***ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH***

***ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND NEW ROME***

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**Sun. 26 Dec. 27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. TONE 2. SUNDAY of the HOLY ANCESTORS of the Lord. Martyrs EUSTRATIUS, AUXENTIUS, EUGENE, MARDARIUS, & ORESTES of Sevaste (284). Virgin-martyr LUCY (304). Ven. ARSENIUS, NICODEMUS & ARCADIUS. Ven. MARDARIUS the recluse of the Kyivan Caves (13th C.)**

**Epistle: Colossians 3: 4-11 Gospel: Luke 14: 16-24**

**Liturgical Meneion & Scripture Readings (Nativity Fast)**

**Mon. 27 Dec.** Martyrs Thyrsus, Leucius, and Callinicus (250).

**2 Tim. 2:20-26 Mk. 8:11-21**

**Tue. 28 Dec.** St. Stephen the Confessor, archbishop of Surozh in the Crimea (790).

**2 Tim. 3:16–4:4 Mk. 8:22-26**

**Wed. 29 Dec.** Prophet Haggai (Aggaeus) (500 B.C.). Martyr Marinus of Rome (283).

**2 Tim. 4:9-22 Mk. 8:30-34**

**Thu. 30 Dec.** Holy Prophet Daniel (600 B.C.) and the Three Holy Youths.

**Titus 1:5–2:1 Mk. 9:10-16**

**Fri. 31 Dec.** Martyr Sebastian at Rome and his companions (287).

**Titus 1:15–2:10 Mk. 9:33-41**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

**Sat. 01 Jan.** St. Elias of Murom, of the Kyiv Caves (1188). Ven. Amfilohije of Pochaiv.

**Eph. 1:16-23 Mk. 9:42-10:1**

***5:00 PM Great Vespers, Examination Of Conscience, Confessions.***

**Sun. 02 Jan. *9:00 AM Divine Liturgy.***

**Question: "What is the meaning of the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24)?"**

**Answer:** The Parable of the Great Banquet is found in Luke 14:15-24. It is similar to the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14), but with some significant differences. The story in Luke’s Gospel was told at a dinner that Jesus attended. Jesus had just healed a man with dropsy and taught a brief lesson on serving others. Jesus then says that those who serve others “will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke 14:14). At the mention of the resurrection, someone at the table with Jesus said, “Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God” (verse 15). In reply, Jesus tells the Parable of the Great Banquet.

The man who, in verse 15, looks forward to dining in the Messianic kingdom probably subscribed to the popular notion that only Jews would be part of that kingdom. The parable Jesus tells is aimed at debunking that notion, as the following explanation makes clear:

The master of the house is God, and the great banquet is the kingdom, a metaphor that was suggested by the speaker at the table. The invited guests picture the Jewish nation. The kingdom was prepared for them, but when Jesus came preaching that “the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17), He was rejected. “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11).

The excuses for skipping the banquet are laughably bad. No one buys land without seeing it first, and the same can be said for buying oxen. And what, exactly, would keep a newly married couple from attending a social event? All three excuses in the parable reveal insincerity on the part of those invited. The interpretation is that the Jews of Jesus’ day had no valid excuse for spurning Jesus’ message; in fact, they had every reason to accept Him as their Messiah.

The detail that the invitation is opened up to society’s maimed and downtrodden is important. These were the types of people that the Pharisees considered “unclean” and under God’s curse (cf. John 9:1-2, 34). Jesus, however, taught that the kingdom was available even to those considered “unclean” (cf. Acts 10). His involvement with tax collectors and sinners brought condemnation from the Pharisees, yet it showed the extent of God’s grace (Matthew 9:10-11). The fact that the master in the parable sends the servant far afield to persuade everyone to come indicates that the offer of salvation would be extended to the Gentiles and “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people” (Romans 15:10).

The master is not satisfied with a partially full banquet hall; he wants every place at the table to be filled. John MacArthur’s comment on this fact is that “God is more willing to save sinners than sinners are to be saved.”

Those who ignored the invitation to the banquet chose their own punishment—they missed out. The master respects their choice by making it permanent: they would not “taste of my banquet.” So it will be with God’s judgment on those who choose to reject Christ: they will have their choice confirmed, and they will never taste the joys of heaven.

The basic message of the Parable of the Great Banquet could be stated this way: “The tragedy of the Jewish rejection of Christ has opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. The blessings of the kingdom are available to all who will come to Christ by faith.”

The inclusion of the Gentiles is a fulfillment of Hosea 2:23, “I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’” God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9), and “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

**PROPERS FOR THE LITURGY ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

**Tropar of the Resurrection, Tone 2**

When You descended to death, Life Immortal, You slayed Hell with the splendor of Your Divinity. And when from the depths You raised the dead, all the Powers of Heaven cried out: Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You.

**Tropar of the Holy Ancestors of God, Tone 2**

Through faith, You justified the Forefathers, forming through them the Church of all nations. These saints exult in glory, for from their seed came a Blessed Fruit: She who bore You without seed, Christ our God. By their prayers save our souls.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.**

**Kondak of the Resurrection, Tone 2**

Hell became fearful, Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb. The dead arose and all creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You. And the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

**Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.**

**Kondak to the Holy Ancestors, Tone 6**

Thrice-Blessed Ones, you did not worship the man made image, but armed with the invisible power of God, You were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames, You called on God crying: Hasten, Compassionate One. Come quickly to our defense, for You are merciful and able to accomplish all that You will.

**Prokimen of the Three Children, Tone 4**

Blessed are You, Lord God of our Fathers, praised and glorified is Your Name to the ages.

**Verse:** For You are righteous in all that You have accomplished for us.

**Epistle: Colossians 3: 4-11**

**Alleluia Verses, Tone 4**

Moses and Aaron are among his priests and Samuel among those who call upon His Name.

They called upon the Lord and He answered them.

**Gospel: Luke 14: 16-24**

**Communion Hymn:** Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. Rejoice in the Lord, you Righteous, praise befits the upright. Alleluia (3X)

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**Welcome a new parishioner Karen Kankula to our Church Family!**

Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets for the Holiday Gift Basket. Proceeds of $151 will go to our 100th Anniversary celebration. **Congratulations to the lucky winner Linda Hnatow Tilson.**

**Parish HOLY SUPPER THURSDAY, January 6, 2022, 4:30 PM (signup sheet in hall).**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**  The Brotherhood of Ukrainian Clergy in the Lehigh Valley is sponsoring a **"Synchronized Ukrainian Christmas Carol Flashmob"** on the evening of Christmas Day - January 7, 2022 at 6:30 PM at the Bethlehem City Hall Christmas Tree. It is open to all! No previous experience needed! Just show up! Songs sheets will be provided. Come out and sing the Birth of our Savior in true Ukrainian style.

The senior UOL is collecting **GLOVES, SCARVES AND HATS FOR THE FOOD BANK.** Collection box is in the hall. Thank you.

We are going for **CAROLING** this year (from Dec 25 till Jan 14)! If you would like to join us, please let Fr. Oleg know. If you want us to come to your house to caroling, please sign up. The list will be placed in the Church Hall!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE:** Mrs. Mary Ost (Preschool/ Elementary) Sundays 8:55-9:20 AM. Mrs. Karen Osmun (Secondary) Sundays at 8:45-9:15 AM.

**FOR THE FOOD BANK**: We were assigned baby foods, but they also need cans of potatoes, tuna fish, canned meats, pasta, spaghetti sauce, mac & cheese.

**VARENYKY SCHEDULE:**  February 3, 17. 300 dozen limit. We strongly need your help as a volunteer. Please call Helen: 610-261-4575.

**BIRTHDAYS:**

**26 Dec…Amanda Pypiuk, Mary Ost**

**27 Dec…Linda Vitushinsky**

**31 Dec…Vera Alexander**

**MNOHAYA LITA! MANY YEARS!**

**NECROLOGY:**

**27 Dec…Tessie Zazworsky ‘97**

**28 Dec…Josephine Peters ’82**

**29 Dec…Eustachy Pshebyla ’22, Martha Zaharuyko ‘60**

**Priest Gregory Pypiuk ‘62**

**30 Dec…Katherine Yeremko ’28, James Osmun ’91**

**31 Dec…Olha Kutianski (infant) ‘22**

**VICHNAYA PAMYAT! MEMORY ETERNAL!**

**PRAYER FOR THE HEALTH & SALVATION OF THE AFFLICTED:** priest Vasyl Dovgan, Rosemarie Pypiuk, Kirk Swauger, Azarah Nehmeh, Oleksandr Syvolob, Stephanie Donnelly, Nicholas Alexander, Danny Berro, Paulette Mecherly, Steve Sivulich, child Alexandria, Elizabeth Pastushenko, Philippe Chasseuil, Halyna Kucharchuk, Joan Molnar, Bill Ketterer, Brandon and Stacy Snyder, Aaliyah Osmun, Ihor Broda, James Osmun, William Savitz, Vladimir Krasnopera, Brendan Phillips, Jessie Hnatow, Jessica Meashock, Adam Hewko, Andrew Thaxton, Susan Ferretti, Judy Albright, Rob Hewko, Daniel Kochenash, Christopher Mack, Norman Betrous, Justine Schubert.

So, not everybody has time for the kind of fellowship, food, and entertainment God has on offer at His dinner party. Only the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame end up coming – the ones with all the time in the world, and nowhere better to go. The “invited” ones politely decline, because they “have” matters, like work and family and romance, which require their wholehearted attention.

Does one need to be poor, or crippled, or blind, or lame to hear God’s call and “find time” for Him? Yes. This has been my experience, anyway. I need to be “poor in spirit,” and have “a broken and humbled heart” (Ps 50/51: 17). Perhaps ironically, for some of us the way to “a broken and humbled heart” is through a Godless dedication to work, family, or some relationship, romantic or otherwise. Without God in the picture, an intense dedication to a job or a relationship can leave me with a broken heart and emptiness. But this is my human condition without God in the first place, because I am not self-sufficient.

Whatever relationships or responsibilities I engage today, let me open them up to God's nurturing word, taking time for His fellowship. It is made so accessible to me in the God-Man Jesus Christ, Who comes into my world in Bethlehem, to dine with the poor, crippled, blind, and lame. Today, once again, I bring my brokenness and emptiness to His table, to be healed and filled with His grace. “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in him.” (Ps 33/34: 8) **(By Sr. Vassa)**

**Self check:**

1. Were the excuses of the parable enough to justify a broken relationship with God?  
2. What convinces me that the excuse of being busy should satisfy God's "demands" upon me?  
3. Can it be spiritually dangerous to be so busy?  
4. Am I free of any moral responsibility to change the ordering of my life so as to respond to God and neighbor without any excuses to relieve me from doing so?   
5. What are the implications of being "too busy" within the context of my relations with God?  
6. Is it possible that I have become overly-dependent upon the excuse of always being busy?  
7. What does it mean when we come to the "supper" - the Liturgy - but fail in partaking of the "food" freely-offered - the Eucharist?

8. What excuses do I offer for refusing the Master's hospitality?  
9. If the excuse is being unprepared, what am I doing to change that pattern?  
10. How do I understand the last words of the parable spoken by Christ: "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper?" (14:24)