Spirit. Amen.

### God's Extended Hand

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.



## БЛУДНИЙ СИН І ДОБРИЙ БАТЬКО

Читаючи й вивчаючи С в я т е П и с ь м о , ми дізнаємося, що діти, - це велике Боже благословення, діти - це дар ожий. „Як оливкові дерева, засаджені довкола твого стола, так внуки є вінком для старших віком”, - каже псалмопівець. Пророки Ісая, Осія в чудовий спосіб зображують нам батьків і матерів, що з ніжністю, терпеливістю, любов'ю навчають дітей, як їм треба жити. Вони з м а л ь о в у ю т ь в і д ч у т т я радості й щастя, яке спливає на батьків, що дають життя дітям та збільшують родину. Тому Христос говорить про дітей словами ніжної любові. Він ставить дитину перед народом і каже: „Істинно кажу вам: Хто Царства Божого не прийме, як дитина - не ввійде до нього” (Лк. 18, 17).

Не заперечуємо факту, що коли діти підрастають, то часом гірко розчаровують нас своїм егоїзмом, нерозумними домаганнями. Вони стають для нас випробовуванням нашої терпеливості. Часом вони приносять смуток, недоспані ночі. Однак, найбільш прикрим є те, що в той час батьки ні від кого не мають підтримки. Коли ж діти зійдуть на блудну дорогу, тоді родичам доводиться чути слова: „Це ваші діти, це ваш клопіт, це була ваша справа добре виховати дитину”. Чи це справедливо? Ні! Бо, згідно з навчанням Святого Письма, родина — то цеглина, з якої будується народ, спільнота, громада. Тому ми всі, ціла громада, цілий народ несемо відповідальність за

наших дітей, за нашу молодь. Особлива відповідальність за наших дітей лежить на школі, організаціях, які опікуються молоддю. Ми маємо право і обов'язок поставити питання: що школа і молодіжні організації дають нашим дітям? Куди вони їх провадять? Чи вони підносять духовне життя молоді, чи може його знижують? Отже, коли нам тяжко зрозуміти вчинки наших дітей, молоді генерації, коли ми питаємо себе, чому наші діти не є такими, якими були ми в молоді роки, коли нам здається, що сьогодні між старшим і молодшим поколіннями утворилася глибока прірва згадаймо Христову притчу про Блудного сина. Це - історія молоді людини, яка своєму доброму, повному самопошану батькові, спричинила біль. Але батько незабував своєї відповідальності, тому, коли норовистий син, шукаючи прощення, вернувся до батьківського дому, він прийняв його з радістю. За слоами Христової притчі: „Він, змилосердившись, побіг, на шию йому кинувся і поцілував його”.

Ми не можемо інакше поступати з нашою молоддю. Вони всі - наші діти. Благословімо їх, показуймо їм правильну дорогу життя. Прощаймо їх, бо так навчає прочитане сьогодні Євангеліє.

## A PRODIGAL SON AND A GOOD FATHER

In reading and learning the Holy Gospels, we find that children are a great blessing and gift from God. *“Like olive trees planted around the home, so are grandchildren the window for the elderly,”* says the Psalmist. The Prophets Isaiah and Hosea portray fathers and mothers in a wonderful manner, saying that through their tenderness, love and patience they teach their children how they should live. They depict the joy and happiness which parents feel when they have children. Christ speaks of children with tender love: *“Trust Me when I tell you that whoever does not accept the kingdom of God as a child will not enter into it”* (Lk. 18, 17).

We do not deny the fact that, as children grow up, they often bitterly disappoint us with their egotism and unreasonable expectations.

They test our patience and often bring us grief and sleepless nights. And, unfortunately, at that time, parents receive no support. When children follow the prodigal path, parents are likely to hear: “They are your children, your problem. You should have raised them better.” Is this a just response? No! In accordance with the teachings of the Holy Gospel, the family is the foundation upon which is built a community, a society, a nation. All of us - the community, the society,

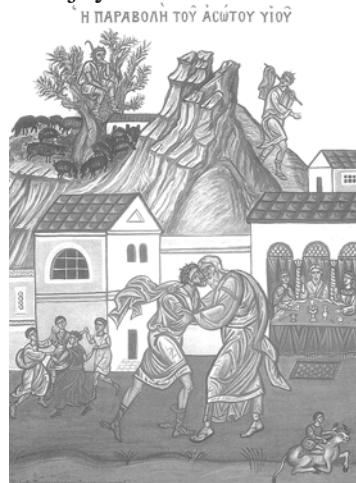
the nation - are responsible for our children and our youth. Special responsibility for our children rests with the schools and youth organizations.

We have the right and the responsibility to ask: What do the schools and youth organizations provide for our children? Where do they lead them? Do they increase spiritual awareness, or do they decrease it?

When we find it difficult to understand the behavior of our children, of the younger generation; when we ask ourselves why our children are not like us when we were their age; when it seems that there is a great chasm between the younger and older generations, let us remember the parable about the Prodigal Son. This is the story of a young man who caused great grief to his good and self-sacrificing father. But

the father did not forget his responsibility. When the Prodigal returns to his father's house seeking forgiveness, his father greets him with happiness: *“He ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him.”*

We must treat our youth in the same manner. They are all our children. Let us bless them, show them the right road and forgive them as today's Holy Gospel teaches us.





