



# FROM THE AMBON

## ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

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**March 3rd, 2024 - SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 6.**

Martyr Eutropius of Amasea, and with him Martyrs Cleonicus and Basiliscus (ca. 308). Saint Piamoun (337). Ss. Zenon and Zoilus.

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### **Birthdays & Anniversaries for February**

**Birthdays:** Maura Elko (3/2); Matushka Emilia Shepherd (3/3); Tammy Wytovich (3/4); Marie Pasternak (3/7);

**Nameday:** Diane Buranich (3/19)

**Anniversary:**

**Baptism:**

**Travelers:**

**Prospora Schedule: 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. We will need more prospora during Great Lent for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays.***

Mar 10

Mar 17

Mar 24

**Counting: HELP! Please sign up and help our Maura Elko count.**

Mar 10

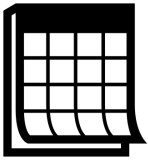
Mar 17

Mar 24

**Visitors: PLEASE JOIN US FOR 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

FRI, Mar 8th: Great Vespers & Matins 4:50PM

SAT, Mar 9th: @ 9:00AM Memorial Saturday Divine Liturgy

SAT, Mar 9th: Great Vespers & Matins w/confessions 4:50PM

SUN, Mar 10th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY OF MEATFARE - Tone 7. Sunday of the Last Judgment.

SAT, Mar 16th: Great Vespers & Matins w/confessions 4:50PM

SUN, Mar 17th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON - Tone 6.



## Words of Wisdom

### From the Saints & Teachers

## Today Readings

**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

**Gospel:** Luke 15:11-32

**1 Corinthians 6:20 (ACCS 1-2 Co): 6:20 Glorify God in the Body Bring Nothing Defiled into the Temple. St Cyprian:** Let us glorify God and bear him in a pure and spotless body and with more perfect observance. Let those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ submit to the rule of our redeemer with the absolute obedience of servants. Let us take care not to bring anything unclean or defiled into the temple of God, lest he be offended and leave the abode where he dwells. **The Dress of Virgins 2.**

**15:11–24 The Prodigal Son and His Merciful Father The Parable Calls the Pharisees to Rejoice Over the Repentance of Sinners. St Cyril of Alexandria:** What is the object of the parable? Let us examine the occasion that led to it so we will learn the truth. The blessed Luke had said a little before of Christ the Savior of us all.... The Pharisees and scribes made this outcry at his gentleness and love to people. They wickedly and impiously blamed him for receiving and teaching people whose lives were impure. Christ very necessarily set before them the present parable. He clearly shows them that the God of all requires even him who is thoroughly steadfast, firm, holy, and has attained to the highest praise for sobriety of conduct to be earnest in following his will. When any are called to repentance, even if they have a bad reputation, he must rejoice rather and not give way to an unloving irritation because of them. **Commentary on Luke, Homily 107.**

### A GUIDE TO THE TRIODION AND LENT

#### 2. Second Sunday of Triodion - Sunday of the Prodigal Son

On this Sunday, we commemorate the Parable of the Prodigal Son, from the Holy Gospel, which our most Divine Fathers appointed to be read after the Parable of the Publican and Pharisee.

Since there are some who are conscious of having lived prodigally from a very early age, giving themselves over to drunkenness and licentiousness and falling thereby into a depth of evils, and have reached despair, which is the offspring of vaunting; and since, for this reason, they have no desire to devote themselves to the pursuit of virtue, putting forward the swarm of their evils as an excuse, and since they are forever falling into the same evils and worse than these, the Holy Fathers, wishing, in their paternal loving-kindness towards such people, to lead them away from despair, placed this parable here after the first one, pulling out the passion of despair root and branch and arousing them to acquire virtue, and, through the story of the Prodigal Son, showing God's loving and exceedingly good mercies towards those who have sinned very greatly, proving from this parable of Christ's that there is no sin which can overcome His love for mankind.

