

brutality of tribal warfare, and the human penchant and perversion for revenge. The *little infants* which were left alive in wars would grow up to take revenge on and destroy the warrior who was so careless (just as our unchecked *logismi* can grow into passions which destroy *our* unseen warfare). We are not as removed from that brutal idea as we think. The basic plot of the movie **Godfather II** is that little Vito Corleone is the infant (small child in this case), whom the Sicilian Mafia boss wants to kill (having just killed the rest of Vito's family). The boss was aware that if Vito were left alive, it could be bad for him later in life. The Great Fast offers an invitation and the tools for us to change, to reorient our lives, thoughts, words, deeds and goals toward the Kingdom and Christ's life. The intrusive "little infant thoughts" —seemingly so harmless—that lead us to distraction, despair, confusion and sin, are thereby overcome. We empower the soul by prayer to the Almighty God to put the stranglehold on our unruly desires, self-pity, and self-justification. By God's grace then, the soul alone controls who can operate in the neighborhood of our heart, and infusing our life with grace until it makes us an "offer we can't refuse!" (*borrowed from a forgotten source*).

Blini Brunch

Complete with sour cream, lox, herring, and caviar...and of course, butter, syrup and bacon!!

Church Hall
Sunday, February 19, Noon

Please come enjoy Blini with us as we prepare to enter that wonderful time of Lent.

Prices for the Blini Brunch will be a la carte.

Wine, juice, coffee and tea will be available for a small additional charge.

Children's plates are available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 12, 2017 - Sunday of the Prodigal Son

• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

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 Savior, 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.

• KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

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.

• KONTAKION OF THE PRODIGAL SON, Tone Three:

Foolishly I sprang away from Thy great fatherly glory and dispersed in wicked deeds the riches that Thou didst give me. With the Prodigal I therefore cry unto Thee now: I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. But receive me in repentance; and make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 11: 5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 12: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wed., Feb. 15: 6 PM, Vespers
6:30 PM, Talk on the Incarnation, Parish Hall

- WELCOME:

We welcome Fr. Peter Robicheau from St. Basil Orthodox Church in Wilmington, SC.

- STEPS TOWARD GREAT LENT:

Sunday, February 19 is the last day to consume meat products (including chicken and lamb!) until Pascha. The next weekend, February 26, is *Cheese-fare*, also known as the “Sunday of Forgiveness.” It will be the final day to eat dairy and eggs. However, more importantly, on that day we have the Sunday afternoon 1:15 PM Vespers with the *Rite of Forgiveness*. The Church teaches us that participation in “Forgiveness Vespers” is *essential* for each one of us as members of a parish, members of one another (of course, there are exceptions for pastoral and practical reasons. Legalism is not helpful). Let’s all make the effort to come to the Service. —Fr. Lawrence

- CONGRATULATIONS:

Members elected to the Parish Council at the Annual Meeting last week are: Tom Pellizzer, Debbie Buse, Kathy Ramos, Kendra Meshnik, Ted Dechant, Freddie Myles and George Barsi. They join Serge Anderson, Lisa Ann Wespiser, Bonnie Alexander and Deacon Jeremiah Crawford (who have one more year to serve). The first meeting will be Thursday, February 23, at 7 PM.

- WEDNESDAY LECTURE:

Wednesday, Feb. 15 after Vespers: “On the Incarnation.” Ambrose Inlow will give a talk on how the Incarnation is the supreme hope for man’s body and soul. He will begin by looking at Plato’s hope for man’s soul and body, then move through the expressed hope of a few Jewish rabbis, thus ultimately arriving at the sweet and divine teachings of St. John of Damascus and St. Dionysius the Areopagite, on how the divine body of the Word of God is the supreme hope for man’s knowledge of God and union in Him.

- FROM THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM—Fr. Alexander Men:

“*Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother.*” You understand this. The greatest cure from condemnation is the ability to criticize oneself. We are extremely careful—I would say observant and even psychologically sophisticated—when we are considering the sins of

our neighbors or the sins of other people. Here we display maximum knowledge of all moral laws in all their subtleties. Here we act like strict judges, although we have no right to do so, since we ourselves are guilty of the very things of which we condemn others. You ask me: perhaps this is appeasement and compromise with evil? Under no circumstances. Never. We must call evil by its name. But we must have compassion for the person who falls into this sin. This is the essence of this prayer read daily with prostrations during Great Lent. *From the lecture “Great Lent,” delivered on April 1, 1989 the year before he was martyred—with an ax—on his way to serve Divine Liturgy.*

- BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON (reprint from 2015):

On the three Sundays prior to Great Lent we sing Psalm 136, which begins with the phrase: “By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.” This was a psalm sung by the Jewish people who had been taken as captive slaves to Babylon (597–538 BC) after the Temple and city of Jerusalem had been destroyed. It is a lament of exile, enslavement and bitterness, not in Egypt as before, but in Babylon. In scripture, pagan Babylon stands for defeat, loss, sin, humiliation and alienation from God. These themes link us to the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), who is in wretched exile in a “far country” rather than Paradise, a long way from his father’s house. The ancient Jews in Babylon and the Prodigal remind us that there are many things which exile and estrange us from our Loving Father, from “normal life” and from the Kingdom, and so we sing this Psalm from the depths of our sorrow. In its final verse, we hear words which express the utter frustration and devastation of having lost home, family and God, words of violence and outrageous revenge by a people who have been egregiously wronged: *Happy shall he be, that shall take and dash thine infants against the rock. Alleluia.* Of course we recoil in horror at such words. Perhaps those that have forgotten the principles of understanding the Scriptures would like to remove that Psalm from the Bible? They are not aware that we are to look past the historical reality of those people wanting revenge for the suffering visited upon them by the Babylonians. We are to look at the underlying spiritual need—within ourselves—to overcome sin. In that light, we understand the Rock to be Christ (see 1 Cor. 10:4), and the infants, our “intrusive thoughts” (*logismi*) which tempt us into sin. The psalm expresses the