## PRAYER BEFORE THE GOSPEL

*By VRev. Vladimir Berzonsky*

*“Illumine our hearts, O Master who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our minds to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings...that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things that are well pleasing unto Thee.”* (Priest’s prayer before the Gospel)

The Divine Liturgy from the opening through the sermon is called “Liturgy of the Word.” We mean by Word the living Word who is the Son of God having come into the world as Jesus Christ in order to save sinners, the first among them being me. The readings of epistle and gospel are about the Word of God explained for us, a lesson for our instruction; but we might ask:

A. Why does the instruction happen here, when we assemble for the Holy Eucharist;

B. Why is it important to listen to the readings – more than significant – mandatory, so that the Church will never allow the Holy Sacrifice to be offered unless the readings from the Bible precede the Communion?

Readings from Holy Scripture are read in nearly all of the sacred services both liturgical and private. A vital connection bonds Christ as Word with Christ as Living Sacrifice.

“Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you.” (John 15:2)

I hope to receive Holy Communion, but my Lord is telling me that I am already in communion with Him. “Every branch that bears fruit He prunes,” so the afflictions that upset me are for my welfare. I came hoping for relief, to somehow leave Church having shed the pain and anguish that I brought with me for the Lord to remove. He is telling me that I’m being pruned. The dead leaves I’ve been clinging onto must be clipped off. The rotted fruit that gives me only heartburn has to be eliminated from my memory if my soul is to be sweet and I am to be pure again to “taste and see how good the Lord is.” He is telling me: “You are already clean.” Am I really, or is the pollution from my past clogging up the arteries from my mind to my heart? Proleptic phrases are saying that Christ’s point of view is different, since He doesn’t look at me the way I see myself, at this moment in fleeting time when my failings possess me. How can I possibly see what He sees in me, unless I accept the forgiveness that only He can bestow, and then get on beyond this wallowing in my inadequacies and take a seat at His mystical table?

“Because of the Word which I have spoken to you.”

Yes, Lord Jesus, I have heard Your word spoken through Your holy lips two millennia ago, heard and writ-ten down by Your chosen apostles to enter my heart by the voice of the deacon, to resonate in my feeble mind and ring a silent sound that stimulated me to take it to heart. That is what You must have meant as remembered and recorded by Your divine apostle John. You entered through my ear to my mind and descended into my heart. Your Word rests there – more than a spoken word, You abide there for my comfort and peace. Your Father in You, You in me and I in You; and wonder of wonders, the heavenly Father, Creator of heaven, earth and of me also in me: All through the power and gift of the Holy Spirit, third Person of the Holy Trinity. Aware of all that, I feel now I am ready to receive You from the sacred chalice.

## ***THE GREATEST GIFT A MAN CAN MAKE***

*By St. Makarios the Great*

"The devout soul, even if it practices all the virtues, ascribes everything to God and nothing to itself. God, on the other hand, when He sees its sound and healthy understanding and knowledge, attributes every-thing to the soul, and rewards it as though it had achieved everything through its own efforts. He does this in spite of the fact that, if He were to bring us to judgment, no true righteousness would be found in us. For material possessions and everything that man regards as valuable and through which he is able to do good, the earth and whatever is in it, all belong to God. Man's body and soul, and even his very being, are his only by grace. What, then, is left to him that he can call his own, by virtue of which he can pride himself or vindicate himself? Yet when the soul recognizes - what is indeed the truth - that all its good actions for God's sake, together with all its understanding and knowledge, are to be ascribed to God alone and that everything should be attributed to Him, then God accepts this as the greatest gift that man can make, as the offering that is most precious in His eyes."

### **A PRAYER BEFORE READING OR LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD**

*By St. John Chrysostom*

O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart, that I may hear Your word and understand and do Your will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not Your commandments from me, but open mine eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom. On You do I set my hope, O my God, that You shalt enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of Your knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; that in reading the lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For You are the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from You comes every good deed and every gift. Amen.



### **ON CHRIST THE ARTIST**

*A Reflection from the Prologue of Ochrid*

An artist is one who, from crude and shapeless stone, carves and shapes forms similar to living creatures. An artist is one who weaves a multi-colored blanket from the wool of sheep. An artist is one who builds a magnificent palace out of earthly bricks. But what kind of artist on earth can be compared to Christ the Artist, who from illiterate men creates wise men, who from fishermen creates apostles, who from cowards creates heroes, who from the immoral creates saints? But all must be given over to the hand of the artist, in order to be fashioned into that which the artist knows and is capable of doing. All things, in truth, must be given over to the hand of the artist. Even men must give themselves over to the hand of Christ, in order for Him to carve, to weave or to build that which only He knows and is capable of. Nineteen past centuries witness to us, that all of them who did not protest [against Him] but rather gave themselves over to Christ the Artist and from the boorish and the ignorant became angel-seeing children of God.





**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
St. John the Baptizer  
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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**Website:** [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

***If You Believe, He Who Welcomed  
the Thief will Welcome You Also***

Faith is the ascent of the soul to a truth. If you want to know what advantage the soul gains from it listen to what the Lord says:

“Whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.”

The righteous in ancient times, in order to find favor with God, had to struggle for many years. They achieved it after having served God

for long and with heroic efforts; Jesus grants it to us in an instant.

It is true. If you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Jesus on the cross on Calvary welcomed the thief to Paradise. He will welcome you also.

*St. Cyril of Jerusalem*