**Parish Prayer List**

**Newly Departed:** *Nicole Serniak Cochrane (2/11); Sabina Maguerite Weiss (2/17)*  
**Departed:** *Stephen Polanchik (3/3); Joseph Kuzmich (3/8); Diane Yacopchak 03/11); Michael Buday (3/18)*

**Please remember in your prayers LIVING**

Ill-afflicted *Archpriests Michael Evans, 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, Mike Jadick, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel Jones, Matushka Paula Soucek, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; The children of God Abigail and Nathan.*

**Servants of God** *David Barsigian, Patricia Jones, Anne Buday, Mary Krevko, Gregory Krevko, Emily Krenitsky, Gregory Krenitsky, Barbara Sevensky, Bernie & Beverly Elko, Sandra Condon, Marie Pasternak, Ann Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmon, Walter Pritchuk, Michael & Euphemia Keklak, Justin & Elisabeth Kane, Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky, Ekaterina & Anna, Joe & Kelly Cigna, George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia Coyoy, Paul & Ann Newmeyer, Mat. Emilia, Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Charissa & Debra, Nadia Macheska, Paulette Ezbiansky, Maura Elko*  
**Seekers -** *Paul, Christopher, Eugene, Mike, Brayden, & JoAnne*

**Catechumen -** *Jason Vo, Santo Joseph Cerminaro, & Mikayla Brown*

**How Much is my tithe**

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
<b>\$200</b>	\$4	\$8	\$10	\$20
<b>\$500</b>	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50
<b>\$750</b>	\$15	\$30	\$37	\$75
<b>\$1000</b>	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
<b>\$1500</b>	\$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.

**February Income:** \$13,998.28

**February Expenses:** \$16,398.02

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

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

**TITHING** Assessing our personal giving for the coming new year. Tithing is the practice of returning to the Lord a portion of the financial treasure He has blessed us with in this life. We offer our gifts in gratitude for His. This principle is found in both the Old and New Testament scriptures. Tithing is what is returned to Him and is different for each family/household. The giving chart above offers a starting point for giving based on a range of weekly incomes along with a range of giving levels beginning at 10%, the ideal for a Christian tithe if one is capable, down to 2%. Our goal as we journey through life is to offer increasingly more of what God has given us back to Him, just as we give more of our heart. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt 6:21). This, of course, is done freely and out of love for God and His Church, not in response to an outward rule (Freely you have received, freely give - Matt 10:8). May this chart be helpful for you in prayerfully determining your level of giving this coming new year, challenging yourself to tithe to God the good portion of His financial blessings.

## Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events



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

**Catechumen/Inquirers/Continuing ED Class:** Every Saturday at 2:30-4:00

**Church Work Day:** Every Friday is Church Maintenance day. Come help! Please come and help maintain the Church and its grounds.

**Monthly Panikhida:** No Panikhida. We will have a Memorial Saturday Divine Liturgy on Mar 9th. Please email Fr with any and all names you would like to be remembered at this liturgy by Mar 7th.

**Parish Council Meeting:** 10Mar after Liturgy. All are invited.

**Please pick up your Tithing/Donation Letters.** After this weekend letters and envelopes will be mailed out.

**ChurchTrac:** Maura and I are in the process of importing our weekly donations and record keeping to ChurchTrac. This is an updated, cloud base system that will improve our reporting requirements and will give me the ability to make bulletins, track birthdays & anniversaries etc, make the church calendar ... You can use the link below or the QR Code to go to the website. When you register with your email address it will connect you to your profile if I have already added your email address. After this, you will be able to update your personal information and view your tithings throughout the year. <https://stmichaeloldforgepa.churchtrac.com/>



**Envelopes:** please mark on your envelopes whether it is a cash or check donation. Also, please annotate what the donation is for. Proportional Giving is tithing. If you are donating to a specific need e.g. copulas, carpet, building, annotate that as well. This will help Maura to accurately record the donation. We have been getting checks with nothing on them as to what they are for. If you are giving for candles please let us know. This helps us with our budget. As to what we spend on candles and to what is given for candles.

**Lenten Retreat/Event:** “We are Icons (Images) of God.” We will have Susan Shiposki come and teach us how to write an Icon! Beginning on Saturday, MAR 16th at 3-4:30PM prior to vespers until April 20th. This class will be a 6 session class depending on the class size and how far we get through each discussion and lecture. This class will not only give us an idea of how to write an Icon but throughout the process what Icons mean to us. Please sign up! Open for all ages (provided they can take direction), male and female, old and young! Come one, come all. We have 12 St Michaels parishoners signed already! Invite a friend! Sign up ends Mar 3rd to have supplies ready for the class.

