



# FROM THE AMBIVON

## ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

### 512 WINTER ST., OLD FORGE, PA

Phone: 570-457-3703

Web: [www.stmichaelof.org](http://www.stmichaelof.org) Facebook: [stmichaelof1891PA](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelof1891PA)

Priest Michael Shepherd ([frmichael@stmichaelof.org](mailto:frmichael@stmichaelof.org))

Chair - Tammy Wytovich ([chair@stmichaelof.org](mailto:chair@stmichaelof.org))

Vice Chair - Danny Pregmon ([vicechair@stmichaelof.org](mailto:vicechair@stmichaelof.org))

Secretary - Vitaliy Rakovsky ([office@stmichaelof.org](mailto:office@stmichaelof.org))

Treasurer - Maura Elko ([treasurer@stmichaelof.org](mailto:treasurer@stmichaelof.org))

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**December 28th, 2024 27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2. Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord. Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ. Sunday after Nativity.** The 14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem. Ven. Marcellus, Abbot of the Monastery of the “Unsleping Ones” (485). Ven. Mark the Grave-digger, Theophilus, and John, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—11th-12th c.). Venerable Theophilus and Jacob, wonderworkers of Omuch (15th c.). Ven. Thaddeus the Confessor, of the Studion (818).

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### **Birthdays & Anniversaries for December**

**Birthdays:**

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

**Baptism:**

**Anniversary:**

**Travelers:**

**Prospora Schedule: PLEASE HELP! We need families to start baking prospora at home. Please sign up. *The Church has a prospora kit if you would like to borrow it!* Thank you all for your offering “for the people by the people”.**

Jan 8th

Jan 15th

Jan 22nd

**Counting: HELP! Please sign up to help us count weekly donations! We need help counting today.**

Jan 8th

Jan 15th

Jan 22nd

**Visitors: PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS for an Agape Meal. Thank you to everyone who donated! Please donate what you would spend for lunch at the agape meal to replenish our supplies. PLEASE SING ALONG! Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies throughout the services is encouraged!**

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**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 prayer, fasting, and a recent (monthly) confession. If you have questions please ask Fr Michael! Visitors, if you did not introduce yourself to Fr Michael at Vespers, please refrain from Holy Communion.*



## Service Schedule

TUES, Dec 31st @ 5:00 PM Compline and Matins w/Litya  
WED, Jan 1st: Divine Liturgy @ 9:00 AM - The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia

FRI, Jan 3rd Royal Hours

SAT, Jan 4th @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers

SUN, Jan 5th: Hours @ 9:10 AM Hours & Divine Liturgy, 28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 3. Eve of Theophany . Sunday before Theophany.

@ 5:00 PM Compline and Matins w/Litya for Theophany & Great Blessing of the Water

MON, Jan 6th Divine Liturgy of St Basil @ 9 AM THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST



## *Treasury*

*“... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. Jesus Christ*

## How Much is my tithe

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
\$200	\$4	\$8	\$10	\$20
\$500	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50
\$750	\$15	\$30	\$37	\$75
\$1000	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
\$1500	\$30	\$60	\$75	\$150

**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.

**Dec Donations:** \$20,506.08

**Dec Expense:** \$13,477.08

**Average Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open:** \$3,740.85

**Average Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open:** \$14,963.58

## Parish Prayer List

**NEWLY DEPARTED:** Archpriest Michael Evans (11/14); Morgan Shepherd (12/16)

**DEPARTED:** Michael Toczko (12/1); Peter Mizgala (12/2); Helen Sorok (12/9); Dorothy Polanchik (12/11); Walter Buranich (12/19); Robert Sorok (12/23);

**Please remember in your prayers LIVING:**

Ill-afflicted Archpriest(s) John Nightingale, & Theodore Orzolek

**All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends:** Christine Sevensky, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel Jones, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; Bernie Elko; Nadia Macheska; The child of God Abigail. Judith

**Servants of God:** Mark Bezhuly, David & Kathy Barsigian, Patricia Jones, Anne Buday, Emily Krenitsky, Gregory Krenitsky, Barbara Sevensky, Beverly Elko, Sandra Condon, Marie Pasternak, Nicole Earl, Anna Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmon, Walter & Marie Pritchuk, Michael & Euphemia Keklak, Justin & Elisabeth Kane, Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky, Ekaterina & Anna, Joe & Kelly Cigna, George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia Coyoy, Mat. Emilia, Reader Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Paulette Ezbiensky, Jason Vo & Maura Elko, Mary Krevko, Elisabeth & Jacob Hallford

**Seekers:** Eugene, Gabriel, Mike, Maxim, & Alyssa

**Catechumens:** Paul Dunay, George McCandless, Christopher & Neva Yeisley



## **Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events**

**Silent Prayers and Confession:** Every Wednesday 11:00AM - 1:30PM or before/after Vespers.  
Or you can make an appt for confession.

**Monthly Panikhida:** Jan 25th, 4PM prior to Vespers.

**Catechumen Classes:** Every Sunday after Liturgy. All are welcome to sit in the classes. Today's class will be on the Theotokos.

**Church Work Day:** Every Day is Church Maintenance day! A lot of cleaning can be done! If you have a day you would like to work in the church or even just a couple of hours please get with Fr Michael for what can be done. Sweeping, vacuuming, polishing.

**Parish Council Meeting:** Jan 11th, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM - All are invited. January we are preparing for the Diocesan Meeting 23rd & 24th of January (Vitaliy Rakovsky-Delegate) and the Annual Parish Meeting February 9th. Any motions to change the Parish By-laws must be submitted to Parish Council for discussion by mid January in order for His Eminence to bless off on the change prior to the Annual meeting. Reminder, in order to submit changes or to be a voting member, a parishioner will submit a signed "Statement of Intent" along with donation of Time, Talent, and Treasure along with frequent Communion and Confession. T3C2.

**St. Michael's Greeters Ministry please sign up!** Thank you Maura!

**ChurchTrac Registration** Please register and/or sign in to ChurchTrac and update your information. I am in the process of putting a church directory and this program will allow us to do so very easily. Please add your photo so when we use this directory for proskomide there will be a picture alongside your name.

<https://stmichaeloldforgepa.churchtrac.com/sign-in>

**HOUSE BLESSING:** During the days following the Feast of the Theophany (January 6th), it is customary for the Priest to visit the homes of his parishioners, bringing with him the "Jordan Water" for the traditional Theophany House Blessing. The First Great Sanctification of Water is performed at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Theophany (January 5th). While that water may be given to the faithful to drink on that day and throughout the coming year, traditionally it is only the water from the Second Great Sanctification, which is performed on the day of the Feast of Theophany (January 6th), that is called "Jordan Water" and used for the Theophany House Blessing. Please schedule with Fr Michael to have your house blessed.

**Prospora Baking Class:** Emily Hart has graciously volunteered to open her home for all those interested in baking Prospora as an offering for the Church. This class will be on Jan 9th. Please get with her and let her know you are attending so she can prepare.

The stamp we use can be found on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/867gwkF>

Rosemary's Foolproof Prospora Recipe can be found on our website:

<https://www.stmichaelof.org/prosporarecipe>

Remember that at the Great Entrance the people respond with "And to thy Holy Priesthood, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom always now and ever unto ages of ages."



Epistle: (200) Galatians 1:11-19

Gospel: (4) Matthew 2:13-23

**EPISTLE**

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 2nd Tone, a Psalm of David: The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Choir: The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Reader: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death.

Choir: The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Reader: In the 4th Tone: God is wonderful in His saints the God of Israel.

Choir: God is wonderful in His saints the God of Israel.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

Deacon: Let us attend!

[(200) Galatians 1:11-19] Brethren: I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. \* For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. \* For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; \* and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. \* But when He Who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, \* was pleased to reveal His Son in me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, \* nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. \* Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. \* But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Priest: Peace be unto thee, Reader.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

**ALLELUIA**

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Alleluia in the 2nd Tone: May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect thee!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call to Thee!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: In the 4th Tone: Remember David, O Lord, and all his meekness.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

[(4) Matthew 2:13-23] When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell thee; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." \* And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, \* and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My son." \* Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. \* Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: \* "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." \* But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in

Egypt, saying, \* "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." \* And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. \* But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. \* And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

**GALATIANS 1:13 WHETHER THE LAW ITSELF IS TO BLAME FOR LEGALISTIC SERVITUDE. St AUGUSTINE:** If therefore he showed prowess in Judaism by persecuting and wasting God's church, it is obvious that Judaism is contrary to the church of God, not through that spiritual law which the Jews had received but through their carnal habit of servitude. And if Paul as a zealot—that is, an imitator of late Judaic traditions—persecuted the church of God, his paternal traditions are contrary to God's church, but the blame does not belong to the law itself. For the law is spiritual and does not allow itself to be interpreted carnally. That is the fault of those who understand carnally the things that they have received and who also have handed down many things of their own, undermining, as the Lord said, the command of God through their traditions. *EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS 7 [1B.1.13–14].* Edwards, M. J., ed. (1999). [\*Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians\*](#) (pp. 10–11). InterVarsity Press.

