

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Efthalia	Denny
Anthony	Pauline	Kathleen	John L.
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Jason	Silouan	Susan Mary
Maximus	Emily	Clint	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	John H.
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	Seraphim	Maria
Sophia	Danny	Katina	Jeffery
Andrea	Subdn. Gregory	Subdcn. Paul	

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige and Paul	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Barry Pierce	Rick P.	Susan K	Rdr. David
Anna	Brian	Hugh	Salvatore
Lane	Megan	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Clyde	Dan Brown
Pietra & Piero	Michael	Tad and Terra	Valentina
Mike	Ron	Brian	

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Joseph Visconti (+1/26)

June Henn (+2/2)

Olga Specian (+2/19)

Lorraine Solinko (+2/27)

Frances Dreyer (+2/1)

Angelina Visconti (+2/14)

Pauline LoGalbo (+2/22)

John Beach (+2/27)

Thoughts from the Fathers

Repentance is often simply identified as a cool and ‘objective’ enumeration of sins and transgressions, as the act of ‘pleading guilty’ to a legal indictment. Confession and absolution are seen as being of a juridical nature. But something very essential is overlooked – without which neither confession nor absolution have any real meaning or power. This ‘something’ is precisely the feeling of alienation from God, from the joy of communion with Him, from the real life as created and given by God. It is easy indeed to confess that I have not fasted on prescribed days, or

missed my prayers, or become angry. It is quite a different thing, however, to realize suddenly that I have defiled and lost my spiritual beauty, that I am far away from my real home, my real life, and that something precious and pure and beautiful has been hopelessly broken in the very texture of my existence. Yet this, and only this is repentance, and therefore it is also a deep desire to return, to go back, to recover that lost home.

-- *Alexander Schmemmann*

...at the Prodigal Son's greatest despair, hunger and horror, a spark was lit within him; a forgotten, undreamed-of spark. Whence this spark on dead coals? Whence a spark of life in a corpse? It has come from that which we mentioned at the beginning: that the father, in giving His son his portion, gave him something more than his share. He gave him, as well as dust, a spark of conscience and understanding. As though the wise and merciful father said to himself, when he divided a part of his goods for his younger son: "I'll give him this also: something of conscience and understanding; something, in fact, of that from which he wanted to be separated. Why not? - he'll need it. He's going off to a cold and hungry land, and when he is in greatest want, this one spark will be able to light his path back to me. All right: let him take it; he'll need it. This spark will save him.

-- *Saint Nikolai of Zicha*

In marriage, then, we are transfigured. Loneliness and egocentricity are overcome and personality is completed and perfected. In this light Father Alexander Elchaninov, a notable contemporary Orthodox priest and theologian describes marriage in terms of 'initiation' and 'mystery', in which a full transformation of the human person takes place, 'the enlargement of his personality, new eyes, new perception of life, birth into a new world, by means of it, in new fullness'. In the marital union of two individuals there is both the completion of their personalities and the birth of the fruit of their love, a child, whereby two become three.

~*Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev*

The storm and the tempests which beat against us are the temptations of this life, which in the world, as in a tempestuous sea, do not permit us to have a fair voyage free from pain, in a

calm sea, and one which is free from evils. The casting of Jonah from the ship into the sea, signifies the fall of the first man from life to death, who received that sentence because, through having sinned, he fell from righteousness: "Dust you art, and unto dust you shall return."

~ *The Mystery of Jonah by St. Methodius.*

He who really redeems his life, always dwelling on the thought and remembrance of death, and wisely withholding the intellect (nous) from the passions, is in a far better position to discern the continual presence of demonic provocations than the man who chooses to live without being mindful of death. The latter, by purifying the heart through spiritual knowledge alone, but not keeping in mind any thought of grief, may sometimes appear to control all the destructive passions by his skill; yet he is unwittingly fettered by one of them, the worst of all – pride, into which, abandoned by God he sometimes falls. Such a person must be very vigilant lest deluded by conceit, he becomes deranged. For as Saint Paul says (cf 1 Cor 4:6, 18, 19; 1) souls that gather knowledge from here and there tend to become haughty and disdainful towards their inferiors, as they regard them; they lack the spark of the love which builds up. But he who all the day long is mindful of death discerns the assaults of the demons more keenly, and he counter-attacks and repels them.

~*Saint Philotheos of Sinai*

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The Prodigal Son Interpreted Hesychastically by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos

Regarding the meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, St. Gregory Palamas interprets the parable hesychastically. St. Luke the Evangelist presents Christ's parable, in which we read: "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living" (Lk. 15, 13). St. Gregory does not analyze the parable in terms of morals, but theologically. He sets forth its true dimensions. Having the mind of Christ, experiencing the mystery of the spirit, he grasps its true meaning. Belonging organically, as he does, to the Orthodox

Tradition, he realizes that the Fall of man, the so-called Ancestral Sin, is in reality a darkening, obscuring and deadening of the nous, whereas the resurrection of man is the vitalization of the dead nous. It is in this light that he also interprets the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

The nous is man's real wealth. "Above all else the nous is our innate essence and wealth". As long as we remain on the ways of salvation "we have our nous gathered in itself and in the first and highest nous, God". Our salvation is that we have our nous in God. But when we open a door to the passions, then our nous "is immediately scattered, wandering all the time around things that are carnal and worldly, around the manifold pleasures and passionate thoughts about them". Then a man's nous becomes prodigal, and in general he is called prodigal. The wealth of the nous is prudence, and it distinguishes good from evil as long as we continue to keep Christ's commandments. But when the nous withdraws from God, then prudence too is scattered into prostitution and imprudence.

Man's soul has not only a rational aspect but also appetitive and incensive aspects. In its natural condition man's nous "directs desire towards the one and truly existing God, the only Good One, the only Judge, the only one who provides pleasure unmixed with any pain." But when the nous is in the unnatural state, when it departs from God and is darkened, then desire is dispersed into many self-indulgent appetites: "Drawn on the one hand towards a desire for foods that are not needed, secondly towards the desire for unnecessary things, and thirdly towards the desire for vain and inglorious glory". This comes about through desire. But when the nous is being deadened, the incensive power too is similarly taken captive. When the nous is in its natural state, when, that is to say, it is united with God, then it rouses the incensive power only against the devil and utilises the soul's courage against the devil and the passions. But when it disregards the divine commandments, then "one fights against one's neighbour, rages against those of the same race, is infuriated with those who do not assent to one's irrational appetites, and alas, one becomes a homicidal man...".