

*Christ The Saviour Orthodox Church
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate*

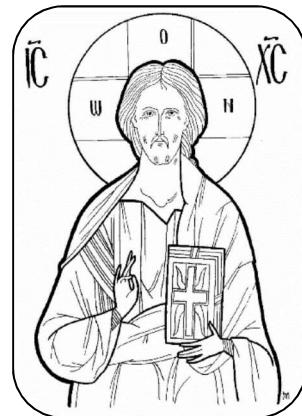
10000 State Road
North Royalton, OH 44133

Parish Website: www.christsaviour.weebly.com

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org

Church Phone: (440) 237-9196

Church Email: christsaviour@live.com



Schedule of Services:

Sunday February 4th: Obednitsa Service at 10 am

Sunday February 11th: Obednitsa Service at 10am

Sunday February 18th: Obednitsa Service at 10 am

Sunday February 25th: Obednitsa Service at 10 am

For more dates of services check out the parish website's calendar.

Candle Prices:

-Large are \$3

-Small are \$1

Our Calendars have arrived and are in the foyer!

Prayer List:

Living		
Pani Donna (Smoley)	Thomas (Royko)	Kathryn (Royko)
Penney (Royko)	Sally (Hubiak)	Ethel (Rusyniak)
Eileen (Bunevich)	Jane	Emerson (Sirilla)
Theresa (Popovich)	Theodore (Bunevich)	Fr. Andrew Harmon
Tiana (Hosta)	Virginia (Shymske)	Bonnie Harmon

Departed		
Matushka Catherine (Jula)		

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." +Timothy 4:12

The Prayer list was restarted. If you wish to have someone on the list, please contact a member of the Royko family or send an email to:

- christsaviour@live.com

The yearly envelopes are in the foyer with your name on the box!

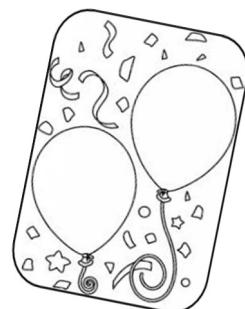
Birthdays & Anniversaries:

Thomas Sirilla- February 3rd

Frank Popovich- February 5th

Theresa & Frank Popovich- February 5th

Ted & Eileen Bunevich- February 9th



Sermon by Father Anthony Hughes:

All of life is an ebb and flow. A leaving and a returning. A descent and an ascent. A coming and going.

In ways past counting we have left the father's house. But we are always welcome to return. We cannot go so far as to not be able to return. In fact, we cannot go "far away" at all! God is everywhere. Where can we possibly go where he is not? But to us the road seems long because sometimes it takes years for us to realize the consequences of our crazy choices and once we do, it seems to take much longer than we would like to get ourselves out of them. But really, God is only a change of mind away. Nothing more. He has more patience than Job. It is we who get antsy.



I may have told you this story before, but it bears repeating. (As if I never repeat myself!) Fr. Keating was teaching the method known as Centering Prayer to a group of people. Afterwards a woman came up to him and said, "Father, I can't do this! My mind wanders away a thousand times!" He replied, "Wonderful!" "But why is that wonderful, Father?" "Because that is one thousand times to come back to God." God is only a change or mind away.

When a monk was asked what his life was like, he replied, "Falling and rising. Falling and rising." Each fall is an opportunity to rise and return. We must not despair over our falls. Instead, we must rise and go to our Father who will embrace us and care for us just as he did his Prodigal Son. The falls are not what matters. It is the return that matters.

The Holy Fathers knew well what it takes to heal and transform a soul. They knew from personal experience, all of them, to the last man and woman, what it takes to become a new creation. They all experienced the power of repentance and the unconditional compassion of God.

St. Peter of Damascus must have been a truly enlightened pastor well acquainted with the realities of human life in this fallen world. He wrote these hopeful words for those who find repentance difficult, "But if repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even if you don't want to, show humility like the publican (Luke 18:13): this is enough to ensure your salvation." Furthermore, he tells us that the one who does not despair and condemn himself for having sinned is "pure in heart." Pure in heart for being able to show himself the same kind of love God shows those who fall.

Do not think for a moment that God will not forgive. If God can stop forgiving, he can also stop loving and that is impossible for "God is love." Even if we do not repent he forgives. He doesn't wait for us to ask. The problem is that we cannot enjoy his forgiveness unless we are willing to receive it and we are not willing to receive it unless we ask for it. He gives even if we aren't ready and even if we don't want it, but we need to be open to receive it. That is our job.

Let me give you two definitions of repentance. One, you have heard from me before. Repentance is giving up all hope of a better past. The past is what it is and cannot be changed, but we do not have to carry it with us. We do not have to let the past stick to us. Unfortunately, we are like Velcro. Everything sticks and we have a heck of a time trying to get unstuck. If we do not allow the past to stick to us, then we are free to move forward in the present. We have to learn how to keep things from sticking, but that is another sermon. Or better, come to confession and we can talk about it there.

The second definition is this: repentance is a change from a mindless way of life to a mindful one. It is really as simple as that. It is only when we have lost our minds that we fall into sin. Like when we drive down the road and start day-dreaming. If we don't stop, we will end up killing ourselves or someone else. Our selfish desires blind us. We can know we are caught when all we can think about is me, me, me! The Lord uses a beautiful turn of phrase when he tells us that the prodigal came to his senses. In one moment he stopped thinking about himself and remembered

his father's house, the love and generosity he had left behind. That was enough to get him to start the journey home. His mindlessness had made him oblivious to the obvious: his selfishness got him where he was. His desire for pleasure over-rode his reason. Our desires and passions unchecked render us mindless.

Finally, the prodigal woke up. Reality dawned. He opened his long-closed eyes and discovered himself in a pig-sty. The pig-sty was no place for a child of the Father. Mindfulness is the key to not ending up in a pigpen just as being awake is the key to not driving into a ditch. If we are aware and present, our eyes wide open and our minds clear, free from attachment to desire, then we are truly free.

The father's generous welcome proves something else. Even while the prodigal was spending his money in riotous living, he was still his father's son. When he given over to sexual abandon, he was still his father's son. No matter what he did, he was still his father's son. The Gospel tells us that even while the prodigal was far off from home his father saw him, ran to him, and the celebration began. In truth, the father was with him all along. As the father cleaned his wounds and clothed him in the finest clothes this message was being transmitted: "You are My son. That is who you are and that is who you always will be. These beautiful robes are your rightful clothes. Those rags are not natural to you. Your sins are not natural to you. I will show you your true identity." And he does. With the greatest compassion and love he shows him his true nature. He re-clothes him in the beautiful robes of human being.

That is exactly what God desires to show each of us if we will allow it. The road to the Father's house is only a change of mind away.