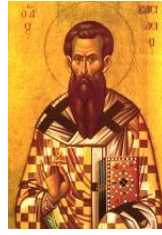


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
901 Sherman Drive, Utica New York 13501
Phone 315.732.4662 Email stbasilutica@gmail.com
Website www.stbasilutica.org



SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON
Saturday, January 30 & Sunday, January 31, 2021

~~~~~  
**WEEKLY SERVICES**

**Daily Liturgy:** Monday-Friday 8:30AM  
**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM  
**Matins/Orthos:** Sunday 9:00AM  
**Holy Confession:** Monday 4-6PM  
**Vespers:** Saturday 3:00PM  
**Holy Rosary:** Sunday 10:30AM

~~~~~  
SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, John & Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

~~~~~  
**WEEKLY COLLECTIONS. THANK YOU!**

Weekly Collection Jan 23/24: \$ 861.00 St Basil Website Donations: \$ 290.70  
Memorial Mass Offerings: \$ 10.00

~~~~~  
SPIRITUAL ADVICE OF THE DAY

“As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the Lord: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the Lord, “from now and forever.” (Isaiah 59:21)

~~~~~  
† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

**THIS SATURDAY, JANUARY 30**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Janet Chanatry & Family

**THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 31**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Mary Nassimos  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Cheryl Kopyt & Family  
† **Abdallah Ghryyeb**, By the Community of St. Basil

**NEXT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By David & Janet George  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Janet Chanatry & Family

**NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By David & Janet George  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Frank Calaprice  
† **Father Julien Eliane, 10<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By Robert Lalli

**THE PRODIGAL SON AND OUR HUMAN CONDITION**

We are not told the exact age of the young man when he decides to set off on his own, but countless commentators have depicted him as an adolescent. His behavior certainly bears this out. He has the selfish impatience of youth: he wants his inheritance now, even though his father is still alive. He is more interested in what the man’s money can buy than in the man himself.

In that, the young man repeats the choice made by our first parents who preferred the appetizing but forbidden fruit to continued fellowship with the One who provided it. He also images the choices we all make when we focus our attention on the fruits of creation rather than on the Creator who offers us a relationship with Himself. In any such choice we become the petulant adolescent whose first stabs at maturity always seem to require resentment of the parent if not outright rebellion.

On his own the Prodigal’s newfound independence seems to lead him into slavery rather quickly. He begins living what various translations call a “wild,” “reckless,” “loose” “riotous” “foolish,” “notorious,” “dissolute,” “wasteful,” or “prodigal” way of life. We are left to imagine what that might have involved; we certainly know what the result was. He spent everything he had and ended up with nothing. He wanted to be independent but did not understand that being independent does not free a person from being responsible.

No well-balanced person in our world wants to be dependent on another. We often forget, however, that our desire for human self-determination cannot lead us away from God without disastrous results. We inevitably end up spiritually bankrupt and living on the pig’s fodder of a Godless world.

Unlike many people, however, the Prodigal does something about his condition: he returns to his father. He repents. Still thinking of himself and his own needs, he plans to plead for the lowest place in his father’s household. The young man does not know with whom he is dealing.

**The Forgiving Father and the Mercy of God:** The father does not wait for his son to apologize or beg for forgiveness. He welcomes him home with open arms and calls for a celebration. He is the image of our heavenly Father who knows when one of His children seeks forgiveness and grants it at once, without demanding any form of penance or satisfaction. Note that the father does not go in search of his son when the lad is enjoying the wasteful life he has chosen or when he is miserable, but not yet resolved to return home. His mercy would bear fruit only when the son had come to truly desire it and so the father waits for his son to make the first move. But when the son does return, the father does not make him work for forgiveness; he gives it freely.

In this the father is unlike many of us who would want the ungrateful son to squirm before accepting him back home. We might feel justified in “teaching him a lesson,” but this is apparently not God’s way. When repentance truly touches the heart, the “lesson” has already been learned.

The Father’s extraordinary mercy is no excuse for taking advantage of Him: seeking the blessing of His house while not repenting in action as well as in words. As St Isaac the Syrian taught, “But the fact that repentance furnishes hope should not be taken by us as a means to rob ourselves of the feeling of fear, so that one might more freely and fearlessly commit sin” (Isaac the Syrian, First Collection: Homily Ten).

**Proclaiming the Mercy of God:** Our liturgy continually emphasizes the mercy of God. The beloved Polyeleos psalm sung so frequently in our churches at the most solemn occasions has as its refrain, “For His mercy endures forever, alleluia” The Typica psalms each proclaim the depths of God’s mercy to His People: “*forgives all your iniquity, he heals all your diseases, he redeems your life from the pit, he crowns you with steadfast love and mercy*” (Ps 102:3, 4). The second psalm is even more specific: “*He brings about justice for the oppressed; he gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin*” (Ps 146:7-9).

(Jan2021Leaflets)