



The Righteous Simeon and Anna the Prophetess

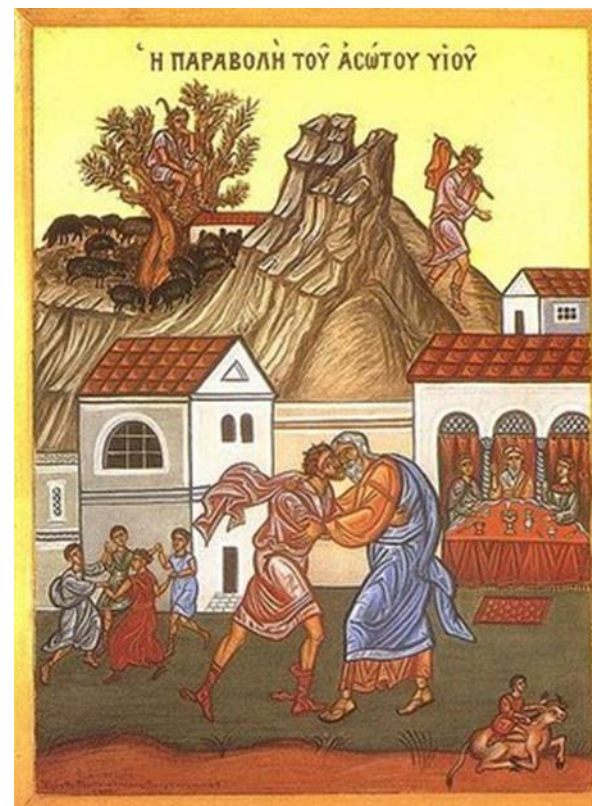
On February 3rd the Church remembers two people whose lives are extraordinary examples of patience. In the calendar they are called the “righteous God-receiver Simeon” and “Anna the Prophetess.”

The previous day is the Feast of the Encounter-Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, an event in which Simeon and Anna had central roles. Jesus Christ, a new baby, was brought by his parents into the Temple in Jerusalem. For the aged Simeon,

seeing Christ the Savior was the fulfillment of God’s long-awaited promise of the “consolation” of Israel. He knew very well the words of the prophets concerning this, for example: “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned...” (Isaiah 40:1) He knew that Isaiah had described a voice crying, “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (40:3). Now it had all been fulfilled in the preaching of John the Baptizer and the coming of Jesus Christ, and Simeon was ready to die in peace. Anna, a prophetess from a family of prophets, had fasted and prayed for decades in the Temple. On this day of the Savior’s coming, she recognized Him. She was prepared, though by this time she was well over eighty, to spread the good news to everyone.

One of the readings for February 3rd is about that quality of faithful patience that Simeon and Anna demonstrate so well. The Letter of James counsels, “Be patient therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient” (5:7-8).

The words remind us that things happen in God’s time, not ours. The farmer is patient with the land until God sends the rain. For Simeon and Anna, the time of waiting was very long, so their patience had to be very great. Whatever situations face us - the ones that require patience - may also stretch on. We must “strengthen our hearts” as Simeon and Anna did. So, we can’t just idly wait around for something to happen. We have to be ready for God to act at any moment, and not “grumble against one another” when our patience gets tested for a longer time than we might have expected and wished. Even a lengthy period of time in human reckoning is only an instant in God’s sight. So, no matter how far away it seems to us, James writes, “the coming of the Lord is near” (5: 8).



January 28, 2024

Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Octoechos Tone 2. Our Venerable Father Ephrem the Syrian (373).

Changeable Parts – Pages 3-4
in the *Booklet of Changeable Parts*
(Small white book)

Announcements:

Encounter of Our Lord (St. George parish, North Side)

On Friday, February 2nd, we will celebrate the Feast of the Encounter-Meeting of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To celebrate this Feast day we will have Thursday evening, February 1st, Divine Liturgy with the Blessing of Candles at 6:30 p.m. If you wish to have your candles blessed, please place them on the Tetrapod in the center of our Church. Remember to come and to celebrate this Feast Day that has been celebrated in the Eastern Church since the fourth century.

Mark your calendar: Next Adult Religious Class on: Feb. 15, 2024, at 6:30pm. Also, please mark other scheduled classes: March 14, Apr.18, May 16, and June 13, 2024

Next Coffee **Social and Children Liturgy** on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024. If you would like to sponsor it let know to Fr. Igor.

First All Souls Saturday:

The 1st All Souls Saturday will be celebrated on Saturday, February 3rd, at 10:00 a.m. On these All-Souls Saturdays it is tradition in our Holy Church to prayerfully remember our beloved departed family members, loved ones, etc. Divine Liturgy will be celebrated followed by a Panikhida when the names of all those deceased are commemorated out loud. Amongst your offertory envelopes you have a gray envelope for the commemoration of departed souls marked SOROKOUSTY. Please write the names of your deceased loved ones on this envelope and drop the envelope in the collection basket or bring them to the parish office.

Mardi Gras Party

Here in our local community, Brighton Heights Lutheran Church (3830 California Avenue) invites us to their annual Mardi Gras, which will take place on Sunday, February 11th from 12:00-4 p.m. Music will be by the Blue Orphans Band. Delicious food and coffee & desserts will be served. There is a Free Will offering to benefit various ministries. You can make your reservations by calling 412-761-8545.

Pyrohy

Our total income from last week’s sale was **\$539.00** Thanks to all our dedicated women and men that come faithfully to be part of this parish activity.

Collection- May God bless you...

The total for Sunday of January 21, 2024 was **1,267.00**
(Collection: \$880.00, Loose & candles: \$35.00; Pyrohy: \$539.00)

Sincere thanks to all for your kindness and generosity to our Holy Church!



Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The parable of the Prodigal Son speaks of many things including the terrible corrupting effects of sin, the unconditional love of God and the hard work and joy of REPENTANCE. Can repentance be joyful?

Repentance is much more than making a list and admitting our sins. It implies the willingness to make a radical transformation. Metanoia-μετάνοια, the Greek word for repentance, literally means to turn around, to change one’s mind or direction.

Repentance cannot be merely a recognizing sin in our lives. We must also change the way we think about ourselves, about God, about life itself. The Prodigal Son came to believe he was invincible. Notice, he did not change his mind on his own. Running out of money and into debt changed it for him, but a real transformation began in him when he realized the way to end his suffering: to return home. Facing the consequences at home, he reasoned, would be far better than continuing life in a pigpen. He changed his mind. He accepted that he was not invincible. I’ll bet at some point he attempted to blame his father for his ill fortune while he ate those pods. Do we not usually look for someone else to blame when things don’t go right? Eventually he came to know the truth. He came to understand that no one else was to blame. His understanding of himself changed at that moment. He came face to face with reality, with his stupid decision and irresponsible behavior. He stood and walked away not only from a pigpen, but from a lie.



If we want to make progress during this upcoming Great Fast-Lent we too must turn away from the lies around which we have built our lives. That is why the Church asks us to begin the Lenten journey by first seeking one another’s forgiveness and giving it in the great ritual of Forgiveness Vespers. We must take responsibility for our actions and forgive any who have wronged us. Then we are instructed through one of the Church’s holy prayers “to still all earthly and material thoughts.” On this Sunday, together with the Prodigal Son let us also embrace the idea of repentance as embracing a new way of seeing and living life. Amen.

