

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church CROSSINGVILLE

02-12-2023

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Glory Forever!

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 2. St. Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch (381). St. Aleksy (Alexius), Metropolitan of Moscow, Wonderworker of All Russia (1378). St. Meletius, Archbishop of Khar'kov and Akhtyrsk (1840). Ven. Mary (who was called Marinus), and her father, Ven. Eugene, at Alexandria (6th c.). St. Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople (895). St. Kristo the Gardener (Albania—1752). The "Ivéron" (Iberian) Icon of the Mother of God.

HOLY HYMNS

Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal, You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead. And when from the depths You raised the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out:// "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

Tone 4 Troparion

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith, / an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence. / Because of your lowliness, Heaven was opened to you. / Because of your poverty, riches were granted to you. / O holy Bishop Meletios, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Tone 3 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

I have recklessly forgotten Your glory, O Father;
and among sinners I have scattered the riches which You gave me.
And now I cry to You as the Prodigal: "I have sinned before You, O merciful Father; receive me as a penitent, // and make me as one of Your hired servants!"

Kontakion — Tone 6

Fearing your spiritual boldness, the apostate Makedonios fled, / and we your servants, celebrating your service with love, flee to you as an intercessor, O Meletios, / converser with Angels, and fiery sword of Christ our God, smiting all the godless; / and we sing to you, as a lamp which enlightens all.

Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation. (Ps. 117:14)
V. The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death. (Ps. 117:18)

Tone 2

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you! (Ps. 19:1)
V. Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call! (Ps. 19:9)

HOLY SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (Epistle)

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Luke 15:11-32 (Gospel)

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and

joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'" **And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"

Pray without ceasing...

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need– Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Joseph, Fr. Zachariah, Iguman Patrick, Hiremonk Philip, Fr. Dušan, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Mat. Trudi, Josiah, Don, John(Chuck), Karen, Susan, Mary B. Bill S., Timothy, Delani, Aaron Jeremiah, Sandy, William, Paul, Tanya, Anna, Kyra and her child, Grace and her child, Mary and her child

Homebound -Mary G,

Catechumens - Bob, Gene, Julie, Lilly, Helena, Prudence

Inquirers – Kathy, Carin, Dan, Jarrod, Kimber, Michael

Special requests... Gilbert, Joanne, Anthony, Paul, James, Helen, Laura, Laken, Paul, Cletus, Nina, Declan, Bria, Jemma, Savannah, Vivian, John (Add your own requests here)...

Departed : Margaret, Valentina

Parish Services and Activities

www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

Sat. Feb. 18th – Parish Council Meeting 2:00pm- 4:00pm

Great Vespers 4:00pm

Sun. Feb. 19th – Hours, Divine Liturgy, No Parish Education, Catechumens Class, Pancake and Sausage Breakfast...

Parish Bowling Outing at Cascade Park Club in Erie from 5:30-7:30 - \$7 includes bowling and pizza see Olivia Today to reserve a spot.

Wed. Feb. 22nd – Daily Vespers – 5:30pm

Sat. Feb. 25th – Great Vespers – 4:00pm

Sun. Feb. 26th – Forgiveness Vespers following Divine Liturgy

Fr. Daniel is out of town this week contact Fr. Nic for emergencies

Saint Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch

Saint Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch, was Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia (ca. 357), and afterwards he was summoned to Antioch by the emperor Constantius to help combat the Arian heresy, and was appointed to that See.

Saint Meletius struggled zealously against the Arian error, but through the intrigues of the heretics he was thrice deposed from his cathedra by the Emperor Constantius who had become surrounded by the Arians and had accepted their position. In all this Saint Meletius was distinguished by an extraordinary gentleness, and he constantly led his flock by the example of his own virtue and kindly disposition, supposing that the seeds of the true teaching sprout more readily on such soil.

Saint Meletius was the one who ordained the future hierarch Saint Basil the Great as deacon. Saint Meletius also baptized and encouraged another of the greatest luminaries of Orthodoxy, Saint John Chrysostom, who later eulogized his former archpastor.

After Constantius, the throne was occupied by Julian the Apostate, and the saint again was expelled, having to hide himself in secret places for his safety. Returning under the emperor Jovian in the year 363, Saint Meletius wrote his theological treatise, "Exposition of the Faith," which facilitated the conversion of many of the Arians to Orthodoxy.

In the year 381, under the emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395), the Second Ecumenical Council was convened. In the year 380 the saint had set off on his way to the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople, and came to preside over it.

Before the start of the Council, Saint Meletius raised his hand displaying three fingers, and then withdrawing two fingers and leaving one extended he blessed the people, proclaiming: "We understand three hypostases, and we speak about a single nature." With this declaration, a fire surrounded the saint like lightning. During the Council Saint Meletius fell asleep in the Lord. Saint Gregory of Nyssa honored the memory of the deceased with a eulogy.

Saint Meletius has left treatises on the consubstantiality of the Son of God with the Father, and a letter to the emperor Jovian concerning the Holy Trinity. The relics of Saint Meletius were transferred from Constantinople to Antioch.

