



“Prodigal Son” by Bohdan Zyatyk

God does not put brakes on His love

“Why do good to people who are not willing to accept you? It is a question that we too often ask ourselves. But it is a question that helps us understand God better. Faced with our closures, he does not withdraw: he does not put brakes on his love. Faced with our closures, he goes forward. We see a reflection of this in parents who are aware of the ingratitude of their children, but do not stop loving them and doing good to them, because of this. God is the same, but at a much higher level. And today he invites us too to believe in good, to leave no stone unturned in doing good.”

Pope Francis

As the threat to Ukraine escalates, so do our prayers.

In the parable for this Sunday, the younger son’s thoughts turn to his father’s benevolence only after he has become totally destitute—desperate. It seems a human reflex to turn to God in times of desperation just as a child in distress runs to their mother.

How virtuous is the younger son who returns home only because he is starving?

Then the older brother, it turns out, also doesn’t appreciate his father. He acted as a model son, yet, he took his father’s goodness for granted. **How virtuous are my actions if I think I deserve more, without recognizing what I have, and still begrudge what my brother gets?**

The two brothers are similar in not acknowledging and appreciating their father’s love for them. Because the father loves his children, they have the freedom to choose how to use their inheritance. One follows the rules, as it were, and works alongside his dad. The other chooses to turn his back on his home and revel in the pleasures money brings him. These brothers characterize traits we see in other parables and likely in ourselves too, if we are honest. **Indeed the present truck convoys spotlight that human propensity to try and justify one’s own pleasure as entitlement—choice and freedom—while willfully neglecting to consider the wellbeing of others.**

We call the parable after the prodigal son, but the focal character is surely the father. This is the gospel tale that best illuminates God’s unconditional love.

The father’s delight at his son’s return could only be matched by the pain caused by the young son’s departure. Welcome and forgiveness do not imply that the parent condones his son’s actions. Nevertheless, the father’s love is constant. So too the older son’s response is not met with condemnation, but with an invitation to rejoice in his brother’s restoration.

These are turbulent times. To some degree each of us may feel the misery, remorse, or humiliation of the younger son. We may feel the anger, resentment and indignation of the older son. We may feel the rejection and disappointment of the father. But take a deep breath. Close your eyes. Remember times when you felt love. Childhood, past, present. Rest in that feeling. Feel it envelope your being. Breathe. You are loved. Always, forever, no matter what. You are loved and Love lives in you. Celebrate!

Announcements:

- **SOLEMN HOLY COMMUNION and FIRST CONFESSION:** If your child or grandchild was born in 2014 or earlier this is the year for them to approach the sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation and Solemn Holy Communion. We will begin preparations soon, so please let Fr. Myroslaw know if you would like your child included in the class. **Our first meeting will take place on Sunday, Feb. 27 after Divine Liturgy.**
- During Great Lent we traditionally pray for all our deceased parishioners and loved ones during the Sorokousty service. The commemorative booklets with the names of your family and friends whom you wish to be commemorated are available by the icon at the back of the Church so that you may add any names necessary. Please take the booklet home and add the name(s) and return it to the basket on the table;

PRAY FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE

Today: panakhyda after Divine Liturgy (+Tekla, Andrij, and Stepan)

Wednesday, Feb. 23 @ 10 a.m. Moleben for peace in Ukraine

11:30 p.m. Bible Study (ZOOM)

Birthday greetings to:

Annabelle Kocan (23rd).

MNOHAYA LITA!

Donations: Feb. 13: Regular \$ 475. Memorial +Hryhorij Szeptycky: \$300.

Thank you for your continued support!

The father's love is knows no limits



THE PRODIGAL SON.

