

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



St. Gregory Palamas  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent  
March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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## *Today's Scripture Readings:*

*Epistle:* Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Hebrews 7:26-8:2

*Gospel:* St. Mark 2:1-12; St. John 10:9-16

*Welcome to ALL our visitors and guests this morning! You are most welcome to be with us anytime!*

## Services, Events & Announcements

**++Pre-Sanctified Liturgy** – Wed. Mar 18<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm (Hours @ 5:45)  
No Lenten Fellowship to follow

**++Pre-Sanctified Liturgy** – Fri. Mar 20<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm (Hours @ 5:45)  
No Lenten Potluck to follow

**++Sat. Mar 21<sup>st</sup>** – Great Vespers @ 5pm (Confessions)

**++Sun. Mar 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Divine Liturgy (Hours @ 9:40)

**\*\*In accordance with Archbishop Mark's directive, ALL non-Service gatherings (Church School, Council, etc . . .) and Fellowship Hours are suspended until further notice. Lenten Mission Vespers are canceled for the remainder of Lent.**

## Our Giving –Mar 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Attendance 56 - Tithes/Offerings - \$2,828.00

Candles - \$99.50 / Love Offerings - \$155.00

Missions - \$18.00

**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.**



### ***What Should a Christian's Response Be in Dark Times?***

As an Orthodox Christian, I do not believe God makes us suffer. However, I know that God sometimes allows me to suffer as a means of delivering me the salvific medicine that can bring about healing of my fallen nature. God knows I sometimes need to suffer in order to turn to Him, and thus deepen my relationship with Him. It is also evident from my relationship with the Church, that God does sometimes allow demons to attack me, but this is always meant to turn my heart to repentance. Are dark times sent to me by God, or is it something that has descended upon my world because of my sin? As an Orthodox Christian, I know in my heart that dark times are a call for my repentance, and are therefore not something I can blame on others.

It would be so simple if I could point an accusing finger toward the secular and humanistic society that has distanced itself from our society's Christian roots, but in good conscience, I cannot say that. I can only look at my own sinful nature, and how far I have fallen from the image and likeness that Our Lord created me to image, and know that dark times are all about me, and I must look to the Lord in the midst of all the suffering that befalls our world, and embrace the truth that my own sin is the cause of all calamities. I must realize that it is in suffering that God is calling me to turn my gaze upon Christ, and become more like Him.

Repentance in the midst of suffering does not mean that I am saying God is punishing me. Repentance is about turning more

to Christ and becoming more like Christ. And suffering often is the only way we can do that. All is the province of God, and I am simply His servant, and I am charged by Him to serve His people, as best I can, as their servant. I am called to give witness to the truth of our Orthodox Christian faith, as best I can. If I am to be a true Christian, then I must be consistent with my Orthodox Faith, and see myself as the ultimate cause of all the suffering and darkness that befalls our world, and I must repent.

“Lord, grant me to see my own sins, and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. (The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian).”

*With love in Christ,*

*Abbot Tryphon*

*All- Merciful Saviour Monastery, Vashon Island, WA.*

“And not many days after,” it says, “the younger son gather all together, and took his journey into a far country” (Luke 15:13). Why did [the Prodigal Son] not set off at once instead of a few days after? The evil prompter, the devil, does not simultaneously suggest to us that we should do what we like and that we should sin. Instead he cunningly beguiles us little by little, whispering, “Even if you live independently without going to God’s Church or listening to the Church teacher, you will still be able to see for yourself what your duty is and not depart from what is good.” When he separates someone from the divine services and obedience to the holy teachers, he also distances him from God’s vigilance and surrenders him to evil deeds. God is everywhere present. Only one thing is far away from His goodness: evil. Being in the power of evil through sin we set off on a journey far away from God. As David says to God, “The evil shall not stand in thy sight” (Ps. 5:5).

*St. Gregory Palamas - The Parables of Jesus, Sermons by St. Gregory Palamas*