



# Sunday of the Prodigal Son

18 / 31 January

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1:** When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1:** As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

**Kondak for the Prodigal Son, Tone 3:** Having foolishly abandoned Thy paternal glory, I squandered on vices the wealth which Thou gavest me. Wherefore, I cry unto Thee with the voice of the Prodigal: I have sinned before Thee, O compassionate Father. Receive me as one repentant, and make me as one of Thy hired-servants.

## Epistle: I Corinthians 6: 12-20

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "The two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

## YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Lord overlooks nothing. Even secrets are open to Him. Let us then do everything as if He were dwelling in us. Thus we shall be His temples, and He will be within us as our God - as He actually is. This will be clear to us just to the extent that we love Him rightly.

*St. Ignatius of Antioch. Letter to the Ephesians. B#10, p. 92.*

## Gospel: St. Luke 15: 11-32

THE LORD SAID THIS PARABLE: A certain man had two sons: 12 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. 13 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. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 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. 21 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. 22 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: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27 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. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. 29 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: 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 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.

The second preparatory Sunday of Great Lent is termed the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. In the touching parable of the Prodigal Son read during the Liturgy, the Holy Church teaches us to rely on the mercy of God, provided we have sincerely repented of our sins. On this Sunday and the succeeding two Sundays, during the Polyeleos at the All-night Vigil, Psalm 136 is chanted: By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Sion... This psalm describes the suffering of the Jews during the Babylonian captivity and their longing for their fatherland. The words of this psalm teach us about our spiritual captivity, the captivity to sin, and that we should aspire towards our spiritual fatherland, the Heavenly Kingdom. The final words of this psalm scandalise many with reference to Blessed shall be he who shall seize and dash thine infants (those of the Babylonians) against the rock! Of course, the literal meaning of these words is brutal and unacceptable for the Christian, for the Lord Himself taught us to love and bless our enemies and to worship God in spirit and truth. These words gain a pure and lofty significance with a Christian and spiritual nature, for they mean, "Blessed is he who has a firm resolve to break, on the rock of faith, the newly forming evil thoughts and desires (as it were in their infant state) before they mature into evil deeds and habits".

*The Law of God*

### Saints of the Week

**18 / 31 January — St Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria - Born** in Alexandria in 296, he had from childhood an inclination to the spiritual life. He was a deacon with Archbishop Alexander and accompanied him to Nicaea, to the First Ecumenical Council in 325. At this Council, Athanasius became famed for his learning, his devotion and his zeal for Orthodoxy, and contributed very greatly to the containing of the Arian heresy and the strengthening of Orthodoxy. After the death of Alexander, Athanasius was chosen as Archbishop of Alexandria. He remained in his archiepiscopal calling for more than forty years, although he was not on the archiepiscopal throne the whole time. He was persecuted by heretics through almost the whole of his life, particularly by the Emperors Constantius, Julian and Valens, by Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia and many others, and by the heretic Arius and his followers. He was forced to hide from his persecutors in a well, a grave, private houses and the deserts. Twice he was forced to flee to Rome. Only just before his death did he have a peaceful period as a good shepherd with his flock, which truly loved him. There are few saints who have been so callously slandered and so criminally persecuted as St Athanasius. But his great soul endured all with patience for the love of Christ and at last emerged victorious from all these terrible and lengthy struggles. He often went to St Antony for advice and moral support, revering him as his spiritual father. He suffered greatly for the truth, until the Lord gave him rest in His kingdom as His faithful servant, in the year 373; St Maxim, Archbishop of Wallachia; Saint Leobardus of Marmoutier (Gaul), hermit.

**St. Dermot, abbot** - (also known as Diarmaid) - 6th century. Ruins of six churches can be seen on Inchcleraun (Innis Clothran) in Lough Ree, where Saint Dermot founded a monastery. His burial site there became a pilgrimage centre. It is believed that Dermot was a native of Connaught and of royal blood.

