

## GENERAL & SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

**Regarding the Temple:** In our tradition, the church temple is a house of prayer. Upon entering it, please refrain from unnecessary conversation before, during and after church services, most especially during the Divine Liturgy. Prior to divine services, or during coffee hour in the Church Hall is the appropriate place to exchange personal greetings and converse with one another. May God bless your reverence and piety!

**Sick/Emergency Calls/Institutional Visitations:** are answered as requests are received. All visitations are by request. Call to schedule an appointment.

**Confessions:** Are heard one half-hour before every service at Holy Assumption, and once a month at Ss. Peter & Paul. Special arrangements by necessity, and thereby, appointment only.

**Sacraments of Illumination:** In the case of infants, Baptism, Chrismation, & Eucharist are administered on ordinary Sundays of the church year, preferably in the context of Divine Liturgy. At least one sponsor must be of the Orthodox Faith and in good sacramental standing. The newly baptized must have one name that is Biblical or Christian in its origin.

**What is Church Membership?** By regulation, active membership in the church consists not merely in the payment of a set sum, or by fulfilling a *minimum* sacramental obligation, but rather in participation in the life of the church (commensurate with your physical ability). This includes entering into the spirit of the faith through regular and frequent attendance, participation in the divine mysteries, sustained financial support (at a percentage that reflects your ability), and adherence to the parish, diocesan, and national church statutes.

**Receiving Communion:** while all are welcome to pray with us, we politely offer a reminder that the Orthodox Church maintains a closed communion. All are welcome to Antidoron bread following the Divine Liturgy, but only prepared Orthodox Christians may receive the Eucharist. Orthodox Christians do not commune in non-Orthodox churches, and the non-Orthodox are not communed in an Orthodox Church. Thank you!

**Lapsed Members:** You are always welcome home, and we need you! Generally speaking, sincere Confession, Communion, and regular attendance are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Elijah for specific details.

**New Members/Adult Chrismation:** new members are always welcome. In the case of interested adults seeking Chrismation, a period of catechesis prescribed by the pastor is necessary before the administration of Holy Mysteries. An Orthodox sponsor is required.

**Weddings:** A minimum six-month notice is requested. Either Bride or Bride-groom must be an Orthodox Christian, and a parishioner in good standing. Dispensations may be required for inter-faith marriages (the marriage of an Orthodox & any non-Orthodox person). Banns of matrimony published 3 weeks before ceremony. No Weddings performed during fasting seasons!!!

**Burial in Church Cemetery:** Burial in consecrated ground is reserved for the Orthodox and their spouses/children. Charity burials, or odd circumstances are at the rector's discretion. It is strongly encouraged to hold viewings and visitation of the reposed in the church.

**Our Stewardship of the Church:** "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Thyself for the life of the world. Thou didst teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. Thou didst praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from Thee and belongs to Thee. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Thy providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Thy people a zealous love for Thee. For Thou art the Good Steward, and to Thee we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Thy Father who is from everlasting and Thine all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

