



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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PHILIPKIVA—NATIVITY FAST—ARNOLD

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: **Metropolitan Constantine**, Patriarch Pavle, Archimandrite Raphael, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, **Father Paul Stoll**, Father Deacon Joseph Bulkanowa, Frank & Ollie Pendlshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Joe Karas, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Angela Wesolosky, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Terry Reinhart, Bernie O'Masta, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Amy, Nigel Daniel, & Daniel Pocura, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 3-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 10-month old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Cindy Rita, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Jeff, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Bill, Sophia Grace, Erin, Jimmy Fennel [6th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Peter Paul & Louise May Sprock, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Claudia [Horvath] Gradicheck, Alberta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Tony Notaro, John Holupka, Patti Sinecki, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Elisabeth Arasin, and Harry Ostaffy.** We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

THANK YOU to everyone who donated toys to the Toys-for-Tots campaign. Alex and Matt helped in the Carnegie Police Department/USMC Reserves biggest haul EVER! God Bless you all for your kindness and generosity to those who are in need!

**REMEMBER YOUR ADVENT ASSIGNMENT:
SAY A PRAYER FOR SOMEBODY YOU DO NOT KNOW!**

Please remember ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Fourth Grade and Matt’s Second Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! *Alex and Matt*

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, December 24 **Divine Liturgy—Arnold** **10:00 AM**
28TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS, SAINT DANIEL THE STYLITE OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT LUKE THE NEW STYLITE OF CHALCEDON, SAINT NICON THE DRY OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, MARTYRS ACEPSIUS & AEITHALAS AT ARBELUS, MARTYR MIRAX OF EGYPT, SAINT LEONTIUS-MONK OF MONEMBASIA IN THE PELOPONNESUS, MARTYR BARSABAS IN PERSIA
Tone 3
Colossians 3:4-11
Luke 14:16-24

Sunday, December 31 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
29TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS, MARTYR SEBASTIAN AT ROME WITH COMANION MARTYRS NICOSTRATUS, ZOE, CASTORIUS, TRANQUILLINUS, MARCELLINUS, MARK, CLAUDIUS, SYMPHORIAN, VICTORINUS, TIBURTIUS, & CASTULUS, SAINT MODESTUS-ARCHBISHOP OF JERUSALEM, SAINT FLORUS-BISHOP OF AMISUS, SIANT MICHAEL-CONFESSOR OF CONSTANTINOPLE, MARTYR EUBOTIUS AT CYZICUS
Tone 4
Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40
Matthew 1:1-25

Litany in Blessed Memory of Rudy Obradovich—Evelyn & Walt Burlack

Saturday, January 6 **Nativity Eve—STRICT FAST DAY**
Grand Compline & Holy Supper—ARNOLD 4:00 PM
Grand Compline & Holy Supper—Slickville 6:00 PM

Sunday, January 7 **DIVINE LITURGY—ARNOLD—Fr. Paisius 8:00 AM**
DIVINE LITURGY—SLICKVILLE 10:30 AM
30TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT--NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, ADORATION OF THE MAGI—MELCHIOR, CASPAR, AND BALTHASAR
Galatians 4:4-7
Matthew 1:1-12

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 24 DECEMBER 2006—ARNOLD

PHILIPKIVA—NATIVITY FAST

28TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS, SAINT DANIEL THE STYLITE OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT LUKE THE NEW STYLITE OF CHALCEDON, SAINT NICON THE DRY OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, MARTYRS ACEPSIUS & AEITHALAS AT ARBELUS, MARTYR MIRAX OF EGYPT, SAINT LEONTIUS-MONK OF MONEMBASIA IN THE PELOPONNESUS, MARTYR BARSABAS IN PERSIA

TROPARION—TONE 3

Let the Heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm!
He has trampled down death by death!
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
And has granted the world great mercy!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 3

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One!
Leading us from the gates of death.
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;
With the prophets and patriarchs
They unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 3

READER: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
PEOPLE: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
READER: Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
PEOPLE: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
READER: Sing praises to our God, sing praises!
PEOPLE: Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 3

In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame!

Be Thou a God of protection for me, a house of refuge, in order to save me!

When you come to the end of all the light you know, and it's time to step into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing that one of two things shall happen: either

you will be given something solid to stand on, or you will be taught to fly. - Edward Teller (1908-2003)

Adventure With Grandma

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her world-famous cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus!" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad. Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous, cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for.

I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church. I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out for recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough, and he didn't have a coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat!

I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that. "Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby." The nice lady smiled at me, as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it -- Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: ridiculous.

Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

I still have the Bible, with the tag tucked inside: \$19.95.

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) is urgently seeking seminarians, theologians, Bible study leaders, teachers, doctors, and those with construction experience for its 2007 Orthodox Mission Teams. Mission Team members serve for 2-4 weeks abroad offering education, healthcare, construction, and leadership services as a witness to the Gospel of Christ. You may visit www.ocmc.org/teams for complete details regarding 2007 Team opportunities. Please contact Andrew Lekos at 1-877-463-6784 or by e-mail at teams@ocmc.org for more information or to volunteer.

LET US LIFT UP OUR HEARTS

Someone once asked why we Orthodox chant our Divine Liturgy. The answer was a bit

surprising to the person: "When you sing, you pray twice!" Really? Singing the Liturgy is that important?

Well, actually that answer just allows us to reveal some deeper truths about worship that will both challenge us and comfort us. The fact is We were created to be worshipers. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann once wrote that we humans are *homo adoramus* - the worshipping man. It is in worship that we are most like who we really are. In a constant attitude of worshipping God, keeping the memory of God and His love always before us, our souls are opened to the healing influence of the Holy Spirit. In other words, worship works wonders!

Worship certainly binds a community and aids harmony. The old saying that the "family who prays together, stays together" is truer today than it has ever been. There is no one more "manly" and countercultural than the father who leads his wife and children into the House of God to pray and adore the Savior of our souls.

But if God is so great, why is worshipping Him so important? Is He so insecure that He has to require His creation to "praise" Him?

Nothing could be further from the truth. God does not NEED our worship. He is complete within Himself. In eternity past, before He created anything, He abided with Himself in the beauty, perfection and unconditional love of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. No, He calls us to worship for the same reason He commands anything from us - for our ultimate benefit. We need our worship of God.

Here are only three of the many benefits of worship that can make your Sunday attendance at Divine Liturgy a transforming event.

First, Worship Enlightens. There is something "holistic" about the Orthodox Divine Liturgy. What I mean is that the Divine Liturgy has been supervised and shaped by the Holy Spirit for centuries to the point where today we are invited to experience a worship time that is filled with Light. This ineffable Light emanates from the Person of Jesus Christ, Who is the Truth Himself. Confronted with Christ, I am challenged with a reality much bigger than my own life. And when a human being is connected to something bigger than himself, his whole life is transformed. The Light of the Wisdom of the rhythm of worