

THE TROPHYBEARER

Pastoral Thoughts

This month, the Church invites us to reflect on the great feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. This event is a moment of profound theological significance and personal transformation. It reveals Christ as the fulfillment of the Law and the long-awaited Savior of the world.

The Presentation of Christ is rooted in the Old Testament law. According to the Law of Moses, every firstborn male was to be consecrated to the Lord, and a purification offering was to be made forty days after birth for the cleansing of the mother.

By following the Law of Moses, we see that Christ came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. He entered fully into our human condition, sanctifying every stage of life and every action by His divine presence. For us, this is a reminder that holiness is found not in rebellion against God's commandments but in faithful submission to His will.

When the infant Jesus was brought into the Temple, He was met by the righteous Simeon. Simeon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recognized the child as the Christ and proclaimed Him to be a light to enlighten the nations and the glory of God's people, Israel.

We see the universal mission of Christ that was revealed. He is not only the Savior of Israel but also the Savior of the entire world. In Him, the ancient promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob find their ultimate fulfillment. The light of Christ shines into the darkness of the world, bringing hope to all who sit in the shadow of death.

This light is both a comfort and a call. We are called to walk in His light, rejecting the darkness of sin and embracing the path of righteousness. Moreover, we are called to reflect His light in the world, becoming beacons of hope and love to those around us.

Simeon told the Virgin Mary that a sword would pierce her soul also. This points to the suffering that the Theotokos would endure as she witnessed the passion and death of her Son. It reminds us that the Christian life is not without its trials.

Just as His light reveals the truth, it also exposes the sin and brokenness of the world. This can bring conflict and suffering as the world resists the transformative power of God's grace. Yet, in this suffering, we are united to Christ, sharing in His redemptive work.

As we celebrate this feast, let us imitate the faith and devotion of those present in the Temple that day. Like the Theotokos, let us offer our lives wholly to God. Like Simeon, let us recognize Christ as our salvation and receive Him with joy. Like Anna, let us dedicate ourselves to prayer and fasting, proclaiming the good news of Christ to all who will listen.

In this feast, we are reminded that Christ is the light of the world. Let us open our hearts to His light, allowing it to transform us and guide our steps. Let us also carry that light into the world, becoming instruments of God's love and mercy. Amen.



This issue:

Pastoral Thoughts

PAGE 01

Epistle Readers

PAGE 02

Parish Council Groups

PAGE 02

Evening Meal Volunteers

PAGE 02

Prospora Makers/Coffee
Social Hosts

PAGE 02

Lives of the Saints

PAGE 03

Church Calendar

PAGE 07

PARISH NEWS

Epistle Readers

Anyone wishing to become an Epistle Reader, Please Contact Father Michael

Sunday, February 2, 2025: The Presentation of the Lord: Alexa Florence

Sunday, February 9, 2025: The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee:
Mary Rankin

Sunday, February 16, 2025: The Sunday of the Prodigal Son:
Georgjean Pitsoulakis

Sunday, February 23, 2025: Judgment Sunday: Kim Eastland

Evening Meal Volunteers

February 26, 2025: Susan Coin and Cathy Farrell

April 23, 2025: Kathy and Kevin Begyn

May 28, 2025: Dennis and Nancy Spurgetis

June 25, 2025: Father Michael, Presbyteria Maria and Patti Kenyon

July 23, 2025: Penny McGimpsey and Angela Spurgetis

August 27, 2025: Mary and Kim Winters and George and Diane Karoules

September 24, 2025: Dena Manta and Alexa Florence

October 22, 2025: Randy and Chris Smith

November 20, 2025: (Thursday) Ted Pitsoulakis and Jimmy Pliakos

December 18, 2025: (Thursday) Deacon Paul and Deaconess Romilie Speed

Anyone interested in taking part in this worthwhile ministry should contact Mary Winters at 563-726- 2880

Pastoral Notes

1. The week of the Publican and the Pharisee, the first week of the Triodion, is a fast-free week. That means we can eat anything any day and still receive Holy Communion on Sunday. It is Fast-free because we do not wish to be like the Pharisee who fasted twice a week and was hypocritical, so we do not fast this week.
2. The week following the Prodigal Son, the second week of of the Triosion, is a normal fasting week.
3. The week following Judgement Sunday, that is, the third week of the Triodion, is fast-free from everything except meat. That means we are allowed to eat anything except meat on any day including Wednesday and Friday, and still receive Holy Communion on Sunday.

Parish Council Sunday Duty Schedule

Sunday, February 2, 2025: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Pete Hadjis

Sunday, February 9, 2025: Kim Eastland, Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, and Ted Pitsoulakis

Sunday, February 16, 2025: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

Sunday, February 23, 2025: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Pete Hadjis

PROSPHORA MAKERS

Sunday, February 2, 2025: Open

Sunday, February 9, 2025: Open

Sunday, February 16, 2025:
Open

Sunday, February 23, 2025:
Open

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Sunday, February 2, 2025:

Tom And Jenny Bakeris

Sunday, February 9, 2025:

Patricia Andrews

Sunday, February 16, 2025:

John And Kelsey Blamoun

Sunday, February 23, 2025: No
Coffee Hour/Philoptochos Meat
Fare Luncheon

PARISH REGISTRY

Chrismation

The Servant of God, Micah Bischoff, was Confirmed into the Orthodox Church on January 12, 2025. The Sponsor is Grant Metzger.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

The Presentation of the Lord (February 2)

When the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8). On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master. . ." And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification.

Saint Theodore the Commander and Great Martyr (February 8)

The holy Martyr Theodore was from Euchaita of Galatia and dwelt in Heraclea of Pontus. He was a renowned commander in the military, and the report came to the Emperor Licinius that he was a Christian and abominated the idols. Licinius therefore sent certain men to him from Nicomedia, to honor him and ask him to appear before him. Through them, however, Saint Theodore sent back a message that it was necessary for various reasons, that Licinius come to Heraclea. Licinius, seeing in this a hope of turning Saint Theodore away from Christ did as was asked of him.

When the Emperor came to Heraclea, Saint Theodore met him with honor, and the Emperor in turn gave Theodore his hand, believing that through him he would be able to draw the Christians to the worship of his idols. Seated upon his throne in the midst of the people, he publicly bade Theodore offer sacrifice to the gods. But Theodore asked that the emperor entrust him with the most venerable of his gods, those of gold and silver, that he might take them home and himself attend upon them that evening, promising that the following day he would honor them in public. The Emperor, filled with joy at these tidings, gave command that Theodore's request be fulfilled.

When the Saint had taken the idols home, he broke them in pieces and distributed the gold and silver to the poor by night. The next day a centurion named Maxentius told Licinius that he had seen a pauper pass by carrying the head of Artemis. Saint Theodore, far from repenting of this, confessed Christ boldly. Licinius, in an uncontrollable fury, had the Saint put to many torments, then crucified. While upon the cross, the holy Martyr was further tormented -- his privy parts were cut off, he was shot with arrows, his eyes were put out, and he was left on the cross to die. The next day Licinius sent men to take his corpse and cast it into the sea; but they found the Saint alive and perfectly whole. Through this, many believed in Christ. Seeing his own men turning to Christ, and the city in an uproar, Licinius had Theodore beheaded, about the year 320. The Saint's holy relics were returned to his ancestral home on June 8, which is also a feast of the Great Martyr Theodore.

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins (February 9)

The Pharisees were an ancient and outstanding sect among the Jews known for their diligent observance of the outward matters of the Law. Although, according to the word of our Lord, they "did all their works to be seen of men" (Matt. 23:5), and were hypocrites (ibid. 23: 13, 14, 15, etc.), because of the apparent holiness of their lives they were thought by all to be righteous, and separate from others, which is what the name Pharisee means. On the other hand, Publicans, collectors of the royal taxes, committed many injustices and extortions for filthy lucre's sake, and all held them to be sinners and unjust. It was therefore according to common opinion that the Lord Jesus in His parable signified a virtuous person by a Pharisee, and a sinner by a Publican, to teach His disciples the harm of pride and the profit of humble-mindedness.

Since the chief weapon for virtue is humility, and the greatest hindrance to it is pride, the divine Fathers have set these three weeks before the Forty-day Fast as a preparation for the spiritual struggles of virtue. This present week they have called Harbinger, since it declares that the Fast is approaching; and they set humility as the foundation for all our spiritual labors by appointing that the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee be read today, even before the Fast begins, to teach, through the vaunting of the Pharisee, that the foul smoke of self-esteem and the stench of boasting drives away the grace of the Spirit, strips man of all his virtue, and casts him into the pits of Hades; and, through the repentance and contrite prayer of the Publican, that humility confers upon the sinner forgiveness of all his wicked deeds and raises him up to the greatest heights.

All foods are allowed the week that follows this Sunday.

THE PRODIGAL SON (FEBRUARY 16)

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man.

SATURDAY OF SOULS (FEBRUARY 22)

Through the Apostolic Constitutions (Book VIII, ch. 42), the Church of Christ has received the custom to make commemorations for the departed on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after their repose. Since many throughout the ages, because of an untimely death in a faraway place, or other adverse circumstances, have died without being deemed worthy of the appointed memorial services, the divine Fathers, being so moved in their love for man, have decreed that a common memorial be made this day for all pious Orthodox Christians who have reposed from all ages past, so that those who did not have particular memorial services may be included in this common one for all. Also, the Church of Christ teaches us that alms should be given to the poor by the departed one's kinsmen as a memorial for him.

Besides this, since we make commemoration tomorrow of the Second Coming of Christ, and since the reposed have neither been judged, nor have received their complete recompense (Acts 17:31; II Peter 2:9; Heb. 11:39-40), the Church rightly commemorates the souls today, and trusting in the boundless mercy of God, she prays Him to have mercy on sinners. Furthermore, since the commemoration is for all the reposed together, it reminds each of us of his own death, and arouses us to repentance.

JUDGEMENT SUNDAY (FEBRUARY 23)

The foregoing two parables -- especially that of the Prodigal Son -- have presented to us God's extreme goodness and love for man. But lest certain persons, putting their confidence in this alone, live carelessly, squandering upon sin the time given them to work out their salvation, and death suddenly snatch them away, the most divine Fathers have appointed this day's feast commemorating Christ's impartial Second Coming, through which we bring to mind that God is not only the Friend of man, but also the most righteous Judge, Who recompenses to each according to his deeds.

It is the aim of the holy Fathers, through bringing to mind that fearful day, to rouse us from the slumber of carelessness unto the work of virtue, and to move us to love and compassion for our brethren. Besides this, even as on the coming Sunday of Cheese-fare we commemorate Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight -- which exile is the beginning of life as we know it now -- it is clear that today's is reckoned the last of all feasts, because on the last day of judgment, truly, everything of this world will come to an end.

All foods, except meat and meat products, are allowed during the week that follows this Sunday.



St. George Philoptochos' Meat Fare Luncheon



Lunch • Fellowship

Sunday
February 23

Following
Liturgy

Gold
Room

Adults: \$15

Children (12-under) \$10

Greek Salad, Chicken Kapama, Desert

Please join us for our meat fare luncheon!

2025 FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 The Presentation of the Lord 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes following Holy Communion	3	4	5 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum	6 6:00 p.m. Special Metropolis Assembly	7 Fast Day	8
9 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (The Triodion Begins) 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion	10	11 Fast Free	12 Fast Free 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	13 Fast Free	14 Fast Free 9:00 a.m. Women's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)	15 Fast Free
16 Sunday of the Prodigal Son 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion	17	18 6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	19 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	20	21 Fast Day	22 1st Saturday of Souls 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy
23 Judgement Sunday "Meat-fare Sunday" 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion Philoptochos Apokreatiko Luncheon following the Divine Liturgy	24 Fasting from meat only	25 Fasting from meat only	26 Fasting from meat only 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	27 Fasting from meat only	28 Fasting from meat only	