

Saint Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church



Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (O.C.A.)

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February Bulletin 2021

Services' Schedule / Programul Slujbelor

Sunday, February 7 - Holy Hierarch Parthenius, bishop of Lampsacus; Ven. Luke of Hellas. 16th Sunday after Pentecost (Parable of the Talents). Epis. 2 Corinthians 6:1-10. Gos. Matthew 25:14-30. Tone 2. Mat. Gos. 2

9:10 am — Matins/Utrenia

10:00 am — Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie

Friday, February 12th - 5:00 pm - Holy Confession/ Spovedanie - by appointment

Sunday, February 14th - Ven. Auxentius, Maron & Abraham. 17th Sunday after Pentecost (Canaanite Woman). Epis. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18, 7:1. Gos. Matthew 15:21-28. Tone 3. Mat. Gos. 3.

9:10 am — Matins/Utrenia

10:00 am — Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie

Friday, February 19th - 5:00 pm - Holy Confession/ Spovedanie - by appointment

Sunday, February 21 - Ven. Timothy; Holy Hierarch Eustathios, archbishop of Antioch. 33rd Sunday after Pentecost (Publican and the Pharisee).

Epis. 2 Timothy 3:10-15. Gos. Luke 18:10-14. Tone 4. Mat. Gos. 4 (Triodion begins)

9:10 am — Matins/Utrenia

10:00 am — Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie

12:00 - noontime - Annual Meeting

Friday, February 26th - 5.30 pm- *Spiritual Conseling / Consiliere Spirituala/ Spovedanie - by appointment.*

Sunday, February 28th -+) *Venerable John Cassian and Germanus of Dobrogea; Ven. Basil the Confessor; Hieromartyr Proterius, patriarch of Alexandria. 34th Sunday after Pentecost (Prodigal Son). Epis. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Gos. Luke 15:11-32. Tone 5. Mat. Gos. 5.*

9:10 am — *Matins/Utrenia*

10:00 am — *Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie*

Question: How Does Forgiveness Bring Freedom?

Answer:

First, our forgiveness of others is the precondition for personal forgiveness. In the words of our Lord, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” These haunting words from the lips of our Lord are reminiscent of one of the most riveting parables Jesus ever communicated to His disciples.

It was the story of two debtors. The first owed his master about twenty million dollars—more than he could repay if he lived to be a thousand years old. The second owed the first less than a twenty-dollar bill. When the day of reckoning came, the master forgave the multi-million-dollar debtor every last penny. Instead of being overwhelmed with gratitude, the man who was forgiven much tracked down the man who owed little, grabbed him by the throat, and dragged him away to debtors’ prison.

When the master heard all that had happened, his condemnation was swift and severe. The ungrateful servant was thrown into prison to be tortured until he could repay his debt in full. When Jesus finished telling the story, He turned to His disciples and said, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

The disciples immediately got the point. The debts we owe one another are like mere twenty-dollar bills compared to the infinite debt we owe our heavenly Father. Since we have been forgiven an infinite debt, it is a horrendous evil to even

consider withholding forgiveness from those who seek it. If, for even a moment, we might wonder whether or not to forgive our debtors, this parable should immediately soften our hearts, illumine the darkness of our minds, and activate within our consciousness the freedom that comes from forgiveness.

Furthermore, in concert with the Master Teacher, Saint John the Theologian urged his “dear children” in the faith—those who have been “forgiven on account of Christ’s name”—to continually confess their sins. Confession purifies our hearts, restores the joy of our salvation, and liberates us with the freedom that springs from forgiveness.

In harmony with Jesus and John, Saint James the Just, “brother” of our Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem, exhorts us to confess our sins to one another and also to God. The grammatical construction is a present active subjunctive, denoting continual confession that brings with it lifegiving forgiveness and liberating freedom.

Moreover, each time we partake of the Eucharist, we examine ourselves and confess our sins so that we will not come under judgment. Continuous confession brings with it the certain promise that God is “faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” And those who have been freed from sin are free indeed.

Finally, morning, noon, and night when we pray, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we also have forgiven those who trespass against us,” we are reminded of the infinite price that was paid so that we might be forgiven. We must ever be mindful that it was God Himself who hung on the cross so that we could be reconciled to Him for time and for eternity.

Multitudes have lost touch with this essential truth because they have little concept of the depravity of the human heart. As one postmodern American remarked, “The day I die, I should only have to look up at my Maker and say, ‘Take me.’ Not ‘Forgive me.’” Karl Menninger once lamented that we live in an I’m-OK-you’re-OK world. In *Whatever Became of Sin?* he compared OK-ness in the face of human depravity to a bluebird on a dung heap. The antidote to OKness is brokenness. And brokenness is the road map by which we find our way back to an intimate relationship with God in whom we experience the joy of ultimate freedom.

King David provides the quintessential example. After the prophet Nathan confronted him with his sin, he cried out, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my

transgressions.” His anguished cry brought with it a freedom that is inextricably woven into the fabric of forgiveness.

So, how does forgiveness bring freedom? First, as Jesus put it, “If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Or in the words of Jesus, “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” Second, continual confession liberates us with the freedom that springs from forgiveness. And third, brokenness is the road map by which we find our way back to intimacy with the triune God in whom we experience the joy of the ultimate freedom of forgiveness.

Announcements:

1. If you are interested to join the Holy Liturgy on Sundays, please contact John Igna at: john_igna@yahoo.ca He will be in charge of making the lists for each service.

Thank you for your cooperation and for understanding!

2. Safety Protocol:

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind when considering coming to mass:

-If you are feeling unwell (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose) please do not come.

-If you have traveled outside the country in the last 14 days you will not be admitted.

-You are required to maintain physical distancing of 2 meters (6 ft) at all times except with the people in your household.

-You are required to sanitize your hands upon entering and exiting the church.

-You are required to wear a mask in order to attend.

-In accordance with public health safety measures, service attendance will be restricted to ensure proper Social Distancing.

3. During this time of the year, I am visiting each of the parishioners’ houses in order to bless them. Due to the Pandemic conditions and restrictions the blessing of the houses has been cancelled until further notice.

God Bless you all!
Father Lucian

