

St John Chrysostom on Almsgiving

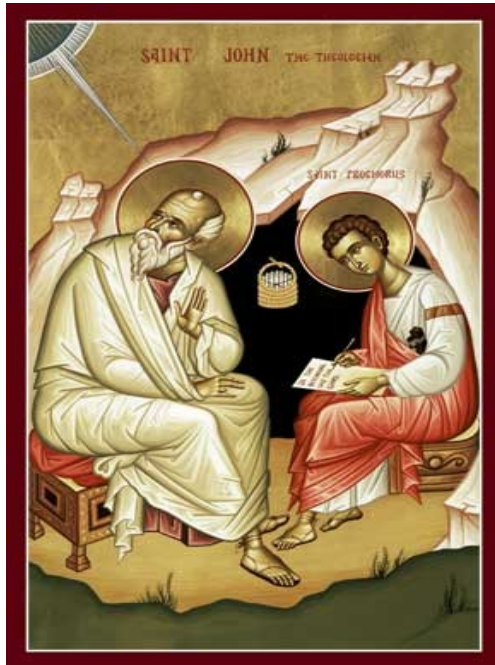
We are given time by our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ for the seeds of almsgiving to fall upon our hearing. Christ has given us the sower to imitate. He sowed his seed on good earth and from it reaped a hundred fold. Hear the message proclaimed by his action.

Behold, the lovers of God, the lovers of honor, and the lovers of the poor are all gathered together as in an arena – God is standing by, receiving the little money given by the lovers of the poor and granting them in exchange the kingdom of heaven. I beg you, let none of us forfeit this grace. Let none of us neglect this great and world-transcending gift for the sake of a little money. I entreat all of you: with diligence let us purchase the kingdom of heaven.

(First Homily on Almsgiving)

From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of the Passing of St. John, the Apostle & Theologian (Sep 26)

You were called a son of thunder, and you deafened the ears of the ungodly, O apostle John; yet you rang out the sweet sound of the Incarnation of the Word to the upright hearts. As a true friend, you reclined close to Christ's breast, from which you drew a profound knowledge enabling you to proclaim to all the Word who proceeds from the Father without beginning. O John, intercede with Christ God for those who keep your holy memory with love that they may receive the remission of their sins. (Orthros)



FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS SEPTEMBER 27, 2020



THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

I: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8, pg. 42)

You descended from on high O compassionate One; and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, glory to You.

Troparion of the Dormition (Tone 1, Pg 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercessions, save our souls from death.

Kondakion (Tone 2)

O never failing Protectress of Christians and their ever-present intercessor before the Creator, despise not the petitions of us sinners, but in your goodness extend your help to us who call upon you with confidence. Hasten, O Mother of God, to intercede for us, for you have always protected those who honor you.



What Do We “Need?”

St Paul’s economics are easy to understand in principle, but we find ourselves with a lot of questions when we try to apply his teaching. When does “need” – I must have – become “excess” – I can use or I want? And is it good for me to have everything I want and can afford?

We recognize the negative effects on our body if we eat or drink to excess. But there are even more serious effects on our soul. Our physical cravings can lead to a psychological dependency: the feeling that I can’t live without X, Y or Z. Overeating leads to overweight, physical discomfort and illness; overdependence on material things leads to psychological unhappiness and spiritual emptiness.

Philosophers throughout the ancient world recognized this apart from Christianity. Lao-Tzu, the fifth-century BC Chinese author of the *Tao Te Ching* said it this way: “To know you have enough is to be rich.” The first-century Roman philosopher Seneca noted, “*It is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more, that is poor.*” Another Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, Himself born into slavery, had so freed himself from dependence on the material that he reportedly said in AD 55 that, “*Contentment comes not so much from great wealth as from few wants.*” These pagan philosophers would likely have agreed with the Lord when He said, “*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man [i.e. one dependent on his material wealth] to enter the kingdom of God.*” (Mk 10:25; Lk 18:25).

Enough vs. Abundance

St. Paul is clear: the purpose of any abundance we may be given is for doing every good work. Do you have more than you need? Don’t look to add to your holdings – you will simply be frustrating God’s purpose for your life. As the Prophet Isaiah warned those who build their life around making more than they need, “*Woe to those who add house to house and field to field... their many houses shall be desolate*” (Is 5:8, 9). Wealth, it must be said, is not wrong. Not using it according to God’s plan turns it – and us – aside from God and His way.

Even this is a principle that non-Christians and non-believers of every kind have espoused. This is evident in the way people have made their own the saying “Live simply, so others may simply live.” Non-Christians have attributed it to Mohandas Gandhi, the Indian nationalist or to Henry David Thoreau, the nineteenth-century American Transcendentalist thinker. Roman Catholics have found it in the writings of Mother Theresa of Calcutta or in the teachings of their first American-born saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton. The idea is clearly easy to accept, but demanding when we try to put it in practice.

One help for those who might try to devote their abundance to the doing of good is the teaching of St John Chrysostom. He reminds us that God’s purpose in commanding almsgiving is not only for the sake of the recipient. It is also, if not primarily, for the donor. The recipient of alms receives physical sustenance but the giver of alms grows in his or her spirit, imitating the Giver of all good gifts.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Donald Halal, John Chebib. Requested by Jeanette Halal and family.

Today's flowers were donated by Katherine Thomas and family in memory of the Thomas & Nikosey families, Arthur Gazal in memory of Arthur P. Gazal & Antoinette Ricciardi, and Antoinio & Karen Solitro in memory of Theodora & Nicholas Barouk and Lucia & Matteo Solitro,

Upcoming Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

Thu 10/1, 6PM –Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Protection of the Theotokos

Fri 10/23, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the James, the Apostle-Brother of the Lord

NOTE: Evening feast day services will be at 6PM effective September 1 unless announced otherwise.

There are a number of things we need for the church. They include: a second icon stand, a second candle box, red & blue altar cloths, new vigil lamps for the iconostasis and walls, new altar server sticharia, as well as some smaller items. If you would like to donate any of these items in memory of your loved ones, please contact Fr. Bryan.

THANK YOU

George Aboody reports that the Beirut Disaster Relief collection he helped organize was a success. There were enough household items, furniture, clothing, and toys collected to fill a 40ft. shipping container. Thank you to all who donated to this critical drive that will assist our brothers and sisters in Beirut, many of whom lost everything in the explosion.

May God continue to bless you!

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

Regular: \$ 1,017

Candles: \$ 26

Flowers: \$ 15

Total: \$ 1,058

Thanks to everyone who has continued to send in their contributions on a regular basis. As a reminder, it costs approximately **\$8,000** monthly to maintain the parish. Your continued generosity has made it possible to pay our operating costs without dipping into savings.

May God continue to bless you for your generosity to your parish!

Special Petitions for the Ecumenic Prayer (Inserted after the third petition)

- For all your people who have proven positive with the coronavirus, that they may be restored to full health and offer you their praise and thanksgiving, we pray to you, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all your people in Lebanon who were hurt during the disastrous explosion, that they may be restored to full health, and for those who died that they may be granted rest among the Saints, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For peace throughout the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.

GOD WITH US ONLINE

This year's God With Us Online series begins on October 7, at 8PM with a four part presentation entitled "God With Us: The Art of Catechesis in the Orthodox Tradition".

For more information, email: info@easterncatholic.org.

The Giver of All Good Gifts

HOW MANY TV CHANNELS can you access – 300, 400, more? How many do you actually use? How fast can your car travel – 150 mph? How fast do you actually drive? Does your Smartphone have more apps than you’ll ever use? Manufacturers design their products based on the conviction that people want more than they really need. As humorist Will Rogers said back in the 1920s, “Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want to impress people they don't like.”

This dynamic, called consumerism, has been known for over 100 years. As more people became financially able to buy more, do more, and travel more “conspicuous consumption” became a way of life for an increasing number of people, particularly in Europe and America. The great symbol of this phenomenon, at least in the U.S. has been “Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving, when people descend on stores in a Christmas Shopping frenzy to grab the latest thing before it’s sold out.

Pope Francis has repeatedly denounced a way of life devoted to conspicuous consumption, contrasting it to a Christ-centered way of life. “The encounter with the living Jesus, in the great family that is the Church, fills the heart with joy, because it fills it with true life, a profound goodness that does not pass away or decay.

“But this experience must face the daily vanity, the poison of emptiness that insinuates itself into our society based on profit and having (things), that deludes young people with consumerism,” he said before thousands in St Peter’s Square.

“Young people are particularly sensitive to the emptiness of meaning and values that surrounds them. And they, unfortunately, pay the consequences.”

Critics have accused the pope of introducing socialism or even Marxism into Church teaching. In fact, the anti-consumerism he espouses may be found in the New Testament and even in pre-Christian philosophers.

How God Provides

St Paul sets forth his “Christian economics” in 2 Corinthians 9:8 – “*God is able to make every gift abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work*”. The first plank in his three-fold approach is to recognize that ***God is able to provide for us***. We often emphasize our own contribution to life, forgetting that our talents, our abilities, our very existence comes from God. As we read in the Epistle of James – and repeat regularly in the Divine Liturgy – “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...*” (Jas 1:17). We are, to be sure, co-creators with Him by virtue of our creation in His image; but there is nothing good wrought by our hand apart from Him.

Secondly, God provides for us in a specific manner. He provides for us *all sufficiency in all things*. In other words, He guarantees that we have ***everything we truly need***. Third, He guarantees us ***an abundance***, over and above what we need, but for a specific purpose: *for every good work*. We have enough for what we actually require and even more, for the purpose of doing good.

Prokimenon

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them: let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them: let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

Verse: God is renowned in Judah; in Israel, great is his name.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them: let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them:

People: Let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord!

Epistle: 2 COR 6:16-18; 7:1

Alleluia Verses

Come; let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us sing joyfully to God our Savior!

Verse: Let us greet His presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

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- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
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