



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

Today Readings

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

Colossians 3:5a (ACCS Col-Phl): 3:5a Put to Death What is Earthly in You Postbaptismal Sin. **Chrysostom:** Does Paul write as though these things were in us? There is no contradiction. It is similar to one who has scoured a statue that was filthy, recast it, and displayed it new and bright, explaining that the rust was eaten off and destroyed. Yet he recommends diligence in clearing away the future rust. He does not contradict himself, for it is not that rust which he scoured off that he recommends should be cleared away but that which grew afterwards. So it is not that former putting to death he speaks of here, nor those fornications, but those which afterward grow. **Homilies on Colossians 8.**

Those Making Excuses. **Cyril of Alexandria:** "They began," it says, "all of them at once to make excuse," that is, as with one purpose, without any delay, they made excuse... By senselessly giving themselves up to these earthly matters, they cannot see things spiritual. Conquered by the love of the flesh, they are far from holiness. They are covetous and greedy after wealth. They seek things that are below but make no account in the slightest degree of the hopes that are stored up with God. It would be far better to gain the joys of paradise instead of earthly fields and temporary furrows. **Commentary on Luke, Homily 104.**



From The Ambvon

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH,
OLD FORGE, PA

Priest Michael Shepherd (frmichael@stmichaelof.org)

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26th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1. Sunday of the Forefathers.

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

Thank you to Savina for this weeks Prospora!

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: 45

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 12Dec-18Dec

Wed, Dec 14th: @ 11:00AM - 1:30PM Silent Prayers

SAT, Dec 17th: @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers

SUN, Dec 18th: Hours @ 9:20 AM

WEEK of 19Dec-25Dec

Wed, Dec 21st: @ 11:00AM - 1:30PM Silent Prayers

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

UP COMING

SAT, Dec 31st: @ 5:00 PM Compline, Matins with Litya for Circumcision of the Lord

SUN, Jan 1st: Hours @ 9:20 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 AM Circumcision of the Lord

THURS, Jan 5th: @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers Holy Theophany

FRI, Jan 6th: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 Holy Theophany



Announcements

& Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events

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!

The Lot down the Street has been sold for \$35,000.00. Closing is on Dec 16th

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!

who are bitter, complaining, condemning, accusing, dissatisfied and depressed are certainly not Christians. They can only be people whose life is untouched by grace, people whose existence is confined to the suffocating limitations of "this world" whose "ruler" is the devil and whose "form... is passing away" (Jn 12:31; 1 Cor 7:31). They cannot possibly be those who belong to Christ and the kingdom of God. For Christians by definition have Christ's "joy fulfilled in themselves" (Jn 17:13). They are people whose joy, which no one can take away, is literally full and complete (Jn 15:11; 16:22, 24).

In his famous book *For the Life of the World*, Father Alexander Schmemmann speaks about the joy of Christians. From its very beginning, he says,

Christianity has been the proclamation of joy, of the only possible joy on earth. It rendered impossible all the joy we usually think of as possible. But within this impossibility, at the very bottom of this darkness, it announced and conveyed a new all-embracing joy, and with this joy it transformed the End into a Beginning. Without the proclamation of this joy, Christianity is incomprehensible. It is only as joy that the Church was victorious in the world, and it lost the world when it lost that joy, and ceased to be a credible witness to it. Of all the accusations against Christians, the most terrible one was uttered by Nietzsche when he said that Christians had no joy.³

Father Alexander goes on to say that before Christians can do anything else with all of their "programs and missions, projects and techniques," they "must recover the meaning of this great joy." he says that joy "is not something one can define or analyze. One enters into joy. 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' (Mt 25:21)." And one enters into this joy, this exceeding great joy, he insists, only by entering into the liturgical, eucharistic life of the Church herself. Here, and only here, as in the celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Epiphany in the world, can a person partake of that joyful reality for which the world itself was created in the beginning.

¹Compline of the final day of the prefeast of the Nativity, December 24.

²Matins of the final day of the prefeast of the Nativity, December 24.

³For the Life of the World, p. 24.

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 23: Glad Tidings of Great Joy
*The following is an excerpt from **The Winter Pascha**, by Fr.
Thomas Hopko*

The joy of the Messiah's appearance abounds in the Church's liturgical services of the Winter Pascha. When the "Hail" of the angelic salutation is translated "Rejoice," as it often is in the church services since in Greek that is what it literally means, there is an even greater presence of the "good news of great joy" for the faithful, since they, together with the whole of creation, are greeted with this salutation again and again in the songs of the festal celebration.

Let creation exceedingly rejoice,
For the Creator fashions himself as a creature.
And He who was before all things now manifests Himself as God newly revealed.
Let the wise men go to meet Him with their gifts;
Let the shepherds clap their hands in faith at the wonder;
and let mortal men join the angels with rejoicing.¹
Be joyful, O earth!
Behold, Christ draws near to be born in Bethlehem.
Be glad, O sea!
And dance for joy, O company of prophets,
For today you behold the fulfillment of your words.
Rejoice, all you righteous!
Let the kings of the whole earth sing with rejoicing,
And let the nations be in exceeding joy!
Mountains, hills, and valleys,
Rivers, seas, and the whole of creation:
Magnify the Lord who now is born.
Rejoice, O Virgin,
The Theotokos who of the Holy Spirit
Has borne life into the world
For the salvation of all!²

Dear Parishioners, We have fallen behind in our tithing and our giving. Please do not be fooled by last months deposits. More then 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.
Last weeks Expenditures: \$3,943.82
Deposits: Dec 5th \$6,066.00
Current Bank Balance: \$20,160.53

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, Miraiiah, 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);