

First Fruits

The Stewardship Newsletter of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

March 2022

Volume 5 / No. 5

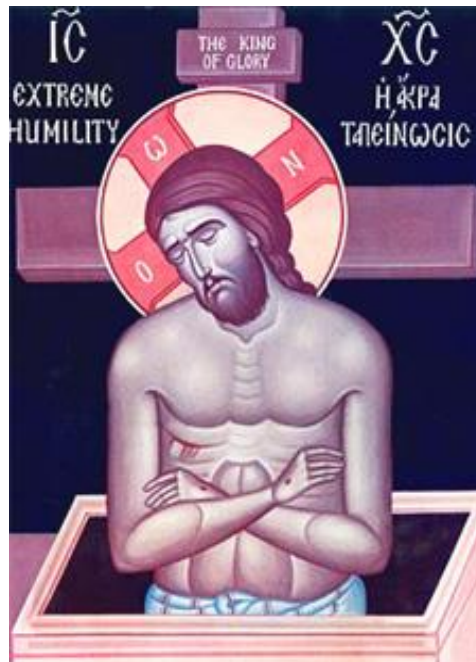
www.nynjoca.org



~~~~~

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a Christ-centered lifestyle, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a call to all of the faithful to share willingly and cheerfully the gifts that God has bestowed on them, including sharing these gifts for God's work in His Church.

~~~~~



Come and See how we are all called to be Stewards of The Church!

“While fasting in body, O brothers, let us also fast in spirit! Let us loose the bonds of iniquity!
Let us undo the chains of injustice! Let us break the yoke of oppression! Let us give food to the hungry!
Let us shelter the poor and homeless, so that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God!”
(Wednesday of the First Week of Great Lent)

With these words of praise, we began the Great Lenten journey. They remind each of us about the importance of Great Lent and how this period in the life of the Church is a time for repentance, forgiveness, and growth.

Every year we make this spiritual journey through Great Lent, gathering together to pray at the various services. We gather together to seek God’s love and repentance ... to seek guidance and salvation. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather together to prepare ourselves to celebrate the Great Feast of Holy Pascha! So, it is during this time that it would be beneficial for us, as Christians, to choose a goal that is appropriate for our own spirituality. Perhaps we need to attend the weekly services that are offered on a more regular basis, or pray a little more each day, or fast more strictly. Perhaps we need to commit to reading the Scriptures every day, or for more time every day. Perhaps we need to extend our time, talents, and efforts a little more in service to the Church or to our neighbors. Even though the Lenten journey is well under way, it is not too late to set spiritual goals and commit ourselves to reaching them. Whatever we need to do to grow spiritually, we need to start today!

The Great Lenten season and journey, itself, reminds us of the constant need to re-evaluate and re-capture that which is central to our lives as Orthodox Christians, to restore balance in all we do, and in repentance to make an earnest attempt to set aside a portion – the “first portion” – of our time to acquire the peace of the Holy Spirit. This can be seen and fulfilled by way of our stewardship or commitment to Christ and His Holy Church.

Christian Stewardship is understood to be a spiritual exercise whereby we, as God’s Children, express our love and faithfulness in tangible ways through the giving of our time, talent and treasure for the building up of the Body of Christ as best expressed in our Parish life and Diocesan life. For truly as Christ has taught, all things belong to God, and He has gifted them to us during our time on earth. As Christians, we are called to share our gifts with those around us.

Remember, our life is not about us – it is about Our Lord! It is about His Gospel! It is about His Church! It is about our salvation in the Heavenly Kingdom. This can happen and it will happen as long as we focus on Christ!

In order to fulfill the responsibility of giving back to God a portion of what He has given us, we must remind ourselves that:

“We, though many, are One Body in Christ, and each of us a member of one another.”
{ROMANS 12:5}

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