**Participation in the Ministries of St Michaels:** My dear brothers and sisters in Christ; in order to participate in any ministry of the Church e.g. the choir (as you may notice catechumens do not have my blessing to be singing in the choir until after they are received), youth ministry, parish council, auditors, or any ad‘ministration’ of the church you first need to be a member in good standing. A Statement of Intent needs to be on file along with the active participation of God’s will in Time, Talent, Treasurer, Communion, & Confession. After this, and like all things done in the Church, one should obtain my blessing to do so. My calling is to Again and Again call us to our purpose and our vocation to our salvation to meet our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ first and foremost.

**“Behold now, what is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity?” (Ps 132)**

**Mission Vespers Services Schedule** for the Wilkes-barre Deanery are held at 4 PM

Sunday of Orthodoxy (Great Vespers for Annunciation): St. Michael's, Jermyn

Sunday of the Cross: Holy Trinity, Stroudsburg

Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt: St. Nicholas, Olyphant



ST MICHAEL'S ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF PHILADELPHIA  
& EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
512 SUMMER ST  
OLD FORGE, PA 18518  
*Holy Week Schedule 2024*  
**CHRIST IS RISEN**



April 27 <sup>th</sup>	LAZARUS Saturday Liturgy <i>Vigil (with blessing of Palms)</i>	9:00 am 5:00 pm
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	ENTRANCE OF THE LORD INTO JERUSALEM ( <i>Palm Sunday</i> ) HOURS/DIVINE LITURGY GREAT AND HOLY MONDAY BRIDEGROOM MATINS	9:10 am 5:00 pm
April 29 <sup>th</sup>	PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY GREAT AND HOLY TUESDAY BRIDEGROOM MATINS	9:00 am 5:00 pm
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY GREAT AND HOLY WEDNESDAY BRIDEGROOM MATINS	9:00 am 5:00 pm
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY HOLY UNCTION	9:00 am 5:00 pm
May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY/WASHING OF THE FEET MATINS WITH TWELVE PASSION GOSPELS	9:00 am 5:00 pm
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY ROYAL HOURS & TYPICA GREAT VESPERS ( <i>with procession to the tomb</i> ) MATINS w/LAMENTATIONS FOR HOLY SATURDAY	9:00 am 5:00 pm
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY ( <i>the Blessed Sabbath</i> ) VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY OF ST BASIL VIGIL OF PASCHA	9:00 am 10:00 pm
May 5 <sup>th</sup>	HOLY PASCHA ( <i>followed blessing of the baskets and Pascha picnic</i> ) ASAPE VESPERS	12:00 am 4:00 pm
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	BRIGHT MONDAY LITURGY (blessing 4 corners) <i>Breakfast</i>	9:00 am

CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! CHRISTOS ANESTI!  
Al Maseeh Qam! CHRISTOS A INVIAT!

The humble person is objective and aware of his duties and rights; he knows the extent of his impact on society and realizes his position and role within it. He does not monopolize his talents and abilities but is happy to share them with others, even if their talents end up exceeding his. He rejoices in other people's success and is thrilled by their growth and maturity. He knows neither jealousy nor envy, is thankful for everything, and flourishes on other's progress.

As for the arrogant person, he only views things through the lens of his own ego. He is immersed in boastfulness about himself and considers no one else but himself. He is condescending towards others and wants to seize everything for himself. Jealousy kills his soul, envy exhausts him, and he is constantly troubled by those who are more distinguished than him. He is demanding, has a bad temper, and is never satisfied, no matter how much success he might achieve.

The humble person realizes how enormous the universe is. Therefore, he is always receptive to other people and ideas. Great scholars tend to be humble because their vast knowledge makes them aware that what they do not know about the universe is much more than what they know. They constantly pursue more knowledge with a sincere zeal, whereas the less learned might be arrogant, haughty, and conceited about what they know. The latter are condescending toward those who are less knowledgeable than them, yet at the same time, they are intimidated by those who are more knowledgeable than them and avoid interacting with them.

The humble person is inhabited by love and views every person as a repository of love. He does not exalt himself, because love does not know exaltation. He deals naturally and spontaneously with others, since he does not know how to lie, falsify facts, or wear masks. More precisely, he has no need to act in such a manner because he does not feel insufficient and compelled to cover up or mask his inadequacy with fake or false interactions. Thus, he is a human being with no inferiority complex. In other words, his self-confidence is within normal limits: he does not overstate his self-confidence, as this leads to arrogance and haughtiness, and he does not understate it, as this leads to cowardice and naivety.

The humble one is a balanced human being. He does not view himself based on how other people view him and, thus, does not have to act inappropriately in order to please others. Humility is associated with self-knowledge, which is "a person's awareness of his ability and a restless reminiscence of his slightest shortcomings" (as St. John of the Ladder says).