### ***Matthew 2:15 A Son Out of Egypt***

**FUGITIVES EAST AND WEST. St John CHRYSOSTOM:** There is something else here worth noticing, one touching the magi and the other touching the Child. The issue is why didn't the magi remain with the Child? And why didn't the Child remain in Bethlehem? Both had to escape as fugitives shortly after they were received with joy: the magi to Persia and the holy family to Egypt. Why? This is worthy of close examination. The magnificence of God's plan of salvation would not have been believed if he had not come in the flesh. If Jesus had fallen into the hands of Herod, his life in the flesh might have been cut off. Many circumstances were quietly ordered providentially within human history. Even while the flesh of the Christ child was in danger, some dared to imagine that he never assumed our common human flesh, that his coming was like that of a ghost. These impious ideas will ultimately destroy those who do not confess that God has come to us in the flesh in a way becoming to his deity.

As to the wise men, they were sent off quickly, commissioned to teach in the land of the Persians, having thwarted the madness of the king. Herod was allowed the opportunity to learn that he was attempting things impossible, against prophecy, and that there was still time to quench his wrath and desist from his demented plot. It is fitting to God's power not only to subdue his enemies but to do so with ease, deceiving the deceivers in a way fitting to God's almighty power. In the same way the Egyptians had earlier been deceived, their wealth transferred secretly and with craft and God's power made awesome to them. *THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 8.1.* Simonetti, M., ed. (2001). [\*Matthew 1–13\*](#) (p. 33). InterVarsity Press.

### **On Prayer**

By St Paisios *"And in praying do not hear up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; ...for your father knows what you need before you ask him."* (Mt 6:7-8)

We should constantly and unceasingly repeat the Jesus prayer. Only the name of Christ must remain inside our heart and mind; when we neglect our prayer, that is our communication with God, the devil finds the chance to confuse us with negative thoughts. Thus, we end up not knowing what we want, do, or say. The soul must be constantly ready and alert and always in contact with the spiritual headquarters, that is, God. Only then, it will feel secure, full of hope and joy.

When I was in the army, during the war, I was a radio operator. I noticed that we felt secure only when we communicated with the Army Division on an hourly basis. When our communication was limited to every two hours, we felt a little bit insecure; sometimes, when we could only be in touch with them twice a day, we felt uncomfortable, lonely and lost. The same thing applies to our prayer. The more we pray, the more secure we feel, on a spiritual basis, of course.

When someone is involved in manual labor, it helps him a lot to say the Jesus prayer and at the same time perform his task. When someone is doing work that needs concentration, i.e. he is driving a car, or he is operating on a patient, he should also say the Jesus prayer so God can help him and enlighten him; however, he should pray with his heart, and use his mind to concentrate on his work and thus avoid doing any mistakes.

The more the mind concentrates on praying, and is being humbled, the more it is enlightened by the grace of God. However, the more it gets dispersed and confused due to its haughtiness, the more it becomes troubled; therefore our mind, which is clean by nature, fills up with dirty thoughts. **“When we suffer from narrow-mindedness, we should ask for God’s intervention. If He does not intervene then, when will He do so?”**

We must pray for other people with contrition and pain in our soul. We can only achieve this, if, due to our humbleness, we consider ourselves the cause of all the problems in the world.

- But, Father, how can you accept that you are the cause for the divorce of a married couple in Athens?
- Well, I say to myself: If I were a saint, like the old fathers, I would ask God to make them love each other again, and He would help them, as He has promised to listen to saints. Since I am not a saint, God does not listen to me. Therefore, it is my fault that this family is breaking up, as well as for the evil existing in the world. This way, I never judge anyone, but I only blame myself for everything; then God will help.

We must not act like children and constantly ask God for minor things. When we are asking for something, which can be humanly accomplished, we must try, as much as we can, to do it ourselves. We should only turn to God, when we, as human beings, are unable to achieve what we want.