**19 January / 1 February — Fast Day - Our Holy Father Macarius the Great** - He was an Egyptian and one of the contemporaries of St Antony the Great. His father was a priest. He married in obedience to his parents' wishes, but his wife died very soon and he went off into the desert of Scetis, where he spent sixty years in toil and struggle, both physical and spiritual, for the Kingdom of heaven. When he was asked why he was so thin, both when he ate and when he fasted, he replied: 'From fear of God!' He succeeded so greatly in purifying his mind from evil thoughts and his heart from evil desires that God endowed him with abundant wonderworking gifts, such that he even raised the dead from the grave. His humility made men and demons marvel. A demon once said to him: 'There is only one thing in which I cannot excel you: that is not in fasting, for I never eat, nor in vigils, for I never sleep.' 'Then what is it?' asked Macarius. 'Your humility', replied the demon. Macarius often said to his disciple, Paphnutius: 'Condemn no man, and you will be saved.' He lived for ninety years. Before his death, St Antony and St Pachomius appeared to him from the other world and told him that he would die in nine days' time. And so it came to pass. Cherubim also appeared to him before his death and revealed the heavenly, blessed world to him in a vision, praised his labours and virtues and told him that they had been sent to take his soul to the heavenly Kingdom. He entered into rest in the year 390; Our Holy Father Macarius of Alexandria; St Arsenius, Bishop of Corfu; St Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus; Blessed Theodore, the Fool for Christ of Novgorod;

**St. Branwallader (Breward) of Cornwall and the Channel Islands, bishop of Jersey, (6th C.)** - the day of the translation of his relics. Saint Branwallader was a Celtic or Welsh monk, who is said to have been a bishop in Jersey. It is believed that Branwallader worked with Saint Samson (f.d. July 28) in Cornwall and the Channel Islands, where he is remembered at Jersey in St. Brelade. He may also have travelled with Samson to Brittany in northern France. In the Exeter Martyrology, Branwallader is described as the son of the Cornish king, Kenen.

**St. Nathalan** - Born near Aberdeen, Scotland; died 678. Nathalan was a nobleman, who possessed a large estate which he gave to the poor in order to become an anchorite. Nathalan is especially praised for having earned his living by farming, "which approaches nearest to divine contemplation." He fed his neighbours from his produce during times of famine, and found that farming served him as a type of penance. During his pilgrimage to Rome, Nathalan was consecrated bishop by the pope, because of his holiness and proficiency in profane and sacred learning. He took up residence at Tullicht (now in the diocese of Aberdeen), where he built a church, but he continued to use all his revenues for the relief of the poor as he had previously. He continued to earn his livelihood by the work of his hands, while living austerely, and preaching the Gospel. He is also credited with founding the churches at Bothelim and Colle.

**20 January / 2 February — Our Holy Father Euthymius the Great** - Born in the Armenian town of Melitene near the River Euphrates in 377, of noble and eminent parents, he was their only son. His mother Dionysia had prayed for a child, and had a heavenly vision concerning his birth. He lived in asceticism from his youth, at first in the vicinity of his town, but then, after a visit to Jerusalem at the age of 29, in the Wilderness of Pharan, between Jerusalem and Jericho. He filled his days and nights with prayer and meditation, contemplation and physical toil. Many disciples gathered round him, such as Cyriac the Hermit, Sava the Sanctified, Theoctistus and others. He was, by God's gift, a great worker of wonders: he drove out demons, healed grave illnesses, brought forth water in the desert, multiplied bread and prophesied. He taught his monks the love of hardship, saying: 'If you eat bread that comes not from your own labours, that means that you eat the labour of another'. When one of the younger brethren desired to fast more than others, he forbade him and ordered him to come to the common table, so that he should not become proud through his too-great fasting. He also said that it is not good for a monk to move from place to place, for, he said: 'A tree that is frequently transplanted does not bear fruit.' Whoever desires to do good can do it in the place where he is. On love, he said: 'As salt is to bread, so is love to the other virtues.' He went off into the desert in the first week of the Great Fast and remained there in silence and meditation on God until before Easter. During his lifetime, a great monastery grew up near his cave, which was for centuries as full of monks as a hive of bees. His last command was that there should be loving hospitality to guests in the monastery, and that its gate should never be closed. He entered into rest at the age of 97. Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem was at his funeral. The Patriarch waited the entire day while a great mass of people gave the saint the last kiss, and only in the evening was he able to finish the funeral. On the seventh day after his death, Euthymius appeared to his disciple Domitian in light and joy. St Euthymius was a true 'son of light'. He entered into rest in the year 473. The Holy Martyrs Innas, Nirras and Pinnas;

**St. Fechin, abbot** - was probably born at Luighne (Leyney), Ireland. He was trained by St. Nathy, was founding Abbot of Fobhar, or Fore, in Westmeath, and died of the plague that devastated Ireland in the year 665..