What has been said so far is a description that befits humanity in general. For Christians, pursuit of humility surpasses this description, because we strive to imitate our Lord, who says, "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29).

Humility might appear to be a downward descent, yet for believers it is an ascent to the highest and a closeness to the Lord and to Creation in general. Humility is deemed to be the third to the last step for those who seek perfection. In Orthodox spirituality, humility comes right before dispassion (apatheia) and love, which are the summit of the ladder of virtues.

The humble person anguishes at pridefulness and pities the arrogant, because he realizes that pride tears apart human nature while humility unites it. The haughty person seeks self-satisfaction through arrogance and cruelty towards others. He thinks that his existence depends on humiliating others, while the humble person understands that loving others is the basis of his and their existence.

The humble person knows that any judgment about others is distorted if it is tinged with pride, because it is not based on a pure and valid contemplation of reality. Conversely, humility leads to careful insight, devoid of passion, and therefore, to sound judgment.

While the arrogant person twists his view of life's affairs to suit his selfish interests, the humble person's approach is realistic, baptized with love. Therefore, the latter re-establishes the true understanding of the

affairs of life. The arrogant person is negative, accompanied by pessimistic darkness, hopeless and helpless. Meanwhile, the humble person is positive to the end, capable of accepting a changing reality, and accompanied by optimism and ongoing progress.

Our spiritual literature has not in vain said that trees devoid of fruit are erect and rise to the heights, while trees full of fruit are always bent. As a matter of fact, the more fruit they carry, the lower they are bent. In Latin, the word humility means "fertile ground." The humble one is like low-lying land that receives water and absorbs it, enhancing its fertility and increasing its fruits.

Humility leads to exaltation, while vanity leads to humiliation. For the Bible says that God "brought down the haughty and exalted the humble" (Luke 1:51). Exaltation is beautiful and good, but humiliation is repellent and distasteful.

The rooster is only aware of its own pen and is content, believing itself to be the mightiest and strongest. This is what an arrogant person is like—trapped in himself, believing that he is the center of the universe. The eagle, however, flies high and sees the earth and everything on it. It notices its tininess compared to other creatures, mocking the rooster and realizing the extent of the latter's ignorance. Eagles are like humble people: they realize their status and role in the world (as Saint Silouan the Athonite says).

The humble person is soft-spoken and does not offend or hurt, unlike the arrogant person. "Treasure does not generate what it lacks."

One might say, "I'm not arrogant." This does not necessarily mean this person is humble. Not being arrogant is different from being humble. Here is what the great teacher John of the Ladder says: "Arrogance is different from not being arrogant, and both are different from humility. The arrogant one judges others all day long, and the non-arrogant one does not judge anyone but does not judge himself either. As for the humble person, he judges himself all the time, without being at fault."

Pride accompanies individualism, which is why it seems to be a general feature in our current era. The more isolated the person is, the more scared he becomes and tries to protect himself with walls of pride. Pride is a sign of fear, avoidance of confronting oneself and one's flaws. It is an inherent lack of love, if not hatred. As for humility, it is the experience of intimacy and a joyful life that is open to others. The humble person does not share in the sins of others but overflows with mercy for those who are in sorrow. Nothing hurts the humble person more than pride.

Our spiritual fathers said that humility is the wall and the roof of the house that protects its children, meaning the virtues, from falling. It is indeed the manifestation of all virtues.

The arrogant person derives his existence from his own self, talents, knowledge, money, and the like, while the humble person is certain that his entire existence is derived from God. The humble one always sees himself as standing in God's presence. He constantly seeks to be fulfilled by God and does not waste his time with narcissistic actions that make him lose his best self.

A very beautiful girl came to Metropolitan Anthony Bloom for confession. She told him that she admired her beauty to the point of vanity and arrogance. He replied: Well, at least this is true. I advise you to stand in front of the mirror three times a day, look at yourself, and say, Thank you, Lord, for creating me beautiful, but my only contribution to this beauty you have given me is to distort it with my haughty gaze.

Pride arises from self-conceit, while humility comes from referring every good deed to God. The humble person attributes everything he has to God, not to himself. Thus, he thanks God, admires Him, and grows in love of Him.

The humble person, in short, is the one who realizes that he needs God's mercy, and his constant prayer becomes, like the tax collector, "O God, be merciful to me, the sinner" (Luke 18:13).