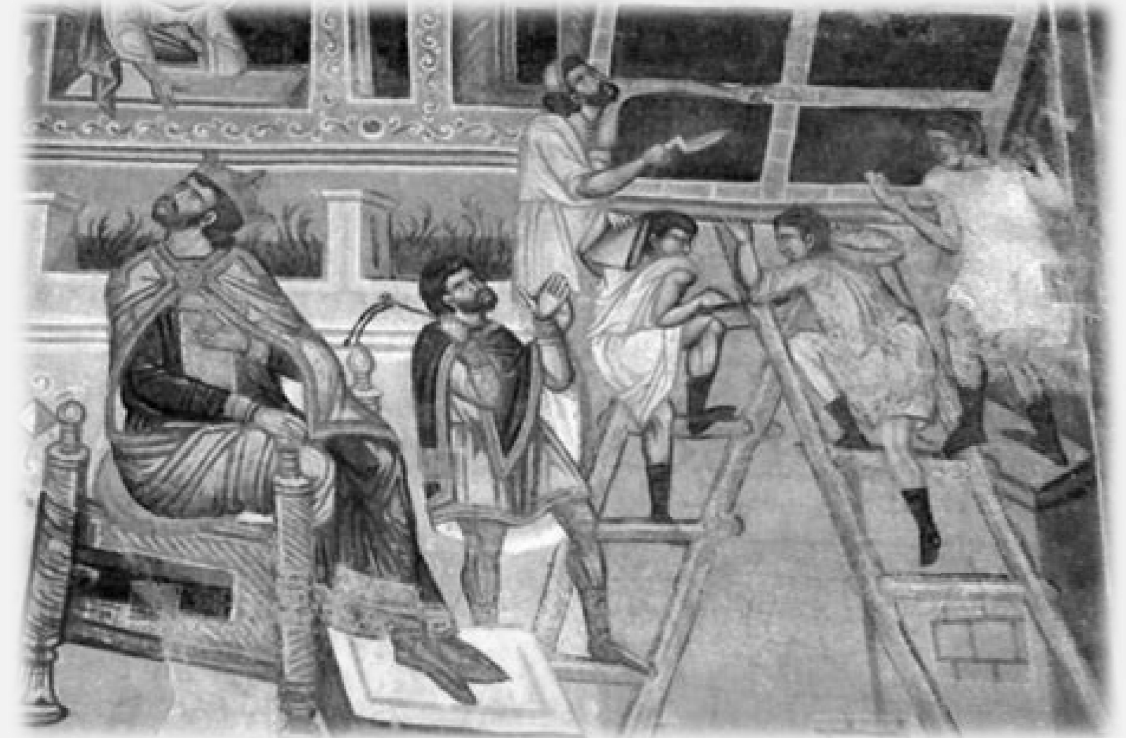
**Prayer When Lighting A Candle:** "Set our hearts on fire with love for Thee, O Christ our God, so that in this flame we may love Thee with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Thy commandments we may glorify Thee, the giver of all good gifts. Amen."

# HOLY ASSUMPTION ORTHODOX CHURCH

629 Sunshine Avenue • Central City, Pa. 15926

## SS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tipple Road • Goodtown, Pa. 15530



*Very Rev. Archpriest Elijah J. Bremer, Rector*

412 Short Cut Road • Alum Bank, Pa 15521

814-977-7397 • otets.ilya@yahoo.com

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost**

**1 December 2024**

"Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

**(Luke 12: 20-21)**

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: 1 – 8 DECEMBER 2024

*“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”  
(Isaiah 58: 6)*

**Sunday  
1 December  
Tone 6**      **23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost**      **8:40 am**, Hours of Prayer (CC)  
Epistle: Ephesians 2: 4-10      **9:00 am**, Divine Liturgy\* (CC)  
Gospel: Luke 12: 16-21

**Wednesday  
4 December**      **Entrance of the Theotokos**      **9:00 am**, Liturgy (CC)  
Major Holy Day

**Sunday  
8 December  
Tone 7**      **24<sup>th</sup> Sunday Post-Pentecost**      **9:00 am**, Hours & Typika (CC)  
Epistle: Ephesians 2: 14-22  
Gospel: Luke 13: 10-17

### *~Important Considerations~*

*All persons are present at their own risk. Please refrain from attending if you are currently sick, or if you were exposed to a contagious disease. Also understand that if you do not attend Church for more than three weeks without just cause, according to canon law you must go to confession prior to receiving Holy Communion.*

### THE LIMITS OF BEING RICH

*By: Fr. Ted Bobosh*

Many believers wish that God would at some point in their lives speak to them – if for no other reason than to know for sure that He existed.

In Luke 12:16-21, we are presented the story of a man to whom God spoke directly. Unfortunately, God’s words to the man were “You fool!” It certainly would be a rude awakening for any of us believers if when God finally spoke to us, first words were to call us a fool! We might then wish that God had never spoken to us, for such a judgment by God would not be a welcomed word by us.

