

ST. MARK'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA (OCA.ORG)

DIocese of Eastern Pennsylvania (DOEPA.ORG)

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Church School Director: Jennifer Sremanak

THE GOOD SAMARITAN



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2015

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 7. Holy
Martyrs and Confessors Gurias, Samonas, and Abibus,
of Edessa (299-306). Martyrs Elpidius, Marcellus, and
Eustochius, who suffered under Julian the Apostate
(4th c.). Martyr Demetrius of Thrace (ca. 307). Ven.
Paisii (Paisius) Velichkovsky (1794).

Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Confessions: Saturdays Following Vespers
Also by appointment

Vespers: Saturdays at 6pm
Vigil: Eve of Feasts at 7pm

Divine Liturgy: Sundays at 9:30am
Feast Days at 9:15am

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS:

Sunday, November 15: Hours and Divine Liturgy – 9:10am; Church School, Coffee Hour; Beginning of the Nativity Fast
Monday, November 16: Education and Outreach Subcommittee – 7pm
Tuesday, November 17: Mirrors of Truth -7pm
Wednesday, November 18: Akathist – 9:15am; Prison Ministry – 7pm
Thursday, November 19: Pre-School Church School 1pm – 2:30pm; Parish Council – 7pm
Friday, November 20: Vigil for Entrance of the Theotokos – 7pm
Saturday, November 21: Hours and Divine Liturgy for Entrance of the Theotokos – 9:10am; Great Vespers and Confessions – 6pm
Sunday, November 22: Hours and Divine Liturgy – 9:10am; Litya for Pierre Djokic, 2nd Anniversary; Church School, Coffee Hour

BIRTHDAYS

Anna Domzalski

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Christmas Food Sale: Saturday, December 12th 9am to 2pm. If you are on our mailing list you will receive an order form either electronically or by snail mail. Also order forms are posted on our website and can be downloaded and printed off of it. Orders are due no later than Dec. 5th. **Halupki making on Friday November 20th. If you would like to help let Martha Moser know ASAP. Thank you.**

Church Directory: As a means to build up our parish community and as a means to reach out to our communities, we are going to have a pictorial church directory. Participation is encouraged but is voluntary. Every family that participates will get a free directory and copy of the photo. There is no cost for participation. Additionally we will have another book featuring the current ministries of our parish, with pictures and descriptions for our information and as an outreach tool. Photos will be taken Sunday December 6 and Monday December 7. You may sign up at this link <http://bit.ly/1MmDN43> or in person after Divine Liturgy every Sunday until November 29th. We would like as many as possible to participate as a way to get to know one another better.

International Orthodox Christian Charities: Today we welcome Tony Pantazopoulos of IOCC who will share with us the work of IOCC throughout the world, but especially in aiding the staggering number of refugees in and from Syria. IOCC is a pan Orthodox effort supported by all Orthodox jurisdictions in North America and is a highly regarded non profit which spends little on administration and is gifted in multiplying the sacrificial seeds sown by donors. We are delighted to welcome Tony here today.

Nativity Fast: Begins today. As with all Fasts, it is not only about what we do not eat, but about what we do. As we prepare for the Lord's Nativity we prepare in many ways in the world, from Christmas shopping to cards to parties. But this is our Feast, a Christian Feast and if we are to truly experience it for what it is, then we must prepare for it properly. Fast and the money you save give to the poor. Pray, more. Get a copy of the Christmas Canon and read it each day, read the Prayers of Thanksgiving after Communion Monday to Wednesday and then do the Preparation Prayers Thursday to Saturday. Attend the various services offered during this time. Want further suggestions, ask Father.

Operation Christmas Child: Thank you to all who supported the Church School sponsored Pancake Breakfast. We raised \$248 for this cause. Remember to bring toys, school supplies, hygiene items (toothbrush, mild bar soap, combs, washcloths), T-Shirts, socks, ball caps, sunglasses, hair clips, toy jewelry, watches, flashlights with extra batteries. Ages 2-4, 5-9, 10-14. Cash also welcome to pay \$7 shipping for each box. Items may be left in the Vestibule, marked Op. Christmas Child. Deadline is November 22nd.

Scrip Program: Today. YTD \$1360.72. Some vendors have introduced smaller denomination gift cards for the Christmas season, check the updated list of vendors. Questions? Call Mat. Heidi at 570 906-1389.

Stewardship:



RESOURCES

Wrightstown Food Cupboard: Pasta, sauce, tea, coffee, juice are always welcome. If you would rather make a monetary donation put it in an envelope with "Food Pantry" and drop in the Question Box. These donations will go towards purchasing Thanksgiving turkeys and Christmas hams for the baskets.

Head and Members

Sin causes panic and confusion. A man drowning in sin and vice is like a chicken with its head cut off which, dying, thrashes about convulsively and rushes to and fro. Before Christ's Incarnation, the whole pagan world was a confused, headless body, dying in convulsions. Christ joined the severed head with the benighted trunk and brought the body of the human race back to life.



St. Nicholai of Zhica. The Prologue, November 3.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- ✦ The sick and the suffering.
- ✦ Those persecuted for their faith.
- ✦ The lost and the lonely.
- ✦ Those in prison.
- ✦ The hungry, the homeless, the abused and the abandoned.
- ✦ The indifferent to those in need.
- ✦ Those who hate us and those who love us.

