

## Mitey Mites!

*God loveth a cheerful giver!*



And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. (42) And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. (43) And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: (44) For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living. (Mark 12:41-44)

Our parish has several important local traditions. The most important ones are that we serve a moleben every Monday, and pray aloud for everyone in the parish, and many more besides. We repeat these petitions in the regular Thursday liturgy we serve. These are critical to our spiritual well-being, but of

course, not everyone participates. It is hard to get everyone to participate in parish liturgical life, but we have a "liturgical tradition" that everyone does participate in, including the children!

It is a powerful force in our parish, and is probably the most forceful way we are obeying the command: "Train up a child in the way he should go", regarding one of the pillars of Christian piety, alms-giving.

**We have a collection EVERY Sunday for various causes.** We have given to almost a hundred people/places/things in the past 3 years, and have disbursed over \$20,000 (see the bottom of this essay). It is not considered to be part of our tithe or pledge to the church. It is a totally free-will offering, given when we venerate the cross at the end of Sunday liturgy. **We call it "MITEY MITES".**

It is very "Mitey". The money collected is usually not a large amount (usually near a hundred dollars, sometimes much more, sometimes less). All the children bring up their folded and mutilated bills (they can be very creative) and coins and are very excited to plop them noisily into the bowl. We announce what we are collecting for. The causes are varied, but one goal is always the same - to teach our children (and ourselves) to give alms with an open hand.

We have a posted in the church hall that shows the causes we gave to last year. a few bills and coins really add up. People are aware of orphanages in India, Monasteries in Mexico, areas in need of relief from natural disasters, and many more worthy causes. We post all letters we receive, and sometimes keep up with the various people and places we have given too.

The world is a big place, and we are small. "Mitey Mites" makes us more aware of the world around us.

The Mitey Mites collection idea originated at a parish council meeting a couple of years ago when ways of encouraging almsgiving were being discussed. Someone on the council suggested that people were usually more eager to give when asked to contribute to a specific need and could see where there money was going to be used to help others. We were inspired by the example of frequent collections for causes in St. John's in DC and St. Jonah's in Spring. As the discussion continued, the idea came up of asking for parishioners to save their pocket change throughout the week to contribute to a weekly collection for specific needs and missions. This pocket change, though small, could, like "the widow's mite" end up doing mighty things --- thus the name, 'Mitey Mites'.

**People give when they see that their giving makes a difference.** People may not feel they can afford to give much more than their normal tithes and offerings to the church -- but pocket change that might otherwise just collect up in a purse, pocket, dish or sofa seat at home, can be added to the contributions of others to do great things. Dropping coins in a bowl, together, for a common cause can produce more of a sense of community and of personal sharing than simply writing check and putting it in a donation box.

It was really easy to do this. The children are our greatest ambassadors. They all want to be involved. It is just too cute to see a two year old excited to drop some coins into the bowl. It is so cute it is probably breaking the law! I have never noticed any resistance to the practice, but on the contrary, people love it!

After we started the practice weekly it just took off. the money added up, and we received suggestions for those to give benevolence to. We decided to create a poster. It is a little schmaltzy, but that is because this practice is fun. A talented parishioner executed a whimsical drawing. The poor server

being "attacked" in the picture is a real person, but he is not really alarmed in real life. The drawing is meant to evoke the image of "Mighty Mouse" flying to the rescue - our little "mouses" are flying in with their coins and bills.

I would recommend that every parish would institute this practice, but please find another name!

(This essay was created with the contributions of several members of the parish)

**Here is a list** in alphabetical order of all the people/places/things we have given to in the past 3 years. We have disbursed over \$20,000 (from couch cushions!) Many names are changed. Many of these items were given to more than once.

1. Aid to needy convert from Islam disowned by family
2. Bp. Peter Gift
3. Bulletins – copying
4. CAMP in Arkansas
5. Chile Parish Building Fund
6. Chrysostom Press
7. Church Audio System
8. Church in Pakistan
9. Conference Travel
10. Convent in DesPlaines
11. Copy Budget – General Fund
12. DCMA Grave Markers
13. DCMA REM-Jerusalem
14. DCMA Seminarian
15. DCMA Youth Fund
16. Deacon DL
17. Deck Fan
18. Deck Finishing Needs
19. Diocesan Education Fund
20. Diocesan Fund for the Needy
21. Diocesan Needy Fund
22. Diocesan Thanksgiving Collection
23. Dn. N Orarion
24. Episcopal Travel
25. Family in Need
26. Fans for Prisoners
27. FFA
28. FFA – Missions
29. FFA (matching)
30. FFA Clergy
31. FFA Haiti
32. FFA Haiti – Priests
33. Fr. Adam whose home burned down
34. Fr. AP Medical Expenses
35. Fr. James in Kenya
36. Fr. Theme (Sierra Leone)
37. Fr. TM medical costs

38. Fund for Assistance to ROCOR
39. Haiti Family Reifeif Find
40. Haitian Orthodox Mission – General
41. Haralampos Fengoulis
42. Holy Apostles Building Fund
43. Holy Cross Fire
44. Holy Cross Monastery Building Project
45. Holy Cross Monastery WV
46. Holy Transfiguration Cathedral
47. Holy Trinity Jordanville
48. Holy Trinity Seminary Annual Fund
49. Iconography etc.
50. IOCC – Benefit Dinner Donation
51. IOCC – Syria
52. IOCC for Philippines
53. Jordanville Monastery
54. Jordanville Seminary
55. KP
56. Liturgical Goods (candle stands and followers)
57. Liturgical Goods (censer, candles)
58. Local cabinet & kiot
59. Local Food Pantry
60. Metr. Hilarion & Bishop Jerome
61. Mission in Peoria
62. Missionaries
63. MyOCN.net
64. New Recording Device
65. OCMC
66. Open House Costs
67. Orphanage in India
68. ORPR
69. Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry
70. Pakistan Mission
71. Parish Needs
72. Parishioner – illness
73. Pascha Flowers
74. Pascha Flowers and Plashchinitza
75. Peanut Butter Drive – McKinney
76. Pentecost Flowers
77. Prayer ropes
78. Prison Ministry
79. RACS
80. Red Cross Tornado Relief
81. REM
82. Retiring our Debt
83. Samaritan Inn
84. St. George's Cincinnati Building Fund
85. St. George's Pantry

86. St. John Kochurov Society
87. St. John the Almsgiver Society
88. St. John's Academy in SF
89. St. Sergius and Herman Brotherhood
90. St. Tikhon Parish Building Fund
91. Supply Priest Budget – General Fund
92. Thailand Monastery
93. Travel for Choir Conference
94. Travel for Fr. Demetrios Carrellas (speaker)
95. Travel to Diocesan Assembly
96. Ubuntu-Blox building program for homeless abroad
97. Zoe for Life

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Priest Seraphim Holland 2014 [St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, McKinney, Texas](http://www.orthodox.net/aboutus/mitey-mites+god-loveth-a-cheerful-giver.html)

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