



# FROM THE AMBON

## 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))

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

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

---

May 5th, 2024 HOLY PASCHA — THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. [Beginning of the Pentecostarion]. Great Martyr Irene (1st-2nd c.). Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Jacob (James), Abbot of Zheleznobórovsk.

---

### Birthdays & Anniversaries for May

**Birthdays:** Jason Vo (5/30); Daniel Jones (5/30)

**Nameday:** Helen Wytovich (5/21); Emily Krenitsky (5/30)

**Baptism:** Fr Michael and Matushka Emilia Shepherd (5/8); Maximus Shepherd (5/16); Rodion Shepherd (5/18)

**Anniversary:** Fr Michael Shepherd - Priest Ordination (5/26)

**Travelers:** Vitaliy and Maria Rakovsky (5/6 -5/22)

**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. Thank you all for your offering “for the people by the people.”***

May 12th -

May 19th -

May 26th -

**Counting: HELP! Please sign up to help us count weekly donations!"**

May 12th -

May 19th -

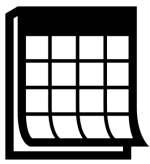
May 26th -

**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!**

---

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

SUN, May 5th: @ 4:00PM Agape Vespers with Procession

MON, May 6th: @ 9:00AM Bright Monday Liturgy

SAT, May 11th: @ 4:50PM Great Vespers & Matins w/confessions

SUN, May 12th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 1. St. Thomas Sunday



## *Words of Wisdom*

### *From the Saints & Teachers*

## Today Readings

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 (§1)

Gospel: John 1:1-17 (§1)

**Acts 1:1 (ACCS Ac): 1:1 All That Jesus Began to Do and Teach The Advantage of Reading the Second Book. St John Chrysostom:** To many people this book, both its content and its author, is so little known that they are not even aware it exists. I have therefore taken this narrative for my subject, both to initiate those who are ignorant and so that such a treasure shall not remain hidden out of sight. For indeed it will profit us no less than the Gospels themselves, so replete is it with Christian wisdom and sound doctrine, especially in what is said concerning the Holy Spirit. Let us then not pass by it hastily but examine it closely. For here we can see the predictions Christ utters in the Gospels actually come to pass. Truth shines brightly through the facts themselves, and a great change for the better takes place in the disciples now that the Spirit has come upon them. For the words which they heard Christ say—“Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these”—and the events which he foretold, that they shall be brought before rulers and kings and be scourged in their synagogues, that they shall suffer grievous things and overcome all, that the gospel shall be preached in all the world, all these came to pass in this book exactly as predicted, and many other things which he told them while he was with them. **Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 1.**

**John 1:1 Genesis Agrees with John. St Augustine:** Moses, they tell us, says, “In the beginning God made heaven and earth,” and does not even mention the Son through whom all things were made; whereas John says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God, all things were made through him, and without him was made nothing.” Is this contradictory, or are they not rather contradicting themselves when they prefer blindly to find fault with what they do not understand instead of earnestly seeking to understand?... For the Lord says to the unbelieving Jews, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me too; for he wrote about me.” So why shouldn’t I understand the Lord himself as the beginning in which God the Father made heaven and earth? For Moses certainly wrote, “In the beginning God made heaven and earth,” and it is the Lord’s words that confirm that he wrote about the Lord. Or perhaps he himself is not also the beginning? But there need be no doubt about that either, with the Gospel telling us, when the Jews asked the Lord who he was, that he replied, “The beginning, because I am also speaking to you.” There you have the beginning in which God made heaven and earth. So God made heaven and earth in the Son, through whom all things were made and without whom was made nothing. And so, since the Gospel is in agreement with Genesis, we may retain our inheritance in line with the consensus of both Testaments and leave fault-finding quibbles to the disinherited heretics. **Sermon 1.2.**

## **HOLY PASCHA: The Resurrection of Our Lord**

Pascha (Easter)

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith; receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness.

