

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church
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Father Michael D. Kunitz, Administrator

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2022
THE SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE
(THE SECOND PRE-GREATFAST SUNDAY)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE PRODIGAL-SON WEEK

Sunday, February 6:	11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• * <i>For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish</i>• + <i>Zenon Kowal (1st Anniversary) by Halyna Kowal, sister</i>
Monday, February 7:	8:30 a.m. – First and Third Hour 5:00 p.m. – Daily Vespers
Friday, February 11:	8:30 a.m. – First and Third Hour 5:30 p.m. – Divine Liturgy
Sunday, February 12:	<i>The Sunday of The Prodigal Son</i> <i>The Third Pre-Greatfast Sunday</i> 11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• * <i>For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish</i>• + <i>Dr. Stephen M. Yovino by Stephanie Yovino, wife, & The Ellsworth Family</i>

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

THE SECOND PREPARATORY SUNDAY FOR THE GREAT FAST....

Each year during the season of the **Great Fast**, the Church calls all of us to a spiritual renewal through intensified practices of **repentance**. Last week on the first pre-greatfast Sunday of preparation, the initial theme of **desire** was emphasized. Desire is the primary requisite for repentance, and the example of the diminutive tax-collector named Zacchaeus was given for our meditation. The second theme of the Great Fast is echoed today as our holy gospel lesson compares and contrasts two totally different men. In examining these two individuals, we are presented with the second aspect of repentance which is **HUMILITY**. The pharisee is a haughty, overconfident man whose religion is expressed by merely following the strict observance of the Law and its external rituals. In contrast, the publican, feeling unworthy even to approach the front of the temple, simply repeats a short prayer of humility: “*O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*” Thus, it is this tax-collector’s sincere humility that makes him justified in God’s sight, and conversely, it is the lack of this virtue that condemns the legalist-ritualist before God. In order for God to respond to our own repentance and pleas for forgiveness, we must take example from the humble publican. We, likewise, must manifest this virtue of deep **humility** as demonstrated by the publican and avoid the disdainful pride so blatantly displayed by the pompous pharisee. Therefore, the first two requisites for **repentance** are **desire** and **humility**.

A WEEK OF MERRIMENT BEFORE THE GREAT FAST: FAŠINGY

The week that follows the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is called the Prodigal-Son Week. This particular week is a fast-free, spirited week of frivolity prior to the beginning of the Holy Great Fast. During this week, it was customary to hold the **Fašingy**, which is the pre-greatfast festival of merrymaking observed with feasting, dancing, and jocular revelry. Typically, this shrovetide celebration took the form of a carnival (this word literally means “O meat, farewell!”), which is a church festival that terminates the use of meat before the fasting period, or a kermis, which is a fair sponsored by the church at this pre-greatfast season. Occasionally, the Fašingy was held in conjunction with a large formal dance known as a fašingovj ball. This was thus the last occasion for public mirth, lightheartedness, and innocent fun prior to the Great Fast. During this **Fašingovj Week**, there is no fasting at all on any day, and a carnival atmosphere prevails. This funfest is a prelude in preparation for the next week, which is called Meatfare Week, during which fasting from meat would be required on Wednesday and Friday. Then following Meatfare Sunday, which was indeed a true “farewell to meat,” no meat products whatsoever would be eaten for the entire forty-day greatfast season.

CANDLES SOLEMNLY BLESSED ON THE ENCOUNTER FEAST.....

The ritual for the Solemn Blessing of Candles was performed on Wednesday, February 2nd, for the Feast of the Holy Encounter of the Lord. Like Simeon and Anna, we too encounter our Savior in the Temple (our church), and then bearing Christ in our lives, represented by a lit candle, we proceed to carry Him into the outside world where His divine Light could illuminate all. When the venerable Simeon embraced the Child Jesus and held Him in his arms, the Elder declared this Divine Infant to be the "Light" that would shine upon all nations. According to our Christian Faith, this is precisely what the burning candle symbolizes: the Light of Jesus enlightening all people on earth. Jesus' Light still continues to shine brightly in a world that tends to be somewhat skeptical and obscured by sinful human deeds. Let the Light of Christ glow within you and radiate from you, and then let the brilliance of His Light be reflected through you so that it could be mirrored all over this darkened world. In the custom and tradition of our Byzantine Catholic Church, the fancy decorative candles are used at the special festive meals on certain major holy days. The plain ordinary beeswax candles are to be burned for private home devotions, in times of intensive prayer and grave illness, and during periods of trial and danger. The blessed candles are available in the church and may be purchased after today's Divine Liturgy.

SETTING GOALS NOW FOR THE GREATFAST SEASON.....

The solemn penitential season of the Holy Great Fast will begin on **Pure Monday, February 28th**, three weeks from tomorrow. Penance, purification, prayer, reformation, and reconciliation are all watchwords for the greatfast season. We employ various figures of speech such as "the desert" and "the world" to express, to assess, and to summarize the dimensions of faith that we profess, the attitudes that we possess, and the behavior that we exhibit. During the forty-day period of the Great Fast, we should attempt to discover in our church, in society, and in ourselves the places of "the desert" and "the world." One of our primary greatfast initiatives must be to examine our faith and our actions in light of exactly what penances we must impose upon ourselves in order to obtain a complete purification in the sight of our Heavenly Father and to affect a total reconciliation with Him. There are so many societal and personal temptations that could distract us in this resolve, but the time for self-reflection and individual spiritual examination is upon us! As we follow the sacred passion of our Lord and meditate upon His redemptive acts performed for our eternal salvation, we must delineate certain spiritual goals for ourselves. Establish your aims for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (generosity and charity) before God and then maintain them! As we begin the Great Fast in this year of 2022, put forth the effort to make this a spiritually profitable greatfast season. God truly will bless you with both His heavenly and earthly rewards!

REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEAD – HRAMOTY.....

Five Saturdays are set aside annually for a universal commemoration of all of our faithful departed. These memorial days are known as **All-Souls Saturdays**. The **Hramoty**, which are the diptychs or records containing the names of all of the parochial deceased, are read on these special Saturdays at the requiem services. On the envelope designated for "**Hramoty**," please fill-in the names of your departed family, relatives, and friends whom you would like to have commemorated. The first of the All-Souls Saturdays will be observed on **Meatfare Saturday, February 19th**. By remembering our dead in the Requiem Divine Liturgy and by praying for their immortal souls, we may be confident that some day, in a similar way, someone will remember us when we have gone on to eternity and will have prayers offered for our souls so that we can rest in peace with our merciful Lord in His heavenly Kingdom forever. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead so that they might be delivered from their sins." (**II Maccabees 12:46**)