

Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church

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January 28, 2018 + Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Divine Liturgy Saturday, 5:30 PM · Sunday, 10:00 AM · Holy Days, 7:30 PM
Confessions Saturday, 4:30-5:00 PM · Sunday, 9:00-9:30 AM
Collection Last week: **\$1,377.00**. God bless you for your continued generosity.
Sunday Readings 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 + Luke 15:11-32
Sacramental Needs Please call Fr. Deacon James 770-993-0973 or 404-227-5401

During the month of January, the Altar Lamp burns before our Lord in the tabernacle in memory of +Rose Tisma by her son, Fr. Deacon Michael. Vičnaja jeh pamjat.



The Light of the East ...

“Let your prayer be completely simple. For both the publican and the prodigal son were reconciled to God by a single phrase.”

Saint John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*

I Was Lost but Now I Am Found. As we draw closer to the Great Fast, today we hear the parable of the **Prodigal Son**. Hearing Christ’s parable about God’s loving forgiveness, we are called to “come to ourselves” as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves in a “far country” far from the Father’s house, and to make the movement of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that the 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.

Annual “State of the Parish” Meeting. Our **Annual Parish Meeting** is this **Sunday, January 28, 2018** following the Divine Liturgy. After a quick coffee and pastry we will meet in the church to receive the 2017 financial statements and to discuss several issues which are before us. Please plan to stay as we need everyone’s involvement. **God has entrusted this parish to us; its future is in our hands.**

Together in the Holy Trinity ... One Faith, One Church, One Future!

Meatfare Sunday. Next **Sunday, February 4**, the *Sunday of the Last Judgment*, marks the midpoint of our preparation for the Great Fast. It is traditionally called *Meatfare Sunday* since it was the last day meat was to be eaten until Pascha. Though this strict monastic observance has been relaxed in recent years, we still have this day to ease into the Great Fast rules of abstaining from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, to spend more time in prayer, to make a sincere effort to attend Lenten liturgies during the week, and to grow closer to God in anticipation of Pascha.

As has been our custom, we as a parish come together for a meat-filled luncheon after the Sunday Liturgy. **This year the parish will furnish the main course: meat lasagna and lots of meatballs and sausages in sauces, as well as the beverages and breads. Parishioners are asked to bring green salads or favorite desserts for all to share.**

Lover of the Innocent. This past week marks the 45th Anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decisions which legalized abortion in every state for any reason. **Since then more than 62 MILLION unborn children in the United States and 1.8 BILLION worldwide have been the innocent victims of that decision.** The teaching of the Church, from as early as the first century (cf. *The Didache*, 70 A.D.) is very clear: all human life is God-given and sacred; it must be respected with dignity from the moment of conception until natural death. The direct and purposeful taking of human life in all its forms constitutes a “grave moral order” (*Evangelium Vitae*, St. John Paul II); it is intrinsically evil and is to be condemned as contrary to the law of God.



One of the central doctrines of Byzantine Catholic spirituality is *theosis* or *deification*: to become like God as much as possible.

Each and every human being possesses the potential to become a Godlike person at whatever stage of physical development, from our mother's womb, to the prime of our life, until we are on our deathbed.



The parish has received a gift of two beautiful icons which speak to the tragedy of abortion: *He Who Loves the Innocent* and *The Souls of the Righteous*. As we remember National Sanctity of Life Sunday, these two icons will be blessed and placed on the analogions outside the iconostasis. All are encouraged to venerate these sacred icons and meditate on them. Created in the likeness and image of God, the

blameless and righteous souls of aborted children are living icons of flesh and blood to whom God has given the breath of life. Let us pray for an end to the senseless and merciless killing of innocent children, an act of blasphemy against God Himself.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. To the unwise they seemed to die; their departure is taken for misery and their going to be utter destruction. But they are in peace. Though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-4