



**On-Going Charitable Projects: *charitable giving includes canned goods collections, hygienic products collection, weekly plate collection, winter warmth items and the Lenten Drive***

- Contribute and participate in the **quarterly Mary House Service Program**
- **Hygiene Products**
- **Keep Warm This Winter**

**From DCE:**

**From Today's Readings**

**From Today's Readings**

**Luke 18:9-14** Jesus preached tirelessly against self-righteousness, the enemy of authentic faith. In this famous parable, the Pharisee looks upon himself as deserving of God's favor since he does all the "right things." Proudful, he has only contempt for the tax collector, who prays in humility, openly dependent on God's grace. Reversing people's expectations, Jesus cites the unpopular tax collector as the one whose prayer is heard and whose faith is honored by God. *Discuss/reflect: In what ways might you be replacing a true relationship with God with religious "habits?"*

**Hebrews 4:16-5:10** As the ultimate High Priest, Jesus is the source of salvation to those who come to the Father through Him. *Discuss/reflect: The writer refers to Jesus' "reverent submission" (NIV) to the Father in v.7. In today's world where being in charge of your life and "taking control" are so touted, what does the term "reverent submission" mean to you?*

**Isaiah 40:18-31** In a series of rhetorical questions reminiscent of God speaking to Job from the whirlwind (Job 38-41), we are reminded of the greatness of the eternal God, the Creator of all. *Discuss/reflect: What "idols" (v.19) in today's world seem powerful to you? How much do you depend on them?*

**Tuesday, December 24 is the Feast of St. Stephen (and Christmas Eve!)**



Stephen was a devout believer who was ordained along with six others to serve the poor at the common table. Acts 6-8:2 relates his story, culminating in his death by stoning and his burial. He is acknowledged by the Church as the first to die for his faith (protomartyr). The intensity and sincerity of St. Stephen's faith deeply impressed Saul, the infamous persecutor of Christians who witnessed Stephen's martyrdom. Upon his own conversion, he became Paul, zealous apostle to the Gentiles and one of the greatest missionaries of the Church. St. Stephen is the role model for altar servers, particularly deacons. During Badarak on this feast day, it is traditional in some places for all deacons serving at the altar to wear a liturgical crown, which is worn only by priests on all other days of the year, the crown being in this instance a symbol of martyrdom. St. Stephen is often depicted holding a censer and a miniature church.

*Department of Christian Education / Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern)*

