

**The Weekly Messenger – February 24, 2019**  
**St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church**  
237 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
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*Epistle: II Corinthians 4:6-15 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32*

**Sunday of Prodigal Son:** And He said, ‘There was a man who had two sons....’  
This is how Christ begins what is perhaps the greatest of his parables, the one we know as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, but which could easily be titled the ‘Parable of the Two Sons’ or the ‘Parable of the Compassionate Father.’ With this parable, which we will hear at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, February 28, we are invited to enter the ‘school of repentance’—Great Lent—and sit at the feet of the Master, so that we can hear the words of eternal life and ‘keep them.’

After receiving his portion of the inheritance, even before his father had died, the younger of the two sons ‘gathered all that he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living’ [Luke 15:13]. This one sober understatement does not demand a great deal of imagination to yield its meaning. We know that *loose living* refers to a web of wrong choices, bad company, unrestrained satisfaction of ‘the passions,’ and forgetfulness of God. This spiritually suicidal combination leads to bankruptcy on a further series of interrelated levels: the material, moral/ethical and spiritual. In no time, the prodigal son is forced to feed ‘on the pods that the swine ate’ [Luke 15:16].

Read more: <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/the-prodigal-son-from-a-far-country>

**Home Blessing/Visitation:** The sign-up sheet is located at the candle stand for February & March visitations. You may pick a date and time that is convenient and sign up on the sheet or you may contact Father Brooks directly to arrange a date for him to visit: [fr.brooks@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:fr.brooks@stjohnsphila.org) or call 215-992-9234

**2019 Pledge cards are available at the Candle Stand.** You can also go online to <https://stjohnsphila.org/pledge.html> to make your pledge. We gladly accept credit card donations online as well as payments made automatically from your checking account. Thank you to those who have made their 2019 pledge. Our goal for 2019 is \$60,000.00.

**Great Lent** begins Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. We will have Pre-sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday nights beginning March 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00pm., Lenten (Pot Luck) dinner and discussion will be held in the church hall following the Pre-sanctified Liturgy.

*If you have information to share in the Weekly Messenger please send it to [info@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:info@stjohnsphila.org)*

**Monthly giving for February:** a box of Tissues

**Commemorations for the Deported:** Skevos Zervos (Michele Sarkos uncle), George Notskas (30 yrs.), Nancy Gregory (4 yrs.), Jorgjia Kashari, Father Deacon Stephen Stefani and those servicemen and women who have fallen asleep in the Lord in the service of their Country. *If you have a name to add to the Commemorations for the departed or the living please email [info@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:info@stjohnsphila.org)*

**Commemorations for the Living:** Archbishop Nikon, Ensign Zach Dardaris, Marion Merkle, Tala Ayyad, Diane Mallios, Rose Adams, Evangeline Prifti, Lisa Kelley, Donna Hlavcek, Father Dimitrie Vincent, Dolly Seiler, Sara, Elizabeth Jones, Ann Gjoka, Virginia Daka, Haretina (Papa) Milo, Margarita, Peter Melnik, Dhimiter Ndrecka, Pandeli, Jorgaq, Lefteri, and all of the men and women serving in the Armed Forces

**The Women’s Day Celebration and Dance:** NEXT Saturday, March 2, 2019, 6:30 – 10:30 pm in the Church Hall. A buffet dinner and continuous dancing are included! Soda & coffee will be provided BY.O.B. Tickets are \$55.00 for adults and \$25.00 for children under 12

**Sunday school News:** An ice-skating outing is scheduled March 17<sup>th</sup> at the U of P Class of 23 Rink. The public skate is from 1:00 to 2:00 The Sunday school will pay for the outing using the money they earned from their fundraising activities. Email Steve Coraluzzi [sundayschooldirector@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:sundayschooldirector@stjohnsphila.org) to confirm your attendance

#### **Upcoming Events:**

**Saturday, Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>** Vespers 5:00 pm

**March 2<sup>nd</sup>** Women’s Day Celebration & Dance 6:30 pm – 10:30 pm

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>** Meatfare

**Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>** Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm

**Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>** Lenten Retreat Annunciation Church Elkins Park, PA  
8:30 am matins, 9:30 am Liturgy, Topic of Retreat *Why be Orthodox?*

**March 10<sup>th</sup>** Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare

**March 17<sup>th</sup>** Sunday of Orthodoxy & Sunday School Ice Skating Outing

**March 24<sup>th</sup>** Semi-annual Parish Meeting following the Divine Liturgy

**Coffee Hour Sponsors:** We need your help and support. There are many open coffee hour dates. Please get together with another family or your own family and sponsor a coffee hour!

**Feb 24<sup>th</sup>** Irakli & Ana

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>** Mirna & Davit **March 10<sup>th</sup>** Sunday School

**March 17<sup>th</sup>** No Sponsor

**Welcome to our visitors.** Father Brooks, the members of our Parish Council and our church community thank you for celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. We invite you to join us for coffee hour and fellowship in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy.