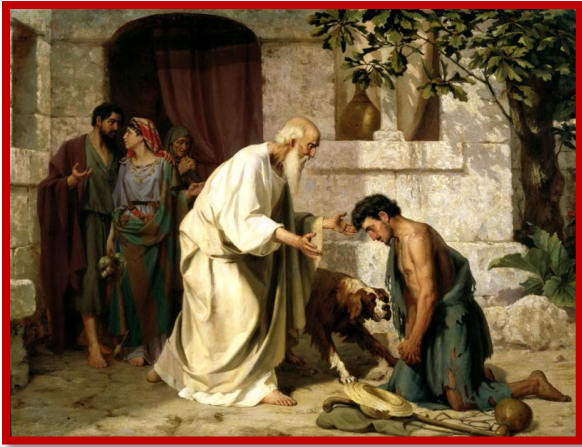


# Saint Joseph Maronite Catholic Church



## The Parable of the Prodigal Son

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

March 15, 2020

Welcome all visitors to the beautiful heritage of Antioch

3 Appleton Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
Office Phone: 207-872-8515

Pastor: Rev. Fr. James Doran, KHS  
Subdeacon: Mr. Stephen Crate  
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*“For us, the men and women of the East are a symbol of the Lord Who comes again.”* *Oriental Lumen*, John Paul II

**Qoorboneh (Masses):** Saturday 4:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m.; Tues. – Fr. 9:00 a.m. in the St. Jude Chapel

The Miraculous Medal and the St. Jude Novenas are on Tuesday following the 9 a.m. Liturgy

**Sick Calls:** To receive the Eucharist and/or the Anointing of the Sick, please call the rectory.

**Confessions:** One half-hour before weekend Liturgies and by appointment.

**Baptisms:** *Parents* should refer to the website and then contact the parish through the parish e-mail address.

**Marriage:** Please refer to the parish website and contact the parish a **minimum 6 months before** finalizing the date of your wedding.

**Mass Intentions:** For *specific* dates requested, please submit at least **two months in advance**. Recommended stipends: weekday intentions \$10; weekend intentions \$15

**Monthly Memorials:** Sanctuary Candles \$20; Altar Bread \$25; Wine \$45

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**Catechists:** Lenore Boles, *Director* **Choir Director:** Dame Marie Fefa Deeb, DSG **Parish Council President:** Lisa Grard **Ex-officio Council Members:** Lenore Boles, *Religious Education*; Larry Mitchell, *Knights of Columbus*; Ruth Lunn, *Rosary Sodality*

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### **THIS DAY'S GOSPEL<sup>1</sup> St. Luke 15: 11-32**

And Jesus said to them again, “A man had two sons. His younger son said to him, ‘My father, give me the portion of your estate that is coming to me.’

“So he divided his wealth between them. After a few days, his younger son gathered everything that had come to him. And he went to a distant country. There he squandered his wealth, living a dissolute life.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation*, Gorgias Press, New Jersey, 2012, ed. George A. Kiraz and Andreas Juckel

“When he had spent everything he had, a great famine took place in that country and he began to be in need.

“He went and *attached himself* to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into the field to feed the pigs.

“He longed to fill his stomach with the husks the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to himself, he said, ‘How many hired hands are in my father’s house right now, who have more than enough food; and here I am, dying of hunger!’

“I will get up and go to my father and tell him, ‘My father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.

“‘Make me as one of your hired hands.’

“He got up and went to his father.

“While he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him.

“He ran and fell on his neck, kissing him.

“‘My father,’ his son said to him. ‘I have sinned against heaven and before you. I do not deserve to be called your son.’

“But his father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it. Put a ring on his hand and put shoes on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let us eat and celebrate, because this son of mine was dead and is now alive; he was lost and has been found!’

“So they began to celebrate.

“Now the older son was in the field. When he got near the house, he heard the sound of many people singing.

“He called to one of the youths and asked him, ‘What is this?’

“He told him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has killed the fattened calf, since he has received him back again well.’

“He was angry and did not wish to go in. So his father came out and pleaded with him.

“But he said to his father, ‘Look --- I have been working in your service for many years, never transgressing your instruction, and you never gave me a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But now this son of yours, after he

squandered your wealth on prostitutes, has come home – you have slaughtered the fattened calf for him!

“‘My son,’ his father said to him. ‘You are always with me, and everything I have is yours. It is right for us to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is now alive; he was lost and is found.’”



*You will progress in understanding the Holy Scriptures only to the degree that you yourself have made progress through contact with them.*

**St. Gregory the Great (AD 540-604)<sup>2</sup>**

## **ABOUNA'S REFLECTIONS**

What does it mean “to return”? From where and to what, when one does not “go” anywhere? We enter naked and screaming into this world, but we are meant to gather additional beauty and return to the Creator at death adorned, elevated, and ennobled by grace. There are three states or stages of this enriching process: purgation, illumination, and union.

The younger son in the parable today must be **purged** of his selfishness through destitution, want, humiliation, and misery; he then “returns to himself” in **knowledge** and wisdom from the experience – freed, he returns in humility to his father acknowledging his obtained knowledge; and, finally, his father has him welcomed, washed, and **clothed anew**, and **brought into the house** as all the other servants rejoice.

Order and harmony are the framework of creation. The watchers<sup>3</sup> and human beings are the only things in existence that can *exceed* or *diminish* their natural place in the cosmos. All things act according to their natures, but angels and men are free according to their natures. Thus, by free-will, these beings can

<sup>2</sup> Homily 1.7.8 “on Ezechiel”

<sup>3</sup> That is, the angels

willfully choose to extoll<sup>4</sup> or mar<sup>5</sup> the splendor of the universe. Marring creation is the conscious choice not to be what one was made to be. It is the refusal to discover one's potential in light and beauty.

In order to collaborate, one must first recognize the intended beauty, order, and see things as they truly are: that-which-is. The Gospel is not a *mere observance*, but a way of *seeing* the world and our life within it. It illumines the purpose in human life. The Fathers speak of "returning to Paradise", which is to say that *grace is to restore human life* (including human vision) as it was intended and first created. The presence of grace makes us not only Christians, it makes us better scientists: to see properly all that there is to see the **that-which-is** and **how-things-are**.

Nonetheless, as we observe easily in children, human beings are fantastical. We love the world of fantasy and make-believe. We love to pretend. Although it might sound strange, it is pretending and fantasy that lie at the root of sin. We pretend and imagine to make things the way we would prefer them to be, as children have always done, and once we mature into adults we easily set about to manipulate, twist, and control to re-make things according to our whims. Instead of consciously being in sync with things as they are, we play, pretend, and set about to manipulate them into something other than they are, and all this for ego's sake. Selfishness lies at the root of all sin, and blindness to *things-as-they-are* traps the human mind in illusion.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, only angels and men can mar the cosmos: they alone, as intelligent beings, are able to know and to choose freely.

The younger son in today's Gospel disliked the farm of his youth, and in his delusion that the world "should be different" from a boring farm he set out to recreate his world according to his own selfish desires. This initial boredom and sin provoke the offense to his father by rudely demanding the younger brother's inheritance before the old man was even dead. The younger son further shirked his responsibility to help his older brother with the work

on the farm. **Delusional**, he then set off with his father's money to live life "on his own terms". **Self-centered**, he could now "live it up" in town with food, drink, and sex, without foresight, or planning for the future. **Blinded** by his selfishness, the young man is careless and future events broadsided him. **Unprepared**, he was reduced to beggar status, slopping unclean and unlawful pigs. Arriving lower than low, he had defiled and marred the order and beauty of the cosmos by his selfish choices. **Undisciplined** and self-centered, he made everyone around him miserable.

So it is that tempering the selfish arrogance of the "ego" which must be the beginning of wisdom. One must first discover and live within his place of creation. From that point one is able to develop her gifts and talents. One must enter the *purgative way* or else one remains in blindness or illusion,<sup>7</sup> unable to see her true purpose. Purification in fasting "clarifies" the spirit. Fasting fosters equilibrium, proper balance, and self-moderation.<sup>8</sup> This is why purgation, fasting, discipline, and efforts are necessary to enter the *illuminative way*.<sup>9</sup>

"What is first in intention, is last in execution" means that what we intend to do is the last thing that we actually accomplish. It also means that without a final goal in mind, nothing is set into motion. Before our dream cottage is ever realized there are a gazillion hurdles of plans and costs that must first be put into action before the camp we truly hope for is ever realized.

Embracing the Gospel of Christ means that one must *first desire to see* the Hidden Divinity (for many this isn't even a "first intention") and then, in order to realize that divine vision, we must *set in motion* and *practice all that is necessary* to arrive at that vision. Salvation is an invitation; it is not an inevitability. Discipline, prayer, fasting, order, perseverance, are all necessary in the purgative stage so that we can enter the illuminative stage, which clarifies the continuing path, develops the life of prayer, and enflames the resolve needed to persevere to the end.

<sup>4</sup> glorify in rational and loving collaboration

<sup>5</sup> selfishly subvert beauty, proper order, and harmony

<sup>6</sup> Have mercy on us, O First-Born, and help us to expel the greediness that lies within our thoughts. *Bo'outho* from Ramsho, Friday of Lent

<sup>7</sup> The **purgative** level of the spiritual life is primarily our effort, inspired by initial grace, of course. As one advances in the Gospel, grace becomes more and more predominant, but in the beginning much of the effort is exerted purely by us.

<sup>8</sup> *Through fasting we shall triumph over the evil one ... by it we shall drive away greed, the source of all evils.* *Qolo* from Safo, Friday in Lent.

<sup>9</sup> The **illuminative** stage in the spiritual life is the state where the grace of infused contemplation becomes habitual to the individual. This is *the* clarity of mind referred to in the liturgical prayers.

The final goal of divine union is initiated here on earth, but it is fulfilled only after death. This is called the *unitive stage*,<sup>10</sup> the form of life in which one is habitually conscious of the presence of God. This union transforms grace and spirit into the *living flame of love* and perfects charity. As charity is the hallmark of the disciples of Christ and the children of the Most High, so the unitive state is supposed to be the ultimate condition of each of the baptized. Are we there, yet?

The younger son in the parable destroyed everything by his selfishness and impatience. Hidden Beauty draws to its embrace and eternal joy only those who have eyes to *see*, strength to *endure*, and love to *follow* the path. Coldness of heart loses the path, weakens perseverance, and bumbles along blindly. In the end, it loses the path entirely. *Impatience* and *demand for immediate gratification* chill the heart, destroy everything, and mar the universe.

By original sin, men are impatient and fantastical beings. We are all prodigals in this way. With Lent, we begin to turn those mental vagaries on their head, and strengthen the will in grace.

The Great Fast, then, is a gift of love. We should live it generously. Our Lord warns us *to be serious*. He stated that the entry to the Kingdom of Heaven is tight and narrow – which is why so few find it.<sup>11</sup>

It's real, and not measured by our fantasies.

### SCHEDULE OF READINGS

#### THE PRODIGAL SON

March 15, 2020

II Cor 13: 5-13      St. Luke 15: 11-32

#### THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC

March 22, 2020

I Tim 5: 24-6: 5      St. Mark 2: 1-12

<sup>10</sup> This *unitive* stage is the beginning of "heaven", that is, the union with God in charity, beauty, and vision. It is a beginning

### VOCATION ICON

*"Request therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest."* St. Matthew 9: 38

Sun	Mar	15	Larry & Lisa Grard
Sat	Mar	21	Jim & Lenore Boles
Sun	Mar	29	Chris & Diane Wyder
Sun	April	5	Bruce & Doreen White
Sun	April	12	Steve and Allison Crate
Sun	April	19	Sue Paré and Lolo Salazar
Sun	April	26	Lowell Hawes

*Grant them health, and raise them up  
from their illness, and make them  
to have perfect health of body and soul  
and strengthen them in spirit;  
for Thou art our Savior and Benefactor,  
the Lord of lords and Weaver of crowns,  
Thou art Lord and King of all. Amen*

**Those for whom we pray:** Rosanna Joseph, Doreen Nader, Louise Saliem, and Virginia Poulin

### INTENTIONS FOR THE QOURBONEH (MASSES)

Sun	15	†Edwin Laabs, Sr (Ed Laabs and Family) -- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
Mon	16	-----
Tue	17	†Edwin Laabs, Sr (Ed Laabs and Family) -- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
Wed	18	†Edwin Laabs, Sr (Ed Laabs and Family) -- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
Thu	19	†Edwin Laabs, Sr (Ed Laabs and Family) -- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

only, vision must wait until the sense life is quieted perfectly by death.

<sup>11</sup> St. Matthew 7: 14



Fri 20 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Sat 21 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Sun 22 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Mon 23 -----

Tue 24 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Wed 25 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Thu 26 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Fri 27 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Sat 28 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Sun 29 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Mon 30 -----

Tue 31 †Edwin Laabs, Sr  
(Ed Laabs and Family)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Wed 1 †Tom and Ida George  
(James and Nancy Nichols)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Thu 2 †Hoda Nasr  
(Carla Caron)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

Fri 3 Private Intentions  
(Abouna James)  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

### LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

(Budgeted: \$3,100.00)

**Regular Collection: \$1,790.00**

(Deficit 2020: \$12,244.00)

**Second Collection (fuel-oil): \$351.00**

Please remember that the Bishop's Lenten Appeal is assessed at **\$4,000.00** each year. This amount must be paid to the eparchy whether we collect it or not. Please be generous to these good causes.

