

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



The Meeting of Our Lord God &
Saviour, Jesus Christ in The
Temple

February 2nd, 2020

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

1725 Holy Cross Ln
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-2749

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Mr. Michael (Cory) Chelko, Parish President
Dr. Theodore Federoff, Vice President

Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 7:7-17

Gospel: St. Luke 15:22-40

Welcome to ALL our visitors and guests this morning! Please, come over to the Hall after Liturgy for some food & fellowship!!

Services, Events & Announcements

++Weds. Feb 5th – Daily Vespers (Adult Ed/Orth 101) @ 6pm

++Sat. Feb 8th – Great Vespers @ 5pm (Confessions)

++Sun. Feb 9th – Divine Liturgy (Hours @ 9:40)

****Ladie's W(h)ine Fest – Tues. Feb 4th at the Valley Inn @ 6pm**

Our Giving – Jan 26th

Attendance 52 - Regular Offering - \$1546.00

Candles - \$55.00 / Love Offering - \$25.00

From Your Pastor . . .

If you would like to have your home blessed, please see Fr. Seraphim to arrange a day and time.

Also, on Wednesdays after Vespers, we have begun a new study on prayer. Please think about joining us as we explore what

“prayer” is about. We will be using the book “Beginning to Pray” by Met. Anthony Bloom (available from your favorite bookstore) and also look at some Orthodox prayers. If you are looking for a prayer book, we have copies of the new “Orthodox Christian Prayers” from St. Tikhon’s for \$20.

Financial Giving Statements for the year 2019 are being mailed out. If you do not receive one, please see our Parish Financial Secretary Daria Fish or Fr. Seraphim.

Regarding Holy Communion: Only those faithful who are Orthodox Christians and have properly prepared themselves by fasting, prayer [i.e. *Prayers Before Communion*], recent confession, and who were at least present for the reading of the Epistle and Gospel should approach to receive the Holy Eucharist. We should all be at peace with each other too. If you have any questions about this, please see Fr. Seraphim.



The Role of a Godparent is an Awesome Responsibility

Since many baptisms took place on Holy Saturday, it is a good idea to revisit the important role godparents play in the life of the newly baptized child. Godparents are also expected to play an important role in the religious and spiritual life of adult converts who’ve been received into the Orthodox Church through the Mystery of Baptism.

The institution of godparents (sponsors) is one that dates back to the first century of the Christian Church. Anyone approaching baptism, be they infant or adult, was required to have a godparent. In the case of an infant, it is the godparent that speaks for the child, answering the questions posed by the priest during the baptismal service. But it doesn’t stop there! The godparent is charged by the Church with the duty to make sure the newly baptized is instructed in the teachings of the Church, remains a frequent communicant within the Church and remains active in the Church. In the case of a child, it is to the godparents that the parents entrust their child, knowing that the godparent will remain actively supporting the child within the life of the Church. Should something happen to the parents, it is traditionally the godparents who will make sure the child continues to be taken to church and remains Orthodox.

Because of the awesome responsibility of godparents, it is all the more important that great care be taken when choosing someone who will take on this role. The Church does not allow anyone to become a

godparent who is not Orthodox, for how can one who is not himself a pious, active Orthodox Christian give witness to living a life immersed in the Orthodox faith? The godparent must therefore be a person of high moral character, and able to inspire the newly baptized to fulfill their baptismal vows.

When the newly baptized approaches the holy chalice for the first three consecutive Sundays following baptism, it is the godparent who accompanies them to receive the Holy Mysteries. The godparent must, therefore, be someone who himself/herself is a frequent communicant. Additionally, the godparent must be someone who is active in the life of the Church, supporting the Church with their tithe, keeping the fasts, and otherwise living in all piety and holiness.

The person chosen to act as a godparent must be someone willing to honor their commitment to the newly baptized for a lifetime, and willing to help nourish the spiritual life and development of the child throughout their life. Thus, it is a very bad idea to pick someone as a godparent simply because they are a good friend. Godparents are duty bound to continue giving support to their godchild, even into adulthood. They must be someone who will remember to honor their godson or goddaughter on special occasions, such as a birthday or name day. They should be a part of the godchild's life during the great feasts of the Church, such as Pascha or Nativity. They should commemorate the anniversary of their godchild's baptism by giving them a Christian gift, such as a Bible, prayer book, or icon.

Everything should be done to strengthen the bond between the godparent and godchild throughout the ensuing years. They can take each other out to a restaurant for dinner, or receive communion together when possible (if living in different cities). Time should be allotted to cultivate a unique spiritual bond, and the godparents should assist the godchild's parents whenever possible – especially when doing so enhances the godchild's commitment to their Orthodox faith.

Because baptism has been called Illumination, and brings us out of the darkness of sin and into the light of Christ, the role of the godparent is critical. The godparent must ensure that the Light of Christ continues to shine in the soul of the godchild. Thus, this role as godparent is an awesome responsibility, and is not to be considered a one-day event. If you've been asked to be a godparent, but are unwilling to see this as a lifelong vocation, please decline the honor.

Love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon

All Merciful Monastery, Vashon Island, WA.