The Jesus prayer must gratefully and generously spring out of our soul, while, at the same time, we think of all the good things God has done for us. We should always say the Jesus prayer wherever we are; not just in the morning or at night. When we walk, we should not waste our free time, but instead take advantage of it and repeat the prayer. When we are working in a busy place and it is difficult for us to concentrate on praying, we can quietly chant without disturbing others.

If someone prays correctly, God listens to him, as long as what he is asking in his prayer is for the benefit of the person he prays for. The prayer of those who pray for the world benefits the faithful Christians who have specific and serious problems, because both the former and the latter “are turned in the same frequency. “When I wish to rest, I pray. I realised that the only effective way to get some rest is through praying. Therefore, pray and study.”

When you are about to begin your prayer, first read a section from the Holy Bible or a story from the Gerontikon/Synaxarion, to get your mind together and your heart warmed up. Then start praying. Through your prayer, you can sanctify yourself as well as your work. When there are new people at your place of work, first teach them how to become spiritually revived, and then show them the practical side of the work. I will give you an example to indicate that this is both for your own benefit as well as for the benefit of your fellow workers.

Suppose someone owns a tailor’s shop. His employees, who are not pious, curse while they are doing their work. As a result, the people who will wear the clothes they are sewing will be under the influence of the devil. Gradually, they will realise that something is wrong with this tailor shop and will start looking for another. God’s grace will also abandon the tailor shop which will eventually close down.

The opposite happens if the owner employs pious workers and looks first after their spiritual education, and then shows them the art of work.

In our days, people prefer to purchase their icons and other items from monasteries. They do so because they know that monks and nuns say the Jesus prayer while working and everything they do is blessed. When people visit a monastery and eat food cooked without oil, they find it very tasty and say:

- I haven’t eaten such a tasty dish even in the best restaurant. How can it be so tasty when it is cooked without oil?

When the cook of a restaurant curses while he is cooking and never goes to church, how can the food be blessed? On the contrary, the monk is praying while cooking and his heart is filled with positive thoughts; he thinks that he is preparing food for earthy angels to eat. Moreover, when monks sit at the table to eat, they say a prayer to bless the food. How is it possible then for the food not to taste good?

Therefore, when someone comes to your business to start work, first see that he is spiritually revived and then show him the work, so your business will have God’s blessing and be prosperous.

St Paisios always prayed wholeheartedly for everyone in the world. He dedicated the day to relieve the pain of people in grief and the night to God. He rested for a few hours in the early morning, in order to regain some strength after his all night prayers and be able to help people during the day. He used to read the whole Book of Psalms on a daily basis. Sometimes, he divided the hours of the night, for instance, from 9:00- 10:00 he prayed for God to protect those who return home late from work; from 11:00- 12:00 for those who travel, so they will not be involved in any accidents; from midnight- 01:00 for God to help people stay away from ill-reputed night clubs, where they usually spend the night. In general, he prayed for every situation, for the sick people in hospitals, the married couples involved in a quarrel, etc.

Priestmonk Christodoulos (1998) “Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain” Holy Mountain.  
Source: <http://www.pigizois.gr/>

Dear Faithful,

Two Sunday’s ago at the reading of the “Invitation to the Banquet,” I stressed in the homily that the Eucharist is the center of our life and of our very being. I also mentioned the importance of preparing to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. As I said on that Sunday, the magnitude of the gift that we receive at the Holy Chalice is **directly proportional** to our preparedness: If we prepare little, we receive little, and vice versa.

And at last night's Matins Gospel reading we heard that two disciples, Luke and Cleopas, were on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:13–35) The disciples were traveling when Jesus joined them and they did not recognize Jesus, but He challenged their lack of faith and explained the prophetic evidence of Christ in the scriptures. When they arrived in Emmaus, the disciples invited Jesus to join them for a meal, and there they recognized him. “And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.” (Luke 24:35) **THEY RECOGNIZED HIM IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD!** You will recognize Christ more in your life if you prepare more and commune more.

Already in the apostolic period, the tradition was established in the Church to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday (and, if possible, even more often, e.g. on the days of martyrs’ commemorations), so that Christians might remain in unending communion with Christ and with each other (see, e.g. 1Cor 10:16–17; Acts 2:46; Acts 20:7).

