
Pastoral Perspective:

If we are to be good stewards of our time, talent and treasure in service to the Lord, we must understand how the church teaches us to apply ourselves to this task. This week I hope to address our financial stewardship behavior. The OCA on a national level has applied a tithing model. So each Diocese sends to the national office ten percent of the total income it receives. The Diocese then asks each parish to likewise send ten percent of their income to Diocese. This model is done with the expectation that it sets a pattern that will hopefully be followed by the faithful contributing in a similar fashion. This tithing model is a form of proportional giving.

Proportional giving is one of the four basic models for financial stewardship. It is exactly what it sounds like, a person gives a set proportion of their income to the church. Tithing means that proportion is set at ten percent following a model used by Abraham when he gave an offering to Melchizedek the King of Salem and Priest of God Most High. (Gen. 14:20) In this model a person can give any proportion they choose: one, three, five, ten percent or more as they feel is appropriate. The second model for financial stewardship is pledge. In this model you remove mathematics and choose instead to pledge a set amount. This can be broken down weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually, the timing does not specifically matter, but it is done consistently. The third model is dues paying, or the giving of a minimum amount set by each parish in order to be considered a member. The Church has discontinued this model because it feels like a bill and leads to transactional thinking among the faithful. The fourth model, and I use model loosely, is the haphazard one. This is when we give randomly, without forethought. Whatever we happen to be able to spare or the leftovers. There is no discipline in this model and it ought not to be followed or encouraged.

The reason we ought to adopt one of the first two models and avoid the other two is that our financial stewardship is meant to be an ascetic act the same as our prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The model matters less than the intention and dedication. Scripture records, “And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.” (Gen. 14:3-5) The difference is that Abel gave the firstborn and the fat, meaning that he gave first before he took for himself, and the fat or the best of his flock. Cain simply gave some of the crop. God accepted Abel’s offering because it was given with intention to honor God, not simply as a begrudged obligation.

Which model we adopt is less important than that we make our offering like Abel. Giving first to God of what He has blessed us with so abundantly. Then taking for ourselves to provide as we each need. We should not give in a sense of burden or obligation, but as an expression of our love toward God. For as St. Paul writes, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2Cor.9:7)

Announcements

Our parish Parish Book Study continues on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month following Vespers. Our next text will be The Art of Myrrh Bearing. The next meeting will be on April 25th. (We are skipping the usual meeting the second weekend of the month on account of Holy Saturday/Pascha.)

March Charity will be directed toward Providence Pregnancy Center as part of the OC Life National Baby Shower.

April Parish Council meeting will be following coffee hour on the 19th.

The Deanery has asked St. Nicholas to host the Mission Vespers service today on St. Mary of Egypt Sunday. Please help as you can. Stay and/or return at 4pm this wonderful service with other faithful from around the Deanery.

Please keep the newly departed Handmaiden of God, Joan, in your prayers through the 40th day of her repose (April 11th). She is a daughter of our parish and a life long member.

Donations in memory of departed loved ones for the Pascha Lily baskets can be given to Marie Evanina, baskets are \$25 each. Sign up sheet for the Paschal Grave watch is on the candle desk, please sign up to participate in these important prayers.

Spiritual Food for Thought:

“The devil tries in every way to conceal from us the good in others and present them to us in a negative light. Take heed and beware of ever looking at others through his eyes.”

-St. John of Kronstadt

Prayers for the Sick:

Archpriest Vladimir
Archpriest John
Archpriest Gregory
Archpriest John
Archpriest Daniel
Priest Michael
Matushka Gloria
Matushka Myra
John

James
Thomas
Diane
William
Oliver
Timothy
Joseph
Agape
Dimitrios

Upcoming Services:

April 1st – Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm

April 3rd – Great Vespers – 6:30pm @ All Saints

April 4th – Divine Liturgy – 9:30am @ All Saints – Lazarus Saturday

April 4th – Great Vespers – 5:00pm

April 5th – Divine Liturgy – 9:30am – Palm Sunday/Triumphal Entrance

Contact Information:

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Fifth Sunday of Great Lent St. Mary of Egypt March 29th, 2026



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

OCA Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
His Eminence, Archbishop Mark – Hierarch

Rev. Nathan Clausson – Rector
Very Rev. Vladimir Fetcho – Attached
Very Rev. John Nightingale – Attached
Mark Howanetz – Choir Director
Thomas LaTournous – Parish Council President