



74th Year

February 8, 2026

Pamphlet #6 (3793)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 15:11-32)
The loving compassion of the father

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his belly 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, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated

him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

THE ABYSS OF DIVINE MERCY

“Deep calls to deep” (Psalm 42:7). With this psalm verse one could describe the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Compassionate Father. The abyss of sin and passions, of despair and darkness brought about by distancing oneself from God, calls forth another abyss: the abyss of God’s compassion, love, forgiveness, and philanthropy. The Parable of the Prodigal Son, familiar to us since our childhood, is called a summary and miniature of the Gospel, because through it, we come to know the inexhaustible love of God and how God continually works for the salvation of man.

The purpose of the parable of the prodigal son

Through this parable, the Lord seeks to uproot from the human heart the despair caused by sin, failure, and missteps, highlighting with vivid colors both the indescribable love of God and the trust that man must cultivate toward God. A “prodigal” is one who cannot be saved, kept intact, or unharmed; a prodigal is one whose life is characterized by moral dissolution and lack of moderation. The son in the parable easily abandoned his father, yet demanded to receive his share of the paternal estate. In a similar way, many people in every age accept the gift of existence, the talents, and the blessings of God, yet reject God the Father – the giver of every good – out of indifference, ignorance, forgetfulness, negligence, or unbelief. And it is precisely at this point, at the attempt to become autonomous and independent from God, that human sin is found, the sin that destroys human existence and imprisons it in the darkness of egoism, loneliness, and disappointment.

For the person who believes, who trusts in God, and who has as the highest criterion of his conscience, the word of God, and the divine commandments, he does not scatter like a foolish and senseless man the wealth of divine gifts, the estate of God the Father. The person of

God gives thanks to Him for time and eternity, for health and sickness, for life and death, and lives in this world inspired by the ethos of the Gospel, looking toward the coming Kingdom of God, which gives meaning even to the present world—this world torn apart by injustice, hatred, wars, and the repeated sin of Cain.

The person of God – safe, sober-minded, humble-minded, filled with the love and Spirit of God – not only does not misuse the paternal estate of God’s gifts, but shares this wealth selflessly with his brothers and sisters. For whatever is kept exclusively for ourselves slowly dies, withers, suffocates, and ultimately is lost.

Repentance as the acceptance of the Father’s love

The Prodigal Son recognized his tragic mistake and decided to return to the Father. “I have sinned against God and against you,” he said, “and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” The acknowledgment of sin as the cause of self-destruction, repentance as the hope of recovery and the possibility of re-evaluating one’s life, and the effort to reorient oneself with the guidance of the word of God – these are the essential conditions that contribute to a person’s salvation. For this is what is sought: healing, communion with God, remaining in the light, in the redemption offered by God’s love to everyone who truly repents. “And though your sins be as scarlet,” says the Prophet Isaiah, “I shall make them white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, I shall make them white as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

Our sins may indeed be red like blood and bear the color of purple; yet they could become white as snow and like pure, spotless wool. This is precisely the possibility offered to man through repentance: the forgiveness of every kind of sin, injustice, and failure; purification and sanctification. God always awaits the repentant person, in order to offer His fatherly love and to clothe him with the garment of incorruption, to reveal him as a living member of the Body of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit, so that “together with all the saints” (Eph. 3:18) he may come to know the love of Christ, which surpasses all human knowledge, and so that his life may be filled with the abundant grace of God. For this reason, as long as our life endures, let us cultivate the gift of repentance and take refuge in the mystery of Confession, which transforms our very being.

Archimandrite N. K.

February 8, 2026: Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Theodore the Commander and Great Martyr († 319); Zachariah the Prophet († 620 B.C.)

2nd Tone – Eothinon: 2 – Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
– Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

NEXT SUNDAY: February 15, Meatfare Sunday
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 – Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

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