



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

No Brokenness in What Is the Same. St Cyril of Alexandria: The natural properties of the Word who came forth from the Father were maintained even when he became flesh. It is foolish therefore to dare to introduce a breach. For the Lord Jesus Christ is one and through him the Father created all things.³ He is composed of human properties and of others that are above the human, yielding a kind of middle term. He is, in fact, a mediator between God and humankind, according to the Scriptures, God by nature even when incarnate, truly, not purely man like us, remaining what he was even when he had become flesh. For it is written, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” **On the Incarnation 709.** Heen, E. M., & Krey, P. D. W. (Eds.). (2005). [Hebrews](#) (p. 233). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Jesus Heals to Show He is the Christ. St Cyril of Alexandria: When he had appointed the holy apostles, he performed very many wonderful miracles, rebuking demons, delivering from incurable diseases whoever drew near to him, and displaying his own most divine power. He did these works so that both the Jews, who had run together to him, and those from the country of the Greeks might know that Christ was not some ordinary man of those in our degree but, on the contrary, God. He honored these chosen disciples with the dignity of the apostolate. He was the Word that was made man but retained nevertheless his own glory. “For power went forth from him and healed all.” Christ did not borrow strength from some other person, but being himself God by nature, even though he had become flesh, he healed them all, by the demonstration of power over the sick. **Commentary on Luke, Homily 25.**

Just, A. A. (Ed.). (2005). [Luke](#) (p. 102). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Today Readings

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21

Gospel: Luke 6:17-23



From The Ambvon

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH,
OLD FORGE, PA

Priest Michael Shepherd (frmichael@stmichaelof.org)

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St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (ca. 345). St Maximus (1280).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for December

Birthdays:

Nameday: Barbara Sevensky (12/4); Daniel Jones (12/17);

Anniversary:

Baptism:

Travelers:

Prospora Schedule: Please sign up to bake prospora. **Open dates:**
Dec

Visitors: Please Stay for coffee hour that will be downstairs in the Church
Do you have a birthday or anniversary this/next week? Please add it to
our list on the shelf in the Vestibule/Narthex.

Service Attendance: Last weekend Divine Liturgy: 41

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive themselves by fasting and a recent (monthly) confession..If you have questions please ask Fr Michael!*



Service Schedule

This Week of 05Dec-11Dec

THURS, Dec 8th: @ 6:00 PM Vespers University of Scranton OCF

SAT, Dec 10th: @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers / Decorating for St Nicholas Feast

SUN, Dec 11th: Hours @ 9:20 AM, Divine Liturgy for St Nicholas @ 9:30 AM

WEEK of 12Dec-18Dec

SAT, Dec 10th: @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers / Decorating for St Nicholas Feast

SUN, Dec 11th: Hours @ 9:20 AM, Divine Liturgy for St Nicholas @ 9:30 AM

UP COMING

SAT, Dec 24th: @ 9AM, Royal Hours for Nativity

SAT, Dec 24th: @ 5:00 PM Compline, Matins with Litya for Nativity of Christ

SUN, Dec 25th: Hours @ 9:20 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 AM



Announcements

& Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events

Parish Steering Meeting: Dec 10th, @ 3:30 p.m. prior to Great Vespers

Dec 14th: setup scaffolding for First Security

Dec 16th: First Security will be here to update our security system & fire Alarms.

Church Work Day: Every Friday is Church Maintenance day. Come help!

ST NICHOLAS DAY FESTIVAL - COME HELP DECORATE - SEE BEVERLY

The Lot down the Street has been sold for \$35,000.00. We are waiting for the title search to be completed

Kontakion, Synaxis of Archangel Michael & all the Bodiless Hosts

Commanders of God's armies and ministers of the divine glory, princes of the bodiless angels and guides of mankind, ask for what is good for us, and for great mercy, supreme commanders of the Bodiless Hosts.

Holy Archangel Michael Pray unto God for us!

The extraordinary thing about the image of St. Nicholas in the Church is that he is not known for anything extraordinary. He was not a theologian and never wrote a word, yet he is famous in the memory of believers as a zealot for Orthodoxy, allegedly accosting the heretic Arius at the first ecumenical council in Nicaea for denying the divinity of God's Son. He was not an ascetic and did no outstanding feats of fasting and vigils, yet he is praised for his possession of the "fruit of the Holy Spirit... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). He was not a mystic in our present meaning of the term but he lived daily with the Lord and was godly in all his words and deeds. He was not a prophet in the technical sense, yet he proclaimed the Word of God, exposed the sins of the wicked, defended the rights of the oppressed and afflicted, and battled against every form of injustice with supernatural compassion and mercy. In a word, he was a good pastor, father, and bishop to his flock, known especially for his love and care for the poor. Most simply put, he was a divinely good person.

Like God and like Jesus, St. Nicholas was genuinely good. Real goodness is possible. For, to quote the Lord again, "with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26). A human being, even a rich human being who believes in God, can be genuinely good with God's own goodness. "For truly I say to you, says the Lord, "if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed... nothing will be impossible to you" (Mt 17:20-21).

The Messiah has come so that human beings can live lives which are, strictly speaking, humanly impossible. He has come so that people can really be *good*. One of the greatest and most beloved examples among believers that this is true is the holy bishop of Myra about whom almost nothing else is known, or needs to be known, except that he was good. For this reason alone he remains, even in his secularized form, the very spirit of Christmas.

Stewardship Part 1: Scriptural Giving
His Eminence, Archbishop Mark
October 23, 2015

At the 18th All-American Council in Atlanta, the Assembly voted to move to proportional giving in the coming year. As we prepare for this transition, I will prepare articles, based on the Holy Scripture, to help us to better understand the Biblical precepts of Proportionate Giving through tithes, offerings and sacrifices. We will make use of both the writing of the New and Old Covenant. In doing so, the instruction of Saint Paul's charge to Timothy in his pastoral letter is helpful: "Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconnium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work [2 Timothy 3:10–16].