*(Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom, read at Paschal Matins)*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith. Saint Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain (I Cor. 15:14). Indeed, without the resurrection there would be no Christian preaching or faith. The disciples of Christ would have remained the broken and hopeless band which the Gospel of John describes as being in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They went nowhere and preached nothing until they met the risen Christ, the doors being shut (John 20: 19). Then they touched the wounds of the nails and the spear; they ate and drank with Him. The resurrection became the basis of everything they said and did (Acts 2-4): “. . . for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . the holy city, new Jerusalem. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

In His death and resurrection, Christ defeats the last enemy, death, and thereby fulfills the mandate of His Father to subject all things under His feet (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Rev. 5: 12)

### **THE FEAST OF FEASTS**

The Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God’s free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church’s liturgical life and the true model for all celebration. This is the chosen and holy day, first of sabbaths, king and lord of days, the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore (Irmos 8, Paschal Canon).

### **PREPARATION**

Twelve weeks of preparation precede the “feast of feasts.” A long journey which includes five pre-lenten Sundays, six weeks of Great Lent and finally Holy Week is made. The journey moves from the self-willed exile of the prodigal son to the grace-filled entrance into the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2) Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study are the means by which this long journey is made.

Focusing on the veneration of the Cross at its midpoint, the lenten voyage itself reveals that the joy of the resurrection is achieved only through the Cross. “Through the cross joy has come into all the world,” we sing in one paschal hymn. And in the paschal troparion, we repeat again and again that Christ has trampled down death—by death! Saint Paul writes that the name of Jesus is exalted above every name because He first emptied Himself, taking on the lowly form of a servant and being obedient even to death on the Cross (Phil.

2:5-11). The road to the celebration of the resurrection is the self-emptying crucifixion of Lent. Pascha is the passover from death to life.

Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ.  
Today I arise with Thee in Thy resurrection.  
Yesterday I was crucified with Thee:  
Glorify me with Thee, O Savior, in Thy kingdom (Ode 3, Paschal Canon).

## THE PROCESSION

The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight of Holy Saturday. At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of Nocturn, the priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they light their candles from the candle held by the priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, priest and people, led by the bearers of the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, “Christ is risen from the dead...”, many times. Even before entering the church the priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: “Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!” This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the experience of the Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that “He is not here; for He has risen, as He said” (Matt. 28:6).

In the paschal canon we sing:  
Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin’s womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).

Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: “The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers. It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:

Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise  
Brighter than any royal chamber,  
Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection (Paschal Hours).

## MATINS

Matins commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord’s resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God:

This is the day of resurrection.  
Let us be illumined by the feast.

Let us embrace each other.  
 Let us call “brothers” even those who hate us,  
 And forgive all by the resurrection. . .

The sermon of Saint John Chrysostom is then read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion.

If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fatted, let no one go hungry away. . .

### THE DIVINE LITURGY

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after paschal Matins. Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

### THE DAY WITHOUT EVENING

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the paschal order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

O Christ, great and most holy Pascha.  
 O Wisdom, Word and Power of God, grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending day of Thy kingdom  
 (Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor  
 New York, 1977

### 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.

**April Income:** \$17,449.46

**April Expense:** \$15,350.73

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

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



## Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events

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

**Church Work Day:** Every Friday is Church Maintenance day.

**Monthly Panikhida:** May 25th

**Mother's Day & Blessing of the Graves:** May 12 - All Men to cook for Agape Meal (if it rains on this day the memorial will take place immediately after liturgy)

**Parish Council Meeting:** 11 May 4 PM - 4:00 PM - All are invited.

**Take Out Chicken Barbeque:** Hosted by Arcaro and Genells Saturday, June 22nd from 12PM-3PM. The price will be \$13 a ticket. Everyone will be given two tickets to sell (you can purchase more if you like). Sandy and Tammy will hand them out on April 14th.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO FERVENTLY LABORED DURING HOLY WEEK TO ENSURE OUR PASCHA CELEBRATION WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH!

**THE AGAPE MEAL:** Following the blessing of the baskets after Divine Liturgy on Pascha it is traditional for the faithful to break the fast by eating with one another from the baskets which have just been blessed.

**Bright Monday Breakfast:** Please join us for Divine Liturgy on Bright Monday and afterwards we will go to Breakfast.

**Cry Room:** Please see the sign on the Cry Room door. This room should be left open at any time for mothers of children to use at their discretion. This room is not to be used to hang out in or a place of worship.