VIGIL LIGHTS:

From the Swan Family:

For the Health of:

Michael Love, Venus Love, Constance Swan, Kathryn Swan, Michelle Swan, Neville Noel

In Memory of:

Thomas O. Swan Jr.

From Judi Rybny:

In Memory of:

Peter & Helen Muha, Daniel Muha, Charles & Marie Rybny, Metro & Anna Ehnatishin, Peter & Mary Muha

From the Perdikis Family:

For the Health of:

Neil, Kim, Melba, Demosthenes

In Memory of:

Angelo, Evangelia, Arthur Sr.,

From a Friend:

For the Health of:

Tiberiu, Mihaela, Tiffany, Maria, Elena, Andra, Elena, Ion, Nichita, Ana, Alin, Ana, Lucica, Ionelia, Gabriel

From Alan Lee Litvin:

In Thanksgiving to Our Lord Jesus Christ for many blessings



November 16, 2015

Scriptural Precepts of Offerings

In the first Chapters of Genesis, we were taught that all that exists, was created by God, whether things visible or invisible and nothing exists without originating from Him. All of Creation has God as its source and ultimately belongs to God. Secondly, we learned from the offerings of Cain and Abel, that one's attitude is of the utmost importance. Do we offer our very best, i.e., the first fruits of our labors and the choicest of all He has blessed us with? Is it an acknowledgement that all that we have comes from Him? What we offer should be done as an expression of gratitude. Our attitude in giving has a direct bearing on whether it is acceptable to God. With this in mind, do we see our offering of our time, talent and treasure as a means of communion with God, or as an obligation or debt?

So far, as we have studied offerings and sacrifices in Genesis, we have seen nothing prescriptive as what is expected, i.e., what is to be offered, how frequently or how an offering is to be made. We were only told that the Lord accepted Abel's offering of the firstlings of the flock, but had no regard for Cain's offering at the end of days and the Lord was pleased with the burnt offerings of Noah after the flood.

When we get to Genesis 12, Abram is called by God to leave his people and land of his fathers and go to the place the Lord will show him. It reads as follows:

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."^[a]

Then in verse 7, the Lord appears to Abram and promises to give him the land of Canaan and Abram builds an Altar to the Lord. Though the passage is silent about what Abram offered, in the Old Covenant books, a sacrifice or offering was always offered upon an Altar. As the Lord has promised to bless Abram, he likely built the Altar to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Again in Genesis 13: 14, the Lord promises to bless Abram with numerous descendants and to give to him and his descendants the land in which he has come to dwell. Once again Abram expresses his gratitude by building an Altar to make a sacrifice. We are not told what he offered, nor was he instructed by the Lord to make an offering. Abram just did it as an expression of gratitude, love and means of communion with the Lord. What did Abram have that the Lord did not give him? Nothing! Yet, in his heart Abram desired to show his love for God through his offering.

In Genesis 14, we are told of a battle between various kings in the land resulting in Abram's nephew Lot being captured and all his goods carried off. Abram gathering his household pursued these four kings. Recovering not only Lot, his goods, women and people, but also the goods, women and people of Sodom, Abram went out to meet Melchizedek, king of

Salem who brought out wine and bread (a prefiguring of the Eucharist, which is derived from the word “thanksgiving”). Melchizedek was also a priest of God Most High who blessed Abram saying:

*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
maker of heaven and earth;
20 and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”*

In response to God’s blessing of Abram defeating the kings who captured Lot and recovering Lot’s goods, women and people, Abram gave Melchisedek a tenth of everything (Genesis 14: 20b). This would obviously have been a tenth of Abram’s own sheep, goats, oxen, cattle, camels, etc., as you cannot offer to God something that is not your own. The king of Sodom had also received back his goods, women and people through Abram’s assistance and he asked Abram only for the persons, but offered to let Abram keep the goods for himself. Abram refused the offer because he had promised the Lord that he would not take as much as a thread or a sandal thong or anything belonging to the king of Sodom, lest the king should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ This is quite a remarkable passage, as Abram could have seen an opportunity to enrich himself by laying claim to all the spoils of war or by accepting the goods of another as payment for his assistance in defeating a common enemy. Certainly, Abram and his nephew Lot would have suffered some loss in the battle, yet Abram knew God was the source of His many blessings and he partook of the bread and wine in thanksgiving for the Lord’s blessings.

Abram in gratitude and thanksgiving for the safe return of his nephew and his nephew’s household offered a tenth of his own possessions to Melchizedek, king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God. Abram is depicted as an un-mercenary in this passage as he assists his nephew and the four kings of Canaan in recovering their people and their goods expecting nothing in return from them.

As we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, we prepare to receive the Eucharist. As mentioned above the word Eucharist is derived from the word “thanksgiving.” In Corinthians, St. Paul writes:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

As the Lord delivered Lot and his household from certain slavery, the Lord has also delivered us from death and slavery to sin. The freedom we acquired through Christ is a freedom we could not achieve on our own, buy or pay for no matter how rich one may be. It is a gift. Is what we offer back to God a reflection of our thanksgiving for the gift of eternal life? He already owns the world and all it contains. What He does not own is our freedom to love and serve Him, with our time, treasure and talent. That is where we are all called to offer back to God our very best!

Your unworthy father in Christ,

+Bp Mark

+Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania