

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

28 Cross Street - Auburn, New York 13021 (www.stnicholasauburn.com)

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Pastor

(315) 246-6051 (Cell), (315) 255-2998 (Home) mspeck100@gmail.com

Office Hours Thursday from 2PM to 4PM or by Appointment

Reverend Deacon David Donch Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck
Sr. Warden - Greg Michaels Jr. Warden - Rocco Lupo Reader Nathaniel Donch



Sunday, February 28, 2021 – Prodigal Son

Sunday, February 28 - 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, March 3 – 8:30 AM - Divine Liturgy

Saturday, March 6 – 8:30 AM – Divine Liturgy –

Soul Saturday

- 5:00 PM – Vespers

Sunday, March 7 - 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

St. Nicholas Parish News and Announcements



Thanks to all who worked so hard to make our February Pork Chop Dinner a great success! Our profit for the event was \$3,026. This is a great outreach activity for our church and is so well received by many of our neighbors and friends. God bless all of you who help with our parish activities!

Thanks also to all our pierogi makers! The Sisterhood supports many worthy charities, and provides us all with an opportunity to participate in a fun activity that helps others!

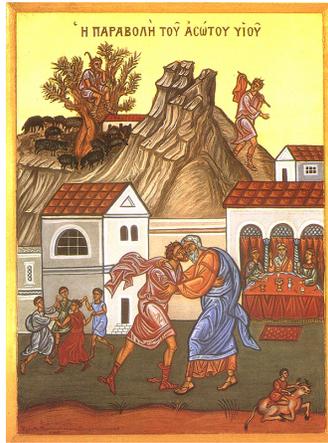
Pascha Breads are going to be made by members of the Sisterhood again this year. Order forms will be available in the back of the church. Orders should be placed by March 17 for Western Easter (April 4). Breads will be made again for Orthodox Easter at a later date. Please contact Debbie Slobodiak by e-mail at mdnps@frontiernet.net or by phone (315-935-3351)

Donations

\$600 in Memory of the Kotzer-Young Family by Don and Emily Young for the Cemetery Driveway Fund.

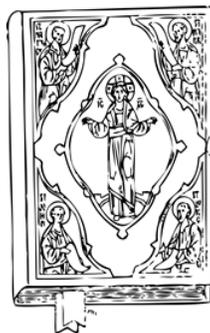
\$25 in Memory of Irene Bashta by Beverly and Jaci Aversa to the Benevolence Fund

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).

Starting tomorrow, the weekday readings summarize the events of Holy Week. On Monday we read Saint Mark’s account of the Entry into Jerusalem. On Tuesday we read how Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray the Lord. On the night before His death Christ tells His disciples that one of them will betray Him. He also predicts that they will desert Him, and that Peter will deny Him three times. On Wednesday the Gospel describes how Judas betrayed the Savior with a kiss. Thursday’s Gospel tells how Jesus was questioned by Pilate. On Friday we read the narrative of Christ’s crucifixion and death.



Virgin Martyr Piama

Commemorated on [March 3](#)

The Virgin Piama lived in asceticism not far from Alexandria. The saint lived in the home of her mother, as in a hermitage. She partook of food at the end of the day, and after prayer she spun flax.

Saint Piama was granted the gift of discernment. The people of a more populous village, blinded with greed, planned to destroy the small village of the holy maiden in order to divert water to their own fields when the Nile overflowed its banks. Saint Piama saw their wicked intent and reported it to the village elders. The startled elders fell on their knees before the saint, imploring her to go to the neighboring people and dissuade them from their evil purpose.

The nun Piama did not go to meet them, since for a long time she shunned contact with people. The saint spent all night at prayer, and in the morning the people of the neighboring village armed themselves and set off for the village of the holy maiden. Suddenly, they froze in their tracks and were not able to proceed farther. The Lord revealed to the impious people that the prayer of Saint Piama held them back. The people came to their senses and repented of their wicked intent. They sent messengers to the village with a request for peace and said, "Thanks be to God, Who through the prayers of the maiden Piama has delivered us."

The saint peacefully fell asleep in the Lord in the year 337.



We are the Prodigal Son, We are the Older Brother

A Homily on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son



As often happens, we destroy the deep, full importance and meaning of relationships, because we are used to a loving person giving to us—giving generously, giving constantly, never thinking of himself: just giving; and how easily we gradually forget the one who gives, remembering just the gifts. It happened with the Prodigal Son, but it so happens constantly in our human relationships...

The Prodigal Son said to his father: “Give me what will be mine when you die;” in other words: “Let’s agree that you no longer exist for me; I only need what you can give me...” And as the Prodigal Son, we then for a while live off these gifts; our heart is yet warmed with the warmth given to us, our mind yet lives on the riches of our bygone association... As long as we are able to live on these gifts, we are surrounded by people who want to live off of that which we received: we are, like the Prodigal Son, surrounded by the people that swarmed around him while he was yet rich from the riches of his father. But when nothing of the riches remained, they fell away. And impoverishment entered his life again: he renounced one human

relationship, and now he himself is renounced by others; he remained alone...

Life is possible only in relation to God, and in relation to others people, as if in an ongoing mutual exchange, when we are as much givers as receivers of the generosity of men and God.

And then the time comes for us to deeply and closely reflect upon ourselves, and understand that we have sinned against Heaven, sinned against our father, against our brother, against our loved ones, against our sister—against everyone around us. We have sinned—meaning we severed the tie, desiring to be free of them... And then the time comes to return: back home, there to where they fed us, gave generously to us, cared for us, and in the end, to God, the Font of all blessings.



But so often, trying to return, we meet not the father of the wayward son, but the older brother, who never had a real relationship of love or friendship, neither with us nor with our father. We meet him who can boast that he was always diligently, honestly “working” in his father’s home, doing everything necessary—but indifferently—he fulfilled his duties as those who cannot escape, or as a transaction, as work for money. We must reflect on this, because in our experience of human relations we are not always just the Prodigal Son—we so often are the older brother. Another comes to us and says, “It was my fault that I

fell out of contact with you, I behaved as a parasite, I want to be different!” and we meet them with the words (or gesture), “There was a time when I saw you differently! There was a time when we lived in fellowship, which was precious to me, but you broke it! My wounds have healed, I don’t want to open more!” How often are we the older brother?

And we behave so unlike the father, who never stopped loving his wayward son, even when this lost one renounced him, rejected him, waiting for the time “when he would die,” to take control of everything he had accumulated through years of labor, wisdom, and sacrificial love...

But the father runs forward to meet his lost son. Have we ever acted this way?... Would we be ready to give him our best clothes, that is, to envelop him with our former relationship? Would we be ready, when he squandered our treasure, disparaged us, and robbed us, to entrust him with our ring, giving him power over our identity, our property, and our honor?

All of these elements of this tragic and wondrous parable are interwoven within every one of us. But it is not enough to discover this; having discovered who we are, we must do something; we must make a decision, we must denounce that identity which we had until now, return, and beseech forgiveness and mercy. It is easy to ask forgiveness from God, because God visibly and palpably never sends us away from Himself empty; He never says to us, “Depart from Me!” But to ask forgiveness from those whom we abused, and who offended us...

Taken from the bulletin of Moscow's Zachetevsky Monastery on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, 2017

Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Surozh