The most recent "big bill" is for repairs to the **elevator**.<sup>12</sup> Testing and maintenance remaining cost: **\$1060.00.**

Generous souls wishing to contribute directly to offset this expense are heartily encouraged to do so.

*Blessed be the Merciful One Who gives us the ability to sustain this apostolate.*

## The Traditional and Patriarchal Norms for the Great Fast

- A.) Ash Monday and the First Week of Great Lent and Great Week of the Passion and especially Great and Holy Friday of the Crucifixion through to noon on Saturday of the Great Light are Days of Fast and Abstinence according to our patriarchal tradition. cf. par. 22
- B.) *For all, as a minimum requirement according to law, we must fast on Ash Monday and on Good Friday. Abstinence is to be observed on all Fridays of Lent. These days of fast are strictly to be meatless.*
- C.) *From the age of reason onward, all are obliged to follow the abstinence from all meat, meat products, and dairy products on these fast days even if they are strictly not obliged to fast.*

<sup>12</sup> Remember, just over a year ago maintenance cost us \$2,000.00.

D.) All Fridays throughout the year are traditional days of fast and abstinence from all meat and dairy products.

E.) *In general, the sick, expectant mothers, and the elderly who need to eat regularly should be exempted from fasting and abstinence, especially those who are taking medications associated with chronic illnesses.*

F.) *Saturdays and Sunday, although abstaining in the quality of foods, are not, in the eastern tradition, days of fasting.*

G.) *Breaking the Fast is permitted also on the following feastdays:*

- 1.) Saint Patrick (USA) (March 17<sup>th</sup>);
- 2.) Saint Joseph (March 19<sup>th</sup>); and,
- 3.) The Annunciation (March 25<sup>th</sup>).

**QUANTITY:** *In our tradition, the fast means no food whatsoever between midnight and noon, only water and medication are permitted.*

**QUALITY:** *Also, in our eastern tradition, the days of fast are in practice more or less vegan, that is, no meat, no seafood, no meat products, no dairy products and no eggs are to be eaten.*

## Stations and Benediction of the Life-giving Cross

Fridays of the Great Fast  
6:30pm

*Choir Rehearsals*

Wednesdays at 6:00pm  
March 25<sup>th</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>



## March Devotions for the Holy of Holies

The Altar Breads, Sacramental Wine, and the Sanctuary Lamp have been offered this month by Dame Marie and by

Ruth Lunn as alms in commemoration of:  
**George Deeb; and Emily & Ashlin Baker,**  
*and for Thomas Porfirio.*

*Their memory be eternal in the fullness of the Kingdom*

## Sunday of the Prodigal Son

p 217

**Lighting of the Church:** LB\* p 5  
*Jesus Christ, O Source of Light*

**Entrance Hymn:** LB eeto 114

**Glory:** SB irhamni

**Qolo/Hymn:** LB bo'outho 115

Creed p 748

**PRE-ANAPHORA:**

**Transfer of Gifts:** LB *The Lord Reigns*

**Incense Hymn Offertory:** SB *l'maryam yoldat*

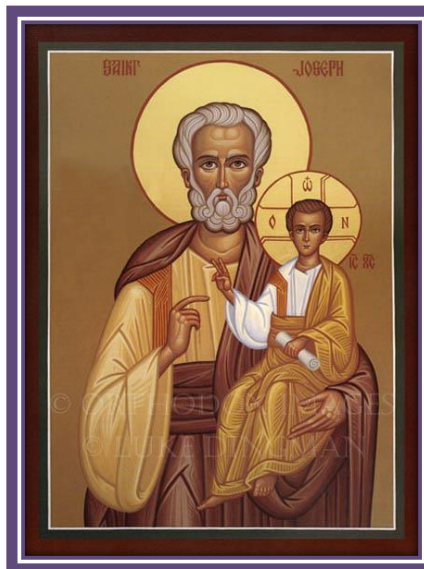
**ANAPHORA:**

**Saint Peter, Chief  
of the Apostles:**  
LB p 774

**Sign of Peace:**  
SB *tou ba*

**Communion:** SB  
*O Lord, I am not  
worthy; I will  
return*

**Recessional:** SB  
*wa habeebee*



*Saint Joseph, the Chosen One,  
Spouse of the ever-Virgin Mary  
March 19<sup>th</sup>*