



ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION ALBANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A parish of the Albanian Archdiocese of the Orthodox Church in America

Fr. Mark Doku, Priest
mdoku123@gmail.com
Cell 774-276-1263

Church Office: 508-756-1690
Website: www.stmarysalbanianchurch.org
Email: smc.worc@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmarysalbanian

February 8 2026

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Epistle Reading : St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20

Gospel Reading : Luke 15:11-32

Theodore the Commander and Great Martyr, the Holy Prophet Zacharias, Nicephoros and Stephanos the Martyrs, the Afterfeast of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple, and Cuthman of Steyning.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

NO Great Vespers February 14

Sunday, February 8— Sunday of the Prodigal Son; Orthros 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Fr. Mark will be traveling with Bishop Nikodhim to Albania on February 9-18

MEMORIALS

We observe 1 year memorials for Gina Nano and Valerie Kerxhalli. Grure and coffee hour are provided in loving memory by family. Memory eternal!

BIDDING of ICONS

We want to extend a sincere thank you to every parishioner and friend who joined us for our annual Bidding of the Icons this past Sunday. Your generosity ensures our parish continues to thrive. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Fr. Mark and the Parish Council for their hard work in organizing the event. It was wonderful to see everyone rally together to support our spiritual home.

If you weren't able to attend but would still like to offer a gift in honor of a particular feast day or saint, we are still gratefully accepting donations. You may send your donation to the church office, marked "ICON DONATION".

May God continue to bless you and your families for your kindness.

REFLECTION

“Even if you are not what you should be, you should not despair. It is bad enough that you have sinned; why in addition do you wrong God by regarding him in your ignorance as powerless? Is he, who for your sake created the great universe that you behold, incapable of saving your soul? And if you say that this fact, as well as his incarnation, only makes your condemnation worse, then repent; and he will receive your repentance, as he accepted that of the prodigal son (Luke 15:20) and the prostitute (Luke 7:37-50). But if repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even when you do not want to, show humility like the publican (Luke 18:13): this is enough to ensure your salvation. For he who sins without repenting, yet does not despair, must of necessity regard himself as the lowest of creatures, and will not dare to judge or censure anyone. Rather, he will marvel at God's compassion.”

+ St. Peter of Damaskos

WOMEN'S GUILD FEBRUARY COOKBOOK SALE

Don't forget to pick up your Albanian cookbook during our February coffee hours! Please see the flyer at the candle stand.

BIBLE STUDY

We have paused our weekly Bible study to focus on the journey of Great Lent. Please be sure to join us weekly during our Lenten worship, and we look forward to gathering again in the shared joy of Pascha!

SATURDAY OF SOULS

We invite you to our Saturday of Souls liturgy, lovingly presented by the Daughters of St. Mary's. Due to Fr. Mark's travels in Albania February 9-18, we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy and the Saturday of the Souls on **February 21, 2026**, with services beginning at 9:30 AM. Please submit your names to us with your contribution of \$15.00 per family to help pay for the memorial wheat (grure), making your checks payable to the Daughters of St. Mary's. Please see the flyer at the candle stand.

UPCOMING LENTEN WORSHIP

Please see the flyers for Pre-Sanctified Liturgies & Lenten worship at the candle stand.

SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY— MARCH 1, 2026

No services at St. Mary's on this day

St. Mary's, together with fellow churches in the CEOC will be closed on Sunday of Orthodoxy. Parishioners will attend the Pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy at St. Spyridon Cathedral at 10:00 am (Matins 8:45 am). We invite you to join us as representatives of the St. Mary's parish. All are warmly invited!

UPCOMING MEMORIALS

Feb 22— Violet Assad, 3 years

Feb 22— Robert Steffon, 2 years

Feb 22— Thomas Sedares, 20 years

Feb 22— Helen Kerxhalli, 1 year

A JOURNEY HOME

To many, the story of the Prodigal Son is a narrative of reckless choices, but in our Orthodox tradition, it is the ultimate story of the outsider returning to the source of Life. The son lost his identity, his resources, and his dignity among strangers. He did not return as a confident member of the household, but as one hoping only to be treated as a hired servant.

In our own lives, amidst the many things we manage for our families, we often find ourselves in that far country of the heart, feeling like outsiders to God's grace. We may feel the weight of our mistakes or the fear of a community that is currently marked by tension and judgment. Yet, we see the Father— who represents Christ's boundless love for the poor, the outsider, and the migrant— running to meet his son while he was still a great way off. He does not demand a defense or a list of restorations; he simply restores the son's dignity with a robe and a ring.

As we look toward the Lenten spring, we remember that many of our spiritual ancestors understood this path from the margins back to the heart of the Father. They teach us that no matter how far we have wandered or how much we feel like a stranger in our own land, there is refuge waiting for us. When we approach the Chalice today, let us leave behind the pride of the elder brother and the shame of the prodigal, recognizing that in the presence of the Lord, we are all beloved children being welcomed home.