**Episcopal Visit!** His Eminence, Archbishop Mark will be visiting on June 2nd! Let's make preparations to welcome our Archbishop.

## Parish Prayer List

**Newly Departed:** *Michael Brown (3/15)*

**Departed:** *Evelyn Flynn (5/5); Volodymyr Danylets (5/9); Marie Raskausakas (5/12); Paul Bezuhly (5/15); Harry Krevko (5/16); Alexander Pritchuk (5/18); Walter Pregmon (5/19); Dennis Pregmon (5/25)*

**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:** *David Lezinsky, John Pritchuk, 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** *Mark Bezhuly, 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 & MaryAnn Newmeyer, Mat. Emilia, Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Sharissa & Debra, Nadia Macheska, Paulette Ezbiansky, Jason Vo & Maura Elko, Santo Joseph Cerminaro, Mikayla Brown*

**Seekers -** *Christopher, Eugene, Mike, Brayden, Barbara*

**Catechumen -** *JoAnne Snopek & Paul Dunay*

## *Paschal Greetings Around the World!*

English Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen [or “Truly He is Risen!”]

Church Slavonic & Russian Христосъ воскресе! (Khristos voskrese!) Воистину воскресе! (Voistinu voskrese!)

Greek Χριστὸς ἀνέστη!V (Khristós anésti!) Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη! (Alithós anésti!)

Arabic al-Masīḥ qām! Ḥaqqan qām!

Aleut Kristusaq Aglagikuk! Angangulakan Aglagikuk!

Amharic Kristos Tenestwal! Bergit Tenestwal!

Belarusian Хрыстос уваскрос! (Khrystos uvaskros!) Сапраўды ўваскрос! (Saprawdy wvaskros!)

Finnish Kristus nousi kuolleista! Totisesti nousi!

Filipino (Tagalog) Si Kristo ay nabuhay! Totoo! Siya nga ay nabuhay!

French Le Christ est ressuscité! (Le Christ est ressuscité!) En verité il est ressuscité! (Vraiment il est ressuscité!)

German Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!

Georgian Kriste agsdga! Cheshmaritad agsdga!

Hebrew (modern) HaMashiach qam! Be'emet qam!

Italian Cristo è risorto! È veramente risorto!

Korean 그리스도께서 부활하셨습니다! (Kristo Gesso Buhwal ha sho sumnida!)참으로 부활하셨습니다!  
(Chamuro Buhwal ha sho sumnida!)

Latin Christus resurrexit! Resurrexit vere!

Mandarin Chinese Jīdū fùhuó le! Tā quèshí fùhuó le!

Scots Gaelic Tha Crìosd air èiridh! (hah krEehsht ehr EErie!) Gu dearbh, tha e air èiridh! (Guh jarv ha eh ehr EErie!)

Spanish ¡Cristo ha resucitado! ¡En verdad ha resucitado!

Tigrinya Christos tensiou! Bahake tensiou!

Ukrainian Христос воскрес! (Khrystos voskres!) Воистину воскрес! (Voistynu voskres!)

Yupik Xris-tusaq Ung-uixtuq! Iluumun Ung-uixtuq!

## **When Is It Appropriate To Receive Holy Communion?**

I have often been asked by new converts to Orthodoxy and even life-long members when it was appropriate for one to receive Holy Communion. This is usually the basic advice I give that I thought I would share with all.

Orthodox Christians are generally encouraged to receive Holy Communion at every Divine Liturgy. The purpose of the Divine Liturgy is to enter into communion with God, and the way this is done is by participating fully in the Divine Liturgy. One should avoid being late for the Divine Liturgy when receiving Holy Communion, as this shows a certain amount of disrespect for the great gift one is receiving, but if you are late you should not be later than the Gospel reading and if you are, please refrain from Holy Communion. You are not prepared to receive. The Divine Liturgy is the communal service and gathering of God's people (this is what the word "liturgy" means), so it requires full participation, as much as possible.

Many people worry and despair over the fact that certain sins in their life make them unworthy of receiving Holy Communion. However, as human beings who often sin every day, we are all unworthy of receiving Holy Communion and there is really nothing we can do to make ourselves worthy to receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We should never approach Holy Communion saying "we are now worthy". But there are certain "grave" sins that we can commit that are sins not only out of habit (personal sins which require daily confession before God), but also sins against our fellow man that require resolve before receiving Holy Communion. For example, to bear a grudge against someone, to have hate towards a person, and to withhold forgiveness are all sins against our neighbor that require patching up before approaching the cup of love and forgiveness. As Jesus said: "Forgive and you will be forgiven" according to the measure that you forgive your neighbor. Some also have what are known as "sins against the Church" which require a general confession and repentance before a spiritual father or confessor (a priest) before one can approach Holy Communion, after a proper repentance to show one's humble approach before God's grace. Such sins are things like adultery, fornication, divorce, murder and heresy (holding blasphemous teachings opposed to the tradition of the Church).

Saying this, what is required for Holy Communion participation is summed up in the words said by the priest before distributing the holy gifts: "With the fear of God, faith and love, draw near". Humility is the most basic requirement, and trying to the best of our ability to live the life of the Church as set down by Christ, the Apostles and the Saints throughout history. The Church is a hospital for sinners, so the least we can do is to receive the "medicine of immortality" (this is what the Church Fathers called Holy Communion) acknowledging our sickness and seeking the entire treatment offered by the Church for our healing.

### **Approaching the Holy Chalice**

Every time we approach the holy chalice to receive Communion to the Body and Blood of Christ we say a prayer that contains words that must become true on our lips and in our actions, otherwise they are a lie before God. We say to God that we are the worst sinner, we are the chief sinner that there is.

And isn't it natural that so often we say these words thinking, 'This was true of the saints, who could feel that way, but I can't feel that I am the worst of sinners'. When we look around, when we look at



the state of the world in which we live, we can see a number of people who in our eyes are worse than we are. And regarding this I would like to remind you of a passage in the diary of Saint John of Kronstadt, who also asked himself the same question, and in the end answered it in the affirmative: 'Yes, I am the worst of all the sinners I know'.

And the reason he gave for this judgment of his was that he was aware of how much God had given him, and how little he had given to God in response.

I think we must all of us begin in this frame of mind, ask ourselves: What are the gifts which God has bestowed upon us? What is it that makes us so happy in ourselves, or makes others so happy in us, rightly or wrongly? And when we have come to understand how much we have received, then we can ask ourselves: what are the fruits which we have borne of these gifts?

And we will see that, according to the first Beatitude, there is nothing in us, in our life, which is our own, of our own making. God gave us life. He gave us a body, a soul, a mind. He gave us all that fills our lives with richness. All that we are and all that we possess are gifts of his. Do we give Him gratitude for it, or do we appropriate these gifts, thinking no, they are our own really? And even when we are aware of the fact that they are not of our making, that it is God who has given us all that we are and all that we have, do we know how to be grateful and also to ask ourselves the question which I have already mentioned: what have I done with all the gifts of God? And if we go ever more deeply within ourselves and in our lives, can we begin to be able to say: yes, I really am the worst of all the sinners around me because I am so richly endowed by God and look how little, how very little, I have brought to God and to my neighbor as a result of it?

If we are to believe that we are the worst of sinners; then it is at this point when the Prince of Peace, the creator of all who exits the altar and just like if a King would walk into the room everything comes to a halt and our focus is only on our Savior. And when we begin the Communion prayer, I believe, O Lord and confess, that You are truly the Christ, Son of the living God, Who came into this world to save sinners of whom I am the first again our arms should be crossed and our focus should not be on anything else. Not having conversations in the narthex, the candle room, or the cry room. As stated above, if we are not prepared properly with a contrite heart in all humility then we should be honest with ourselves not receive Holy Communion. And we should never be having a conversation in the line for Communion as if we are waiting in line to purchase tickets for the latest movie.

So, let us all reflect on this. And when we come next time to Communion and we think or say these words, let us say them with at least a beginning of understanding that yes, it is true, and I know why. But come with an incipient understanding, because it takes a very long time for us to see how richly God has endowed us and how poorly we have responded to Him. But gradually, step by step, these words will become true and we will receive Communion with a new depth of broken-heartedness and with gratitude. Amen.