**21 January / 3 February — Our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor** - By birth a citizen of Constantinople and at first a high-ranking courtier at the court of the Emperor Heraclius, he then became a monk and the abbot of a monastery not far from the capital. He was the greatest defender of Orthodoxy against the so-called Monothelite heresy, which developed from the heresy of Eutyches. That is to say: as Eutyches asserted that there is in Christ only one nature, so the Monothelites asserted that there is in Him only one will. Maximus resisted this assertion and found himself in opposition to both the Emperor and the Patriarch. But he was unafraid, and persevered to the end in proving that there are in the Lord two wills and also two natures. By his efforts, one Council in Carthage and one in Rome stood firm, and both these Councils anathematised the Monothelite teaching. Maximus's sufferings for Orthodoxy cannot be described: tortured by hierarchs, spat upon by the mass of the people, beaten by soldiers, persecuted, imprisoned; until finally, with his tongue cut out and one hand cut off, he was condemned to exile for life in Skhimaris, where he gave his soul into God's hands in the year 662. Blessed Maximus the Greek; The Holy Martyr Neophytus; The Holy Martyr Agnes; in Wales, St. Laudog, confessor; in Scotland,

**St. Vimin (6<sup>th</sup> C)** - the founder of the monastery of Holywood at Nithsdale. It is related that St. Vimin was an abbot in Fifeshire when he was consecrated bishop. He actively evangelized the region. In order to avoid the temptations to pride that accompanied his many miracles, he moved to a deserted place and founded Holywood (Sacrumboscum), which later became famous for producing many holy and learned men

**22 January / 4 February — The Holy Apostle Timothy** - One of the Seventy, he was born in Lystra of Lycaonia of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. His mother and grandmother were praised by the Apostle Paul for their sincere faith (2 Tim. 1:4-5). He met the great Apostle for the first time in Lystra, and was the only witness of Paul's healing of the man lame from birth. Later, Timothy was an almost constant travelling-companion of Paul's, visiting Achaia, Macedonia, Italy and Spain with him. A great zealot for the Faith, a superb preacher and of a gentle spirit, Timothy contributed greatly to the spreading and establishing of the Christian faith. Paul called him his own son in the faith (I Tim. 1:2). After Paul's martyrdom, Timothy had St John the Evangelist as his teacher. But when the Emperor Domitian exiled John from Ephesus to the island of Patmos, Timothy remained in Ephesus as bishop. At the time of an idolatrous feast called Katagogium, the pagans, resentful of the Christians, made a merciless, masked attack on Timothy and killed him, in about the year 93. His honoured relics were later taken to Constantinople and buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles by the graves of St Luke the Evangelist and St Andrew the First-Called. Our Holy Father, the Martyr Anastasius; St. Brithwald, monk of Glastonbury, bishop of Sarum who removed his see from Ramsbury to Sarum.

**23 January / 5 February — Sunday of the Holy New Martyrs & Confessors of Russia (celebrated on the Sunday nearest to January 25 o.s.)** — In any case, the world can and must wholeheartedly use for its edification and correction the present suffering by fire of the Russian people. The Russian people undoubtedly will come out of this fire holier, stronger and greater than it ever was before. No good blacksmith throws nails into the fire to be rid of them, he does it to make something better out of them. We think and believe that the Creator of the Russian people allowed this great people to experience this flame of suffering not to punish and kill it, but in order that by its terrible example other peoples may come to their senses and understand that the Russian people will be even more greatly glorified before heaven and earth. Do not cry, but be happy. A great harvest of souls has ripened in Russia. In these days the tortured Russian people fill Paradise more than any other Christian people on earth.

*St. Nikolai (Velimirovic) of Ochrid*

"Blessed is God! And in our time martyrs have sprung up and we have been vouchsafed to see people slain for Christ, people who have shed their blood which has watered the whole Church" (3rd Homily of St. John Chrysostom on 1 Chronicles)

We also in our times together with the golden-mouthed preacher can say the same of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, who now stand in the choir of the God-pleasers before the throne of the King of Glory and intercede on behalf of our people.

The congregation of the New Martyrs of Russia consists of representatives of all the professions and ranks of the Russian land - beginning from the time of the Tsar-Martyr down to the last homeless wanderer, the finest children of our Fatherland, who were fated to water the whole Russian Church with their holy blood.

The tortures which the holy passion-bearers endured were little different from the Christian martyrdoms of the first centuries, and the refined cruelty of the modern persecutors in no way yields to the cruelty of their predecessors.

Being incited by the devil — the first cause of all persecution against the Church in all ages, the new tormentors subjected their victims to the same kinds of sufferings which the Jews, pagans, and Moslems used in the first and following centuries of persecution.

To these God-pleasers can be ascribed the words of the apostle concerning the first martyrs of the Church of God in the Old Testament ... of them many were "stoned, sawn asunder, were slain with the sword" "not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb 11:37, 35)

Tortures for Christ and death itself the new martyrs met fearlessly they rejoiced that in their sufferings they resembled their Redeemer.

Before their deaths many of them prayed for their tormentors, they blessed their murdered, they called them to repentance.

Their valour irradiates the Russian Church with a new glory presenting to the world a countless congregation of crowned passion-bearers. And together with them the whole Universal Church is harvesting the fruits of their victories. The New Martyrs have united heaven with the earth in common joy, for both the Church militant together with the Church triumphant now rejoices over them.

The celebration of the glorification of the Holy New-Martyrs and Confessors of Russia took place abroad on October 19/November 1, 1981.

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**The Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra** - He was born in 258 in the town of Ancyra of a pagan father and a Christian mother. His devout mother, Euphrosyne, prophesied a martyr's death for her son, and left this world when Clement was twelve years old. Her friend Sophia took Clement into her own home as her son and saw that he was brought up a Christian. Clement became so famed for his virtuous life that he was chosen as bishop of Ancyra at the age of twenty. He acquired a mature wisdom in his early years, and harnessed and conquered his body by great restraint. He ate only bread and vegetables, and never anything slaughtered or with blood. In the reign of Diocletian, he was tortured as terribly 'as anyone has ever been since the foundation of the world'. He spent twenty-eight years under torture and imprisonment. Eleven different torturers tormented him. When, at one time, they were smiting him on the face, spitting on him and breaking his teeth, he cried out to Domentian the torturer: 'You are doing me honour, O Domentian, not torturing me, for the mouth of my Lord Jesus Christ was struck in like manner, and His cheeks slapped; and lo, I, unworthy as I am, am now made worthy of this!' When he was brought before the Emperor Diocletian in Rome, the Emperor placed on one side various instruments of torture, and on the other side gifts—medals, clothing, money—whatever the Emperor was able to bestow, and then told Clement to choose. Christ's martyr, with a scornful glance at all the Emperor's gifts, chose the instruments of torture. And he was terribly tortured; piece by piece the flesh was flayed from his body until the bones showed white beneath. He was healed of these wounds, and was finally beheaded by a soldier in 312, while he was presiding at the Liturgy as bishop in the church in Ancyra. St Clement's miracles are without number. The Sixth Ecumenical Council; St Paulinus the Merciful;

**St. Colman** - Died c. 702. Saint Colman succeeded Saint Hierlug (Zailug) as abbot-bishop of Lismore in 698. During his rule the fame of Lismore monastery, Ireland reached its peak

**24 January / 6 February — Our Holy Mother Xenia** - Born in Rome, she was the only daughter of a famous senator. Drawn by the love of Christ, she refused to marry as her parents desired. In order to escape this, she fled from her home with two of her slaves and came to the island of Kos, to a place called Mylassa, where she started a community for virgins, remaining there in asceticism till her death. Though she was a weak woman, she had a man's perseverance in fasting, prayer and vigils. She often spent entire nights standing in prayer, was dressed more poorly than her sisters, and on her bread, when she ate, she often put ashes from the censer. At the hour of her death (in 450), a wonderful sign appeared over the monastery: a wreath of stars encircling a cross more resplendent than the sun. Many of the sick were healed by her relics. Her two slaves girls followed the example of their abbess in all things, and when they died, they were buried, by their wish, at the feet of blessed Xenia. The Holy Martyr Babylas; Our Holy Father Macedonius; Our Holy Father Philo, Bishop of Cyprus; Our Holy Father Dionysius of Olympus;

**St. Cadoc of Llancarvan Wales** - Son of Saint Gwynllyw, a king in Wales, a robber chieftain who led a band of 300; his mother, Saint Gladys, had been stolen in a raid on a neighbouring chief. Raised by an Irish monk; Cadoc's father had stolen the monk's cow, and when he came to demand its return, the king decided it was sign. Studied in Wales and Ireland. Priest. Once chased through a wood by an armed swineherd from an enemy tribe. His hiding place spooked an old, grey, wild boar that made three great leaps at him - then disappeared; Cadoc took this as a sign, and the location became the site of the great church and monastery at Llancarvan. He once saved his brother monks in a famine by tying a white thread to the foot of a (well-fed) mouse; he then following the thread to an abandoned, well-stocked, underground granary. Another time he and his brothers went out to meet a band of thieves, chanting and playing harps; it surprised the highwaymen so much, they turned and left. Lived as a hermit with Saint Gildas on the Island of Flatholmes off Vannes, Brittany. Established a monastery on a small island just off Brittany, joined by a stone bridge so local children could walk out for school. Returned to Britain to evangelize, and work with Christian survivors of Saxon raids. Born 6th century Welsh Died martyred by Saxons while serving at Mass c.580 near Weedon, Northamptonshire, England