*All members of the local community took part in the weekly Eucharist and received communion, while the refusal to take part in the Eucharistic communion without solid grounds was subject to condemnation: All the faithful whocome in and hear the Scriptures, but do not stay for the prayers and the Holy Communion, are to be excommunicated, as causing disorder in the Church (Apostolic canon 9).*

The early Christian practice of communion at every Divine Liturgy remains an ideal even for the present time, as part of the Tradition of the Church. Thus, St Basil the Great refers to the communion **four times a week as normative:** *And to receive communion every day and to partake of the holy Body and Blood of Christ is good and beneficial, for [Christ] himself clearly says: ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life.’ ... We receive communion four times every week: on Sunday, on Wednesday, on Friday, and on Saturday, and on other days, if there happens to be a memorial of a Saint (Letter 93 [89]).*

Here are the ways in which we, as Orthodox Christians, prepare to receive Christ. Please note, this list may appear daunting. That’s because there is always more that we can do. It does NOT mean that we are failures and unable to receive communion if we come up short on one or a number of these preparations. Rather, it indicates the necessity to seek spiritual counsel, so that we are both realistic and also stringent in our pursuit, and so that our “worthiness” to receive communion is not self-determined.

### Preparation for Holy Communion

#### Fasting

- Abstaining from all food and drink on the morning of the Liturgy (or afternoon/day if it is an evening Liturgy).
- Following the regular fasts of the Church: Wednesdays, Fridays, and seasons of fasting.

#### Prayer

- Saying the “Prayers Before Communion” on the evening before and/or the morning of the Liturgy.

- Keeping a regular prayer rule, which may include Scripture readings, the Jesus Prayer, prostrations, spiritual readings, etc. The prayer rule especially is greatly benefitted by guidance from a spiritual father.
- Praying unceasingly: Striving to constantly remember God, through perpetual prayer, including the Jesus Prayer.
- Participating in the worship services of the church whenever possible, including the Vespers the night before Liturgy.

### **Repentance**

- Metania (“repentance” in Greek) means a changing or turning of the mind. Thus it is our life’s work to constantly refocus upon God. Each time that we turn away from Him, even for a moment – through getting angry, jealous, judgmental, lustful, proud, or any of the passions – we can turn back to him (*metania*). Thus our life becomes a perpetual repentance, not in some slavish self-hating way, but in the constant remembrance of our need for God at all times. (God is not a cold and austere judge; rather He is a willing guide for those who are willing.)
- Regularly seeking forgiveness from those against whom we have sinned.
- Monthly regular confession to a priest, through the Sacrament of Confession.

### **Almsgiving**

- Offering thanksgiving to God by giving to Him the first-fruits: a portion of our income. This tithe is the way in which we place our trust in God, saying, “If He has given all things to me, then I trust that He will continue to provide for me; and I give this offering to Him as testament to that trust and to my gratitude.”
- “Showing mercy” (from the Greek for “almsgiving”) to those in need: Helping the poor, comforting the afflicted, being the image of Christ to those in darkness. Charity comes in many forms: toward our family members, toward those who love us and toward those who hate us, toward parishioners, coworkers, acquaintances, and strangers.
- Forgiving everyone for everything.

### **Keeping the Commandments**

- Jesus said, “If you love me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15); “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (John 14:21); and “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:10)
- Thus, striving to keep all of the commandments of our Lord is essential preparation for communion. We do not keep the commandments as a slave who fears punishment; but as a true son or daughter, who recognizes that it is only through the imitating of Christ (the “keeping of the commandments”) that we can become intimate with Christ and inheritors of eternal life.

Please note that ANY of these preparations might be modified by a person’s spiritual father if his or her situation necessitates such a change.

In as much as we strive toward these goals, we are preparing to receive communion. Thus an Orthodox Christian who practices all of these preparations – and who does not have any unconfessed sins – should strive to receive communion at every Liturgy. If one has any unconfessed sins, the goal is to go to confession ASAP, not to abstain from communion for weeks or months. Abstaining from communion from weeks on end is like not talking to your spouse for weeks on end and expecting everything will be okay.

Lastly, all of these guidelines are intended as general signposts. The specifics are determined through the spiritual father relationship.

May God grant us all of the gifts and benefits of His Body and Blood, toward eternal life!

His unworthy servant,

*Fr Michael*

Fr Michael Shepherd