

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Sunday of the Prodigal Son (02.20.2022)

Luke 15:11-32

And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid,

that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.(*KJV*)

God's Holy Church provides the Sunday of the Prodigal Son each year as Great Lent is approaching. This is a time of preparation for Great Lent. The Church wants each person to know he or she is welcome to return to God. The Gospel for today applies to all persons. Everyone during the course of the year departs to a far country from the Living and Loving God. Every person engages in sin and wastes talents and gifts from God.

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son is a call to return and to repentance to live a God-pleasing life. Careful self-examination and personal honesty will reveal to each person sins committed beyond measure.

An honest reading of God's commandments and teachings will let each person know transgressions that have been committed. God's love and mercy will wipe these sins and transgressions away when repentance occurs.

The younger son in the Gospel thought he could live well away from his father. He took his inheritance and wasted it. The younger son became poor and hungry. He came to his good sense and returned to his father.

The loving and welcoming father was filled with joy on the return of his younger son. The Living, Loving and all Merciful God welcomes sons and daughters returning to their home in the Church.

No barrier is too great as to prevent a person from returning to God. God welcomes each person with the desire to repent and begin anew. The Lord Jesus Christ embraces and rejoices sinners with healing and love.

God's Holy Church has preserved and proclaimed the welcoming message of the Sunday of the Prodigal Son down through the centuries. God's love is all enduring and all embracing.

Faithful sons and daughters who have not left the Church have an opportunity to share in the joy when a person returns. Faithful sons and daughters know to demonstrate the humility learned from the publican last Sunday.

The Church in wisdom encourages attentive believers to look carefully within the heart, mind and soul. As Great Lent approaches, believers are called to firmly reject and refrain from actions and thoughts perilous to the soul Prayer and fasting are to

increase as Great Lent draws near and the journey to Pascha gets fully underway. Each person is expected to voluntarily participate in Great Lent and the journey to Pascha.

The Church sets forth teachings learned through the ages that are beneficial for a full life in Jesus Christ. Great Lent is the period to become transformed in Christ. Investing in Great Lent is an investment in the Kingdom of God.

The joy experienced at Pascha will be proportionate to the investment made in the days leading to Pascha. Each person knows his or her sins. Each person has the benefit of the teachings of God's Holy Church.

Prayer, fasting and charitable works are integral to Great Lent and the journey to Pascha. The father in the present Gospel and the returning son experienced great joy.

Paschal joy is rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ rising from the dead. The joy associated with the returning son in the present Gospel offers a foretaste of Paschal joy.

Today be mindful of personal sin and the presence of the Loving God. Keep the mind, heart and soul focused on living in God-pleasing ways. Be firm in rejecting sin and faithful in turning to the Lord God.

During the days ahead increase love for the Lord God and become more prayerful through fasting. Share love with others in daily life and welcome each person God brings into daily life as the father welcomed his younger son.

Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord. Sunday of the Prodigal Son. February 7/20, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

PRESERVING THE FAMILY
From the Letters of Archimandrite John (Krestiankin)