In this passage of Scripture, Saint Paul is specifically referring to the writings of the Old Covenant, as many of the Books of the New Covenant had not yet been written and the ones that were had not yet been regarded as on the same level as the Scripture of the Old Covenant. With this in mind, we will begin our study of the Old Covenant passages, the Scripture of the early Church, related to offerings, sacrifices, and tithing, etc. Scripture being inspired by God Himself, let us not be dismissive of their instruction, as Saint Paul says they are "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Let us open our ears to hear what the Lord has taught through the Holy Scriptures and set aside all preconceived ideas. Let us remember the word of the Lord, spoken through Isaiah, the Prophet, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts [Isaiah 55:8-9].

When we read the Book of Genesis, we are told the Lord created the heavens and the earth and all it contains. The Hebrew verb for "create" used in Genesis specifically refers to creation *ex nihilo* – that is, God created *out of nothing*.

This theme is also repeated in numerous passages of the New Covenant. Colossians 1:16-17 reads, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

Thus we acknowledge that all we have comes from the Lord. He is the source of all things. It *all* belongs to Him. Think of the words said at the gravesides of our loved ones: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein [Psalm 24:1]. This psalm tells us not only of that which we accumulate during our lives or make use of is the Lord's, but *we ourselves* belong to Him.

This same theme is repeated in Psalm 8, verses 3-8: "When I look at Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast established; what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor. Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea."

Thus mankind occupies an exceptional place in the Lord's creation, one of dominion, which entails responsibility and stewardship. Mankind does not own creation or even his self, but he is entrusted with their care during his brief sojourn in this life. As we will see as we continue our studies, mankind's unique place in creation, as well as being in the Divine Image and Likeness, is a distinctive gift that comes with responsibilities. Mankind was given dominion over creation to fulfill a priestly role and one of stewardship in caring for God's creation. The Lord blessed mankind with his very life, his gifts, his talents, abilities, good weather, fertile land, a bountiful harvest, multiplication of cattle, sheep and goats, etc., and as an expression of mankind's gratitude and means of Communion, in his priestly capacity he offers back to God the very best of what the Lord blessed and gave to him. "Thine own of Thine own we offer unto Thee in behalf of all and for all." There is nothing we can offer to God that is not already his, other than our free will and obedience.

The Winter Pascha, Chapter 8: St. Nicholas

The following is an excerpt from The Winter Pascha, by Fr. Thomas Hopko

Following the feast of St. Andrew, prefeast hymns of the Nativity are heard once again on the feast of St. Nicholas, the fourth-century bishop of Myra in Lycia who through the ages had come to be especially connected with the festival of Christ's birth.

*O you who love the festivals,
Come gather and sing the praises of the fair beauty of bishops,
The glory of the fathers,
The fountain of wonders and great protector of the faithful.
Let us all say: Rejoice, O guardian of the people of Myra,
Their head and honored counselor,
The pillar of the Church which cannot be shaken.
Rejoice, O light full of brightness,
That makes the ends of the world shine with wonders.
Rejoice, O divine delight of the afflicted,
The fervent advocate of those who suffer from injustice.
And now, O all-blessed Nicholas,
Never cease praying to Christ our God
For those who honor the festival of your memory
With faith and love.*

Sad as it is to see St. Nicholas transformed into the red-suited Santa Claus of the secular winter "holidays," it is easy to understand why the holy bishop has become so closely connected with the festival of Christ's birth. The stories about the saint, fabricated and embroidered in Christian imagination over the ages, in various times and places, all tell of the simple faith and love of the man known only for his goodness and love.

Dear Parishioners, We have fallen behind in our tithing and our giving. Please do not be fooled by last month's deposits. More than half of last month's deposits is from rent collected and funeral payments and not monies collected from donations or tithing. To give a more accurate account of monthly tithes/donations funeral & rent payments will not be reflected in monthly deposits.

The Month of December (as of 4th)
WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We thank you for your continued giving in gratitude for all that our loving God does for each of us, for His Holy Church, and all the blessings we receive through her.
Nov Expenditures: \$11,170.91
Nov Deposits: \$14,243.70
Current Bank Balance: \$16,153.53

Parish Prayer List

Please remember in your prayers **LIVING**

Captive Hierarchs PAUL and JOHN; Ill-afflicted Archpriests John Nightingale & Fr Theodore Orzolek

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: Mike Jadick, Bernie Elko, Margaret Pregmon, Marie Buranich, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Rosemary Kuzmich, Sandra Pritchky, Marie Pasternak, Sandy Batton, Paula Stavisky, Al Pritchky, Eli Stavisky, Evelyn Bunevitch, Nadia Macheska, John Pritchky, Paulette Ezbiansky, Andrew Lutzick, Daniel Jones, Charissa Voroziichak, Matushka Paula Soucek **Servants of God** Dcn Nathan, Mat. Katherine, Miraiah, Evangeline, Gideon, Zacharias, Ignatius, Basil (Clausson), Mat. Emilia, Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina (Shepherd), Barbara Sevensky, Bev Elko, Sandra Condon, Ann Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmann, Walter Pritchky, Michael & Euphemia (Mia) (Keklak); Amaya Jackson; Robert Kane; Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky

Seekers: Jason, Emilia, Judah, Nadia, & Silas

DEPARTED

Departed: Peter Gyza Sr. (11/20); John Miseyko (11/5); Peter Mizgala (12/2); Dorothy Polanchik (12/11); Robert Sorok 12/23);