

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2022**  
**SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON**

The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to "come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that our heavenly Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Luke 15:11-24).

After the Polyeleion at Matins, we first hear the lenten hymn "By the Waters of Babylon." It will be sung for the next two Sundays before Lent begins, and it serves to reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel.

Starting tomorrow, the weekday readings summarize the events of Holy Week. On Monday we read Saint Mark's account of the Entry into Jerusalem. On Tuesday we read how Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray the Lord. On the night before His death Christ tells His disciples that one of them will betray Him. He also predicts that they will desert Him, and that Peter will deny Him three times. On Wednesday the Gospel describes how Judas betrayed the Savior with a kiss. Thursday's Gospel tells how Jesus was questioned by Pilate. On Friday we read the narrative of Christ's crucifixion and death.

**GREAT VESPERS**

***LORD I CALL: Six stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 2 (spiral bound vespers book), followed by two of the Triodion***

***Triodion, tone 1:***

Rich and fertile was the earth allotted to us,  
But all we planted were the seeds of sin.  
We reaped the sheaves of evil with sickle of laziness;  
We failed to place them on the threshing floor of sorrow.  
Now we beg You, O Lord eternal Master of the harvest;  
May Your love become the breeze to winnow the straw of  
our worthless deeds!//  
Make us like precious wheat to be stored in heaven//  
and save us all!

Brothers, our purpose is to know the power of God's  
goodness.

For when the prodigal Son abandoned his sin,  
He hastened to the refuge of his father.  
That good man embraced him and welcomed him;  
He killed the fatted calf and celebrated with heavenly joy.  
Let us learn from this example  
to offer thanks to the Father who loves all men,//  
And to the Victim, the glorious Savior of our souls!

***GLORY... from the triodion, tone 2:***

What great blessings have I forsaken, wretch that I am?  
From what Kingdom have I miserably fallen?  
I have squandered the riches that were given to me;  
I have transgressed the commandments.

Woe to me when I shall be condemned to eternal fire!  
Cry out to Christ, O my soul, before the end draws nigh://  
“Receive me as the Prodigal, O God, and have mercy on  
me!”

***NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 2***  
***(spiral bound vespers book)***

***APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 2***  
***(spiral bound vespers book)***

***GLORY... from the Triodion, tone 6:***

I, a wretched man, hide my face in shame:  
I have squandered the riches my Father gave to me;  
I went to live with senseless beasts;  
I sought their food and hungered, for I had not enough to  
eat.

I will arise, I will return to my compassionate Father;  
He will accept my tears, as I kneel before Him, crying:  
“In Your tender love for all men, receive me as one of  
Your servants and save me!”

***NOW AND EVER...the Resurrection Theotokion***  
***in tone 6:***

My Maker and Redeemer, Christ the Lord,  
was born of you, O most pure Virgin.  
By accepting my nature, He freed Adam from his ancient  
curse.

Unceasingly we magnify you as the Mother of God!  
Rejoice, O celestial Joy!  
Rejoice, O Lady://  
the Protection, Intercession and Salvation of our souls!

***TROPARIA***

***Resurrection, tone 2***

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!”

***Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 2***

All beyond thought, all most glorious,  
are your mysteries, O Theotokos.  
Sealed in purity, preserved in virginity,  
you were revealed to be the true Mother who gave birth to the  
True God.//  
Entreat Him to save our souls.

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