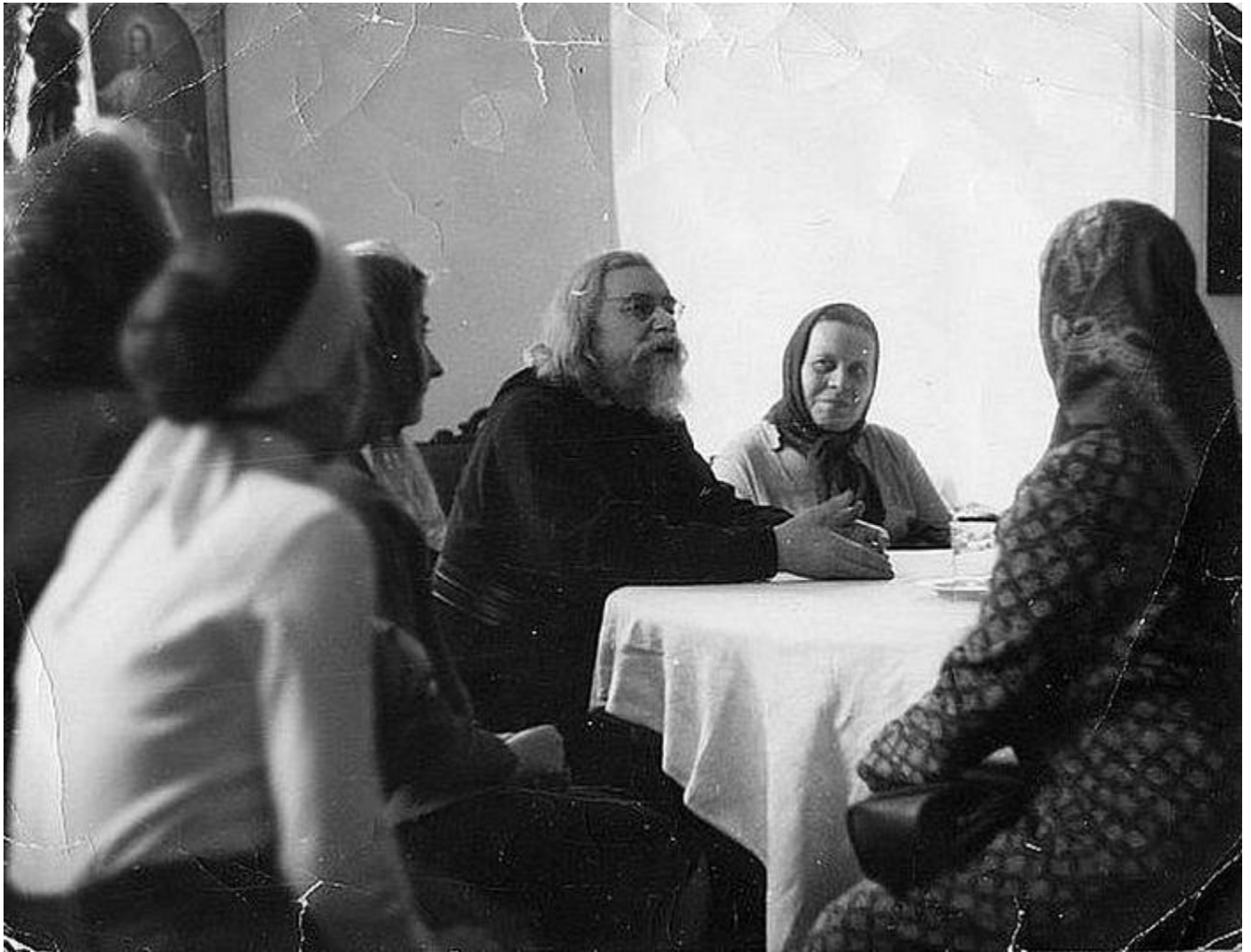
Archimandrite John (Krestiankin)

Excerpts from the book *The Foundation of Family Life. Reflections and Advice from Archimandrite John (Krestiankin)*

You're family people, and Fr. F. is right to orient you to the most important thing—taking care of your family. But how to do that is an internal matter, by your own labors and capabilities. Everyone is called to live in a Christian manner—both monastics and laymen—but the paths are different, and the demands will be different. So build your family creatively. Not all artists have to paint icons. There's no need

for so many icons as there are people desiring to paint them. The world can't do without doctors, teachers, or artists, for the world will become impoverished and sick. After all, everyone does his own work and should carry it out as a Divine obedience—with joy and love.

And don't forget: There is no demand from you before God for self-imposed *podvigs*, for fasts outside those required by the Church, but for your family, your daughter, your spouse—this is what you will answer for. You have focused only on yourself and stopped seeing the need of your neighbor. Is this really what God inspires you to do? The enemy is walking about, attacking, to knock us from the path of God.