If we examine our own lives and our own values, do we imagine that God’s first words to us would be one of praise for our lives and thinking, or would we be rebuked for our folly – for basing our lives on shallow ideas, on goals that turn out to be phantoms which disappear in a second when we wake up to reality? The man’s folly was not that he had become rich, but he had not become rich towards God. Wealth and prosperity can be a blessing from the Lord, but they are given to us in order for us to accomplish His will, not to selfishly spend it on our selves which also turns out to be folly.

Being rich is not the same as being rich towards God. Blessing received from God are by God’s design meant to enable us to give – not just to be thankful but to be generous as well.

This Gospel lesson from Christ offers us one of the earliest glimpses into the notion of a “bubble economy.” For the rich man’s bubble was burst in that moment when he was told he was going to die that night. His wealth was shown to be a mere dream but not the reality upon which to base his life’s decisions. It was not even the case that his wealth was the result of ill-gotten goods – he didn’t lie, cheat and steal to obtain his wealth, but worked for it. Yet in the eternal scale of things, his wealth was not all that valuable to that man. Blessings received might make us rich, but we have to receive those blessing and use them to make us rich towards God.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Today:** we observe the 40<sup>th</sup> Day Panakhyda for Mrs. Betty Sesack following Divine Liturgy. Memory Eternal! Additionally, Robert Hiller will be formally admitted into the Catechumenate following the Gospel Reading. Pray for him, as he continues his journey into Orthodoxy. Coffee social and a brief church meeting will follow liturgy.

**Thank You:** to Fr. Michael and Matushka Sue, Alexis and Jack, as well as Matushka Laryssa, Sue, Joann, and Morgan, for participating in the filming of “Christmas in the Alleghenies: Seasons of Grace.” Also, thank you to Sharon, and the crew from Penn Highlands who did the filming and sound recording. The finished production will air on Christmas day. Once we know the time, we will let you know!

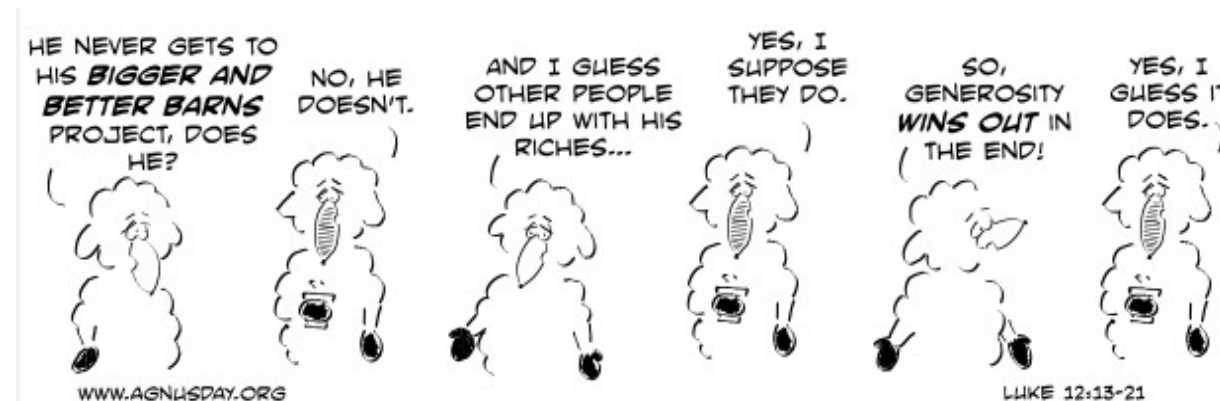
**Fr. Elijah’s Schedule:** with the permission of our Dean, Fr. Mark, Father Elijah and family will be away December 6-8. Typika service will be chanted on Sunday, 12/8. The normal expectation for church attendance still applies! In an emergency, please call Fr. George Johnson: 814.539.8613; or Fr. Dragan Vukovic: 814.244.4063

**Simple Guidelines for the Nativity:** the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. Those who are ill, or those with serious medical considerations, may exercise discretion, but all are encouraged to keep the spirit of the fast with intensified prayer, and charitable works!