DO WE EVER GET IT RIGHT? By Fr. Stephen Freeman

In the film, *Ground Hog Day*, actor Bill Murray awakens each morning to the same day – February 2 – and does the same things over and over. At first it's fun. Then it's maddening. Indeed, a whole string of days finds him committing suicide in an attempt to stop the repetition, only to awaken again to the same day. In conversations about the film, the writer-director Harold Ramis suggests that the "day" repeats at least 10,000 times. As the story develops (repeatedly), Murray begins to adapt to the project, slowly working towards a perfect day – finally getting everything right.

The film has become a classic, both on account of how well it is done, but also because of its universal theme.

Who doesn't want to get everything right? 10,000 chances to live through "what if?"

There are no do-over's in the real world. There are, of course, the tormenting thoughts of "what if" that drone on for far more than 10,000 days. Regret is a terrible, unforgiving master.

Of course, behind all of this is a reality: we never "get it right."

We are hard-wired for caution and a bit of fear. In the normal course of a day, that hard-wiring is useful. It reminds us to look both ways before crossing a street and tells us not to follow too closely the car in front of us. In that the world is always a dangerous place, a lack of caution and the absence of fear would be a ticket to sudden death.

That same hard-wiring is also the source for many of the torments that dog our thoughts. Any number of life events have a cumulative effect of turning up the volume on our caution and fear. For many people, the noise and nagging of caution and fear become a steady back-drop for the whole of their daily lives. Their minds replay their failures over and over as the accompanying shame swallows up hope and threatens to control their whole world.

But...we never get it right.

Over the years I have come to the conclusion that arguing with such thoughts is useless. They are not rational judgments. Instead, they are like pain signals. Imagine arguing with a sprained ankle.

One of the reasons that we "never get it right," is that getting it right is the *wrong question* – the wrong approach to our life, particularly our life in Christ. Where does the language and thought of "getting it right" come from? I would suggest that it comes out of our school-days. It is the language of a math test, a spelling bee, indeed, it is often the language of shame. We imagine that "getting it right" will make us "be right" ourselves. The two, however, are only kin to one another in their bondage to shame.

I find it deeply interesting that the language of St. John, both in his gospel and in his letters, uses imagery of a different sort when speaking to sin and the spiritual life. It is particularly strong in his first epistle.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have communion with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

St. John makes "walking in the light" the primary point of our lives. Additionally, he extols this as the means for having "communion" (*koinonia*) with one another. He notes, as well, that as we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. Casting the question of "sin" in terms of light and communion (their absence), St. John gives us a very different way of thinking about ourselves and God.

We ask, "Did I get it right?" which phrases the question with the emphasis on ourselves. *We* become the center of our attention – which misses the point. That point is better stated as, "Am I walking in the Light?" In this, the focus is on Christ who is the Light. If I fail, then I fail within the light. The point is not my failure (for, if I walk in the Light, then the blood of Jesus cleanses me from all sin) but the Light. Christ is everything.

St. John takes great pains to remind us that we will sin:

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8–10)

It is of interest to me the role played by shame in this dynamic. “Did I get it right?” is a question posed by shame – but a question that does not bear the shame. Instead, it seeks to rid itself of shame, seeking performance as a faux shield. It is of note that one of the primary personality wounds that can be found with toxic shame is “perfectionism.” (There’s lots of other personality disorders – but this one is common). Christ was consistently confronted by Pharisees who seemed to have trusted in a kind of religious perfectionism (as St. Paul the Pharisee said, “Concerning the Law, I was blameless”). It is not surprising that these same personalities crucified Christ “out of envy” (Mark 15:10), a predictable outcome of a shame-bound personality.

St. John’s words confront the reality of our lives: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” Perfectionism is not the same as “getting it right.” Indeed, it itself is sin, or one of its many symptoms. We need to be healed of perfectionism, and not become its slave (which is misery).

St. John centers his thoughts in the reality of communion.

“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.” (John 6:56–57)

“Walking in the Light” can be seen precisely in the eucharistic life. Following St. John, we can say, “I live because of the Eucharist,” or even, “The Eucharist is the cause of my being.” The eucharistic life of the Church presumes confession and repentance. It does not presume that we “got it right.” But, in that we struggle to walk in the Light, it calls us back to our right (Light) mind. For years, the phrase, “Whosoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood, abides in Me and I in him,” has been my whispered prayer as I take communion. Returning to the Cup is returning to the Cause of my being. Christ’s Body broken, Christ’s blood shed, poured out for many, is His gift to the discipline of our lives.

If we understood, we would move heaven and earth to be able to receive communion as often as it is offered.

This echoes the teachings of St. John of Kronstadt who had much to do with the practice of frequent communion in Orthodoxy (which was the ancient practice in the Church).

That eucharistic life is what “getting it right” actually looks like. Walk in the Light as He is in the Light. Eat. Drink. Pray. Repent. Repeat.