Archimandrite John (Krestiankin)

Your worries are a very delicate and creative matter—a matter of love. It's not always possible to find the tune and sing together harmoniously. But that's life. Life is a struggle. Life is a science—it teaches us patience, humility, and love.

E. I., think about it—we, who seem to live far from the vexations of the world, are affected by its feverishness, and what can we say about those whose souls, minds, and hearts are directly touched by it? May God give them strength to endure and not avoid the momentary vagaries of life (life is arranged without God, and that means, though they're living, they're not living).

So, dear E. I., know that we have a very important role to play—to understand and pray, and to give in a timely manner, and accept consolingly, thereby easing the difficult burden of external experiences for your spouse.

You have to be a helper, and for that it's not necessary to know, but it's necessary to feel. And I will finish with the words of the Apostle, which are appropriate for us now: *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth* (1 Cor. 8:1). I know that you have a special difficulty. You want a support for yourself, but you need to be a support to those around you. I'm already ninety, and they still mercilessly demand that I be a support too. But I know that we have One support, and our strength is in One, and our salvation is in One—everything is in our Lord and Savior Christ. With God's help, we will endure everything and survive, keeping faith and loyalty. The most important thing for us is to always be with God in everything.

God's blessing to your family.

You have to fight for your family—it's not just your relationship with your spouse. It's your children's life, broken from a young age. The first thing you must constantly do is pray for your spouse and pray to [Sts. Gurius, Samonas, and Abibus](#) for the preservation of your family. Second, and no less important, is to look into your heart, take a closer look at yourself—whether it's your fault that your husband never comes home.

Your Christian [patience](#), [humility](#), and love, at least a little, in due time, will do their job, and your other half, your husband, will be revived in the spirit. But for this, start working on yourself: He may lose his cool, but don't you do it. You have to understand that it's harder for him than for you—he doesn't know God, and the enemy leads him *whither [he] wouldst not*. Begin praying for him constantly and with a feeling of pity, remembering that it's been hard for him since childhood, just as it was for you. And the rest is God's work. Read the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7, and remember that you're sick together with your husband, as the two of you are one flesh.

And the fact that you pray in secret from him is good. You have to do this so as not to cause him to blaspheme. The time will come when the secret will be done in the open.

You have to preserve your family with a wise and patient attitude towards your husband. It's easy just to say: "I'm getting divorced!" You can say this when you think and know only yourself, but if you also think about your husband, and about your children, then you'll make every effort for the children to know their father, and your husband to know his family.

Believe that the Lord is nearer to you than even those closest to you, that He hears not the rustling of your lips but the prayerful beating of your heart and what it is filled with at the moment of your turning to God. You are a family man, responsible before God for every member of your family, and that means your heart should ache for them all. May God grant you wisdom! And begin, S., by fulfilling the order of [St. Seraphim of Sarov](#): "S., my joy, acquire the spirit of peace, and not only your family, but thousands around you will be saved." And that's it. See how life teaches us to live. If you want to be content and happy—live in God; but if you don't—there will be no happiness.

*[Archimandrite John \(Krestiankin\)](#)
Translation by Jesse Dominick*

The Prologue from Ochrid *St Nicholai of Zhicha*

1. THE VENERABLE SIMEON [MIROTOCIVI] THE MYRRH-GUSHER

Stefan Nemanja [Nehemiah], the great ruler [Great Zupan] of the Serbian people, the consolidator of the Serbian lands, creator of the independent Serbian state, defender of Orthodoxy and eradicator of heresy, was first baptized in the Latin Church, but later he left it and entered the Orthodox Church. In the beginning he was dependent on the Greeks with regard to the state, but later he freed himself from this dependence and became completely autonomous. After Stefan had strengthened the state and the Orthodox Faith in the state, he followed the example of his son Sava. He received the monastic tonsure in Studenica Monastery in the year 1195 A.D., receiving the name Simeon. His wife Anna withdrew to a women's monastery, embraced the monastic tonsure and received the name Anastasija. After two years as a monk in Studenica, Simeon traveled to Athos, the Holy Mountain. There he took up residence in the

Monastery of Vatopedi together with his son Sava. Father and son spend their days and nights in prayer. There they built six chapels: to the Savior, the Unmercenary Saints, St. George, St. Theodore, St. John the Forerunner and St. Nicholas. They purchased the ruins of Hilandar and erected a glorious monastery, in which Simeon lived only eight months and then died. When Simeon was on his deathbed, Sava, according to his father's wishes, placed him on a simple mat. With eyes directed toward the icon of the Mother of God with the Savior, the blessed elder spoke these last words, *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord* (Psalm 150:6), and took up his habitation with the Lord, on February 13, 1200 A.D.

2. THE VENERABLE MARTINIAN

The glorious and most wonderful life of Martinian is worthwhile to read in its entirety. What did he not endure just to fulfill the commandments of the Lord? At age eighteen, Martinian retreated to a mountain in Cappadocia called the Place of the Ark, where he lived for twenty-five years in fasting, vigils and prayer, struggling with many temptations. When a woman came to tempt him, Martinian, perceiving that he would succumb to sin with her, leapt into the fire barefooted and remained in the fire until the pain brought tears to his eyes and subdued all lust within himself. When another temptation erupted, Martinian fled to an isolated rock in the sea and lived there. Following a shipwreck, a young woman swam to this rock. Martinian jumped into the sea to avoid any further temptation, but a dolphin rescued him on its back and by God's providence brought him to shore. Martinian then decided never to make any place his permanent home but to continually travel. In two years, Martinian passed through 164 towns, correcting and counseling the people. He finally reached Athens, where he reposed in the year 422 A.D.

3. THE FEMALE SAINTS ZOE AND PHOTINA

At first Zoe was a prostitute and a temptress of St. Martinian. When she saw this ascetic leap into the fire to subdue all lust in himself, she bitterly repented. Zoe retreated to a convent in Bethlehem, where, as a faster and recluse, she heroically lived a life of asceticism. Repenting of all her sins, she received from God the gift of working miracles. St. Photina was cast by the winds of the sea onto the island where St. Martinian had isolated himself. Martinian immediately fled the island, and Photina remained there in fasting and prayer until her death.

HYMN OF PRAISE **SAINT ZOE**

Zoe looked at the monk in the fire with horror,

How he burned with neither complaint, nor fear, nor sighing!
With horror and with shame, Zoe repented:
"Oh, what this man does, just to save his soul!"
Bowing and begging forgiveness, she began to weep,
Asking how to resist evil,
To save the soul, and resist evil in the flesh.
The man of God, he too began to weep for joy.
To Bethlehem, to the blessed Paula he sent her:
"Depart woman, save yourself. Go and do not perish,
Blessed Paulan will tell you everything else."
Completely humbled, Zoe departed over the turquoise sea;
Paula received her like a little sister, and instructed her.
Zoe cried, Zoe listened, endured and remained silent.
So twelve summers passed, twelve years.
Sister Zoe became known as an ascetic.
She washed her face with tears, and before her death she asked God--
Has God forgiven her? Has He or has He not?
At that moment a blind woman was led before Zoe's door:
"Pray that I might see--pray, pray!"
In tears Zoe prayed, and the woman received her sight.
Thus did Zoe know that she was forgiven.
God is glorified through sinners when they repent;
Then, through their miracles on earth, they shine like the stars.

REFLECTION

The great Stefan Nemanja--whose authoritative words were unconditionally heeded by everyone, and who caused people and emperors to tremble--became a monk and

served the monks of the Holy Mountain as an ideal example of meekness, humility, goodness and piety. Even his death was the death of a truly godly man and spiritual director. He became bedridden on February 7. He summoned St. Sava, placed his hands on him, and blessed him, saying: "My beloved child, the light of my eyes, comfort and protector in my old age! Behold, the time of our separation has arrived. Behold, the Lord is releasing me in peace. But you, my child, do not mourn because of our separation. For parting is the common cup of each and all; here we part from one another, but we will meet there, where there is no separation." On February 12, St. Simeon asked Sava to clothe him in a burial cassock, to spread a mat on the ground, lay him there and place a stone under his head. He then summoned all the monks and asked their forgiveness. At dawn on February 13, the voices of the monks chanting Matins reached the cell of the dying one. Once more St. Simeon's face beamed, and he gave up his soul to his God.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God:

1. As a Lamb born in the dwelling place of lambs;
2. As a Lamb persecuted by men of wolflike temper, such as Herod and others;
3. As the Sacrificial Lamb, Who patiently endured pain and death;
4. As the Victorious Lamb of God on the heavenly throne.

HOMILY

on love above every other love

"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37). The entire Gospel teaches that we should leave the lesser for the sake of the greater, the transient for the enduring, the worst for the best, the less valuable for the more valuable. If the Good News did not promise greater worth, who would leave the lesser? If the Gospel did not reveal the splendor of the precious goods, who would leave the cheaper goods? Who would leave milk and honey if he did not find something sweeter? Who would leave father and mother if he did not find someone closer in kinship? Who would leave children and friends if he did not recognize someone more dear? Who would willingly give his life over to suffering and death if he did not perceive immortal life? The Lord Christ is sweeter than milke and honey; He is a closer kinsman to us than our father and mother; more dear to us than our own children and friends; more precious than all visible treasures; more costly than this life, for He gives life eternal. Compared to Him, everything in the world is inferior,

trivial, bitter, weak, cheap and transitory. To whoever receives Him, it is easier to leave everything, because he has received the best and Him Who is the very best. O Lord Jesus, Treasury of all eternal riches, help us to unbind ourselves from everything and to cling to Thee, our Good and our Life.
To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ **Wednesday- February 23th - Holy Hieromartyr Haralambos – Divine Liturgy 09:00 AM**
- ❖ **Friday – February 22th – PARACLESIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NECTARIOS -05:00 PM**
- ❖ **Saturday – February 23th -THE VENERABLE SIMEON [MIROTOCIVI] THE MYRRH-GUSHER – MEMORIAL SATURDAY 09:00 AM Liturgy for repose**
- ❖ **MEATFARE SUNDAY (Sunday, February 27th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

Donations February 13, 2022
Offering - \$797.00 Candles - \$27.00
Donations

In Memory of Connie Bartis’ birthday from Joe Bartis - \$20
In Memory of Milka Tumbas \$100 from Dianna Dunnington
Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak
In Memory of Parents, Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Robert & Milica Knepp

In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich from Richard Kondas
In Memory of Ed Gartrell from Steve Purich
In Memory of Linda (Locher) Leckrone from Dorothy Podolak

HOME BLESSINGS

Please contact Father Dragan to schedule a time to have your Home Blessed!

(814) 244-4063

CONFESSION

**Father Dragan will have Confession following the Canon to St
Nectarios**

which is held every Saturday at 5:00 PM

SALE!!!!

**The kolo is selling Nut, Poppyseed, Apricot and Lekvar - \$10/each
And Pumpkin Rolls - \$8/each – while supplies last**

Please see Pat Niel

IMPORTANT DATES

TODAY

Sunday, February 20th

Men's Club Slava Celebration

Kumovi – Richard Kondas & George Kohan

With a Serbian Steak Dinner \$13

Open to the Public

Eat in or take out

Sunday, February 27th – Meatfare Sunday

Luncheon following Divine Liturgy

**(Today is the last day for eating meat and meat
products until Pascha, though eggs and
dairy products are permitted every day during the
coming week. This limited fasting
prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of
Great Lent.)**

LENTEN FISH FRIES

Fridays, March 4th thru April 15th

Please notify Suzette Gardenhour of the Friday's you can work!!