

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO REPENT

Throughout His public ministry, Christ preached the message of repentance, and stressed the forgiving nature of His Heavenly Father. Today our Holy Church places before us the most classic example of this: The Parable of the PRODIGAL SON.

In this well-known story, the younger son impatiently demands his share of his promised inheritance, and sets out on his own. He soon finds, however, that his new-found independence and wealth do not bring him happiness. His fortune disappears very quickly. Soon, he is left with nothing.

From the depths of his despair, the Prodigal Son has one glimmer of hope: his Father. Swallowing his pride and recognizing the folly of his wasteful and sinful behavior, the Prodigal Son begins his long journey home. He hopes that his Father will, at least, treat him like one of servants.

The welcome he received, however, went far beyond his expectations. His Father and his entire household rejoiced that this "lost son" had returned home safely! No lecture or reprimands were given; only the warm embrace of a father delighted that his son had returned to his home and to his senses.

Sin brings all of us down to the level experienced by the Prodigal Son. At such times, we are confronted with two distinct choices: remain in such a hopeless state, or follow the example of the Prodigal Son and "arise and return to our Father." It is never too late to repent. Our Heavenly Father awaits our return to Him with outstretched loving arms. His capacity to forgive is without limit. Let us remember this in this season of repentance.