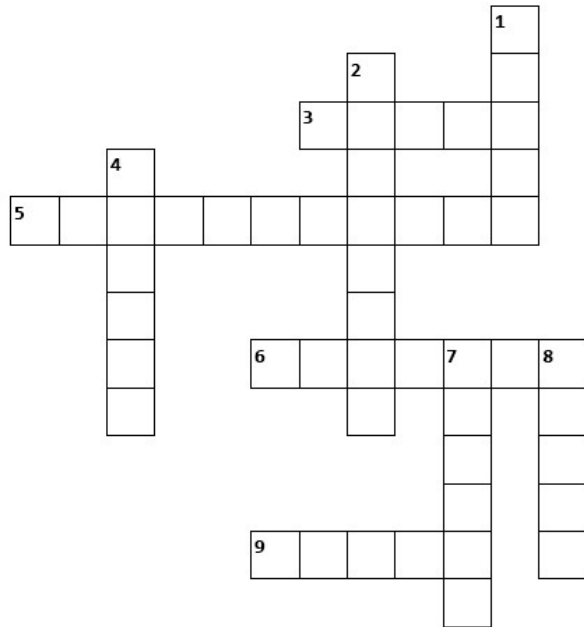
**Birthright of Somerset County Giving Tree:** it is time for the annual giving tree benefiting our local Birthright Organization. All donations stay in Somerset County and help young, pregnant women, babies, and very young children. Please take an ornament, and return the item in the next two weeks. Thank you for supporting this pro-life organization!

**Annual Christmas “Adopt a Family”:** Fr. Elijah is still working out the details, but we will again adopt a family for Christmas, providing food for dinner, comfort food, and a small gift card for Wal-Mart & Aldi. If you can help, please place your contribution in an envelope marked “Adopt a Family” and place it in the collection box or donation plate. Thank you, and God Bless you this Nativity Season!

**Upcoming St. Nicholas Day Celebration (Slava & Social):** on Sunday, 22 December, we will have our annual St. Nicholas Day Liturgy. Following Liturgy, we will have our annual St. Nicholas fasting social. Accordionist Ed Zablotney will provide traditional Christmas Polka music. All family, friends, and well wishers are invited. Covered dishes (fasting appropriate) are needed. If children attend, St. Nicholas will make a visit. Please let Father know if you will attend, and if any children will accompany you. Thank you!



# The Parable of the Rich Fool



**Across**

- 3. 15 He then told them, "Watch out and be on guard against all ??, because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12:15 CSB
- 5. 13 Someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the ?? with me." Luke 12:13 CSB
- 6. 16 Then he told them a ??: "A rich man's land was very productive. Luke 12:16 CSB
- 9. 17 He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to ?? my crops? Luke 12:17 CSB

**Down**

- 1. 14 "Friend," he said to him, "who appointed me a ?? or arbitrator over you?" Luke 12:14 CSB
- 2. 21 "That's how it is with the one who stores up ?? for himself and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:21 CSB
- 4. 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the ?? you have prepared—whose will they be?' Luke 12:20 CSB
- 7. 18 I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build ?? ones and store all my grain and my goods there. Luke 12:18 CSB
- 8. 19 Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and ?? yourself." Luke 12:19 CSB

*Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him, the Lord shall raise him up"*  
 – James, 5: 14-15

Abp. Nathaniel Mat. Valeria Fr. Jim	Abp. Melchisedek Mat. Sasha Fr. Ray	Abp. Michael Mat. Suzanne Mat. Joanne	Fr. Michael Mat. Laryssa		
Allison Sandi Noah Mary-Evelyn Donna Robert Helen Bill Charles Mary-Elizabeth Lisa Jonathan Betty Lou Izzy George Mitch Johnnie-Mac Jan Magdalena Taissia James Andy Ann Robert Phyllis Jeanne Eleanor Ray Shirley Walt Betty Judy Richard Janet Pastor Dave Tammy Marsha Michelle N.	Elaine Stephanie Emma Bryan Kevin Mary Etta Sandy Sam Dakota Darcel Thelma Tammy Renée James Jean Johnnie David Larry Dorothy Daniel Eric Andrea Mark Tim George John Helen Greg Edward Robert Richie Josephine Tammy Keith Jodi George Mike	Charles Sophie Henry Gregory Nick Cory Kenneth Betty Kathy Jennifer Shane Kathie Alexandra Curtis Dale Charles Agnes Daniel Francesca Barbara Mary-Louise Amanda Samantha Don Mary Samantha Dave Maryann Megan Shaun Jennifer Ray Shirley Donna Johannes Nancy K. Louise Hannah	Bernadette Nancy Natalia Debbie Anne Sharon Jaida Jerry Sue Mary Mary Ann Chris Roxanne Lita Allen Nancy Barbara Monica Kara Mary Ann Barbara John, Jr. Susan Mary Ann Heidi Bernie Chuck Julia Bob Hayes Ron McKenzie Sandy John S. Marcella Rod Jessica Mike	Janet Chrystyna Peter Nancy Nick Kara Scott Allan Debbie Karis Peter Larry Alexis Suzanne Steven Annette Katherine Dwain Andrew Dave Denise Mike Mary Judith Dee Ann Gene Anna-Sophie Jim Ann-Marie Sue Y. Linda Brady Karl Paige Linda Larry Rob	Katie Damian Ashley Mike Agnes Michelle M. Jon Julie Ruth Jeremiah Lawrence Matthew Julie Gordon Shirley-Ruth Jim Darren Joseph Michael Tim Ashley Rachelle Jean Maria Roxanne Christine Kim Betty Antoinette Marie Donna Gloria Betty Gail Michelle B. Gladys Ansley Matthew

**Do you have prayer intentions?** Remember you may add or remove intentions at any time. You do not have to be members of our parish, or even Orthodox to be placed on the list!



## BECOMING RICH TOWARD GOD

*By: Archpriest Steven Kostoff*



There is hardly a Christian who would disagree with this teaching of the Lord, as expressed in the words above, when it comes to our relationship with the “abundance of our possessions.” We know that our life does not “consist” in them. In other words, these very possessions do not, and simply cannot, impart genuine meaning and significance to our lives. These possessions are external to our inner being; for they cannot define us as human beings made “in the image and likeness of God”—and we can say that without dismissing these possessions as just so much “mammon.” There are things we need and there are

things we enjoy. Yet, I also cannot but arrive at the inescapable conclusion that even though we know this teaching to be true, we seem to pay such teaching just so much “lip service” because of the extent to which we are enamored and captivated (enslaved?) by “the abundance of our possessions!” Who is the person that can claim otherwise?

On one level—certainly not the highest!—our lives seem to be a steady progression of accumulating as much as possible, the only limit to this accumulation being imposed on us by the extent of our available resources. This means that the abundance—or at least the quality—of our possessions will increase as our access to “purchasing power” increases. (Thus, at Christmas, the extent and quality of the gifts that end up in the hands of children will depend upon the wealth—or lack of wealth—of their parents. Those who “have” will simply have more once Christmas comes and goes). As Christians, then, we find ourselves in the awkward position, indicative of a genuine tension, of accepting our Lord’s teaching about the dangers of accumulating possessions as true, and yet unable to arrest the desire and endeavor of adding to this abundance. The “consumer within” is a driving force indeed!

The Lord reveals His teaching about possessions through the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-21, found immediately after the words cited above. This parable is relatively short and to-the-point, so I will include it here in order to refresh our familiarity with it.

“The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; that there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample good laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

This parable is not only short and to-the-point, but it is almost brutal in its clarity and inescapable truthfulness—one can plan all one wants, but death will cut short the most well-conceived plans with an unexpected finality that makes a mockery of those very plans. When death comes, the rich man’s wealth is shown to be a worthless form of security for his “soul.” (This parable always brings to my mind the words of Tevye the dairyman, who mused that the more man plans, the harder God laughs!) The parable does not make a moral monster of the rich landowner. There is no hint of his being a particularly sinful person. Indeed, he is probably quite indicative of his “type”—outwardly, at least, he is decent and a man of status. And he may have attended his local synagogue with regularity. It is his preoccupation with “the abundance of his possessions”—“what shall I do” and “I will do this”—that renders him a “fool” in the judgment of

God. He had a preoccupation that was self-centered in its orientation, culminating in a blindness that resulted in forgetfulness of God, instead of pursuing the meaningful task of striving to be “rich toward God.” As a Jew guided by the Law, he had that opportunity, but squandered it.

His careful plans to build larger barns to accommodate his ever-increasing store of crops had the immediate impact of making life easier and enjoyable—a time to “eat, drink, and be merry.” This, in turn, was a self-satisfying expansion and investment of his time and energy. In the process, he pushed the inevitability of his death into a vague and perhaps far-off future. (The saints teach us that the “remembrance of death” is a key component of our spiritual lives, precisely to protect us from any such foolish forgetfulness). It is an attitude/temptation as alive today as it was in the time of Christ. As real as the barns the landowner envisioned may have been, they were equally symbolic of a choice he made with the direction of his life. And this choice toward wealth proved to be quite costly. Is this not our present-day “portfolio-building” equivalent to the rich landowner’s building of barns? Are we more preoccupied with becoming “rich toward God,” or simply with becoming rich in the accumulation of our possessions? Will we have to suffer with being called a “fool” when that time comes?

Perhaps we can understand the rich landowner’s pursuit of an abundance of possessions as an unconscious strategy toward finding and establishing a sense of security in life. We are all aware of the fragile nature of our lives, and the threats posed to our security on a host of fronts: poverty, illness, death itself. There is nothing quite so reassuring as the feeling of security that would protect us from such threats, while to feel insecurity is a cause of great anxiety. Civilization and technology are built and developed to provide security for human beings in an insecure world. Thus, we find ourselves facing the same dilemma as the landowner of the parable in our own search for security. We often turn to the very means that he did in order to build up that ever-shifting sense of security—the accumulation of an “abundance of possessions.” How ironic, though, that we tend to “secure our security” with the very means that cannot really provide it, while we neglect trying to get “rich toward God,” the only true security! As the biblical scholar Timothy Luke Johnson wrote, “It is out of deep fear that the acquisitive instinct grows monstrous. Life seems so frail and contingent that many possessions are required to secure it, even though the possessions are frailer still than the life” (*Gospel of Luke*, p. 201). And, as another biblical scholar, Brendan Byrne, writes with a certain bluntness, “Attachment to wealth is incompatible with living, sharing and celebrating the hospitality of God” (*The Hospitality of God*, p. 115).

The impact of the Parable of the Rich Fool is discovered precisely in the choice between two very different types of “security” with which the parable confronts us—the abundance of our possessions, or being rich toward God. It seems like a simple choice—especially for Christians—but somehow it ends up being a good deal more complicated. We need to search our minds and hearts as to why this is true. Christ did not deliver parables to entertain us with pleasant stories, nor to edify us with a moral story that remains within our “comfort zone.” The choice with which that parable does confront us demands a response—though it is possible that if we do not have “ears to hear,” we can walk away from the parable with indifference. (“Let us attend!” always precedes the reading of the Holy Scriptures in liturgical services so as to focus our minds on the appointed readings). Let us, however, assume that we do have “ears to hear.” If, then, the parable shakes out the false sense of security that possessions may give us, we then have to reflect deeply on how to become “rich toward God.” Of course, we must begin by cultivating the gifts of God so graciously bestowed on us—faith, hope and love. We can direct our prayer towards this. We need to unhyprocritically practice prayer, almsgiving and fasting. We further immerse ourselves in the “words of the Word”—the Holy Scriptures. It is essential that we confess our sins, and then wage a “spiritual warfare” against them. The possibilities within the grace-filled life of the Church are many indeed. We are neither predestined nor forced to avail ourselves of these possibilities. We must choose to do so, supported by the grace of God. This choice may very well determine whether or not, at the end of our lives, we will hear either “Fool!” or “Well-done, good and faithful servant.” As Jesus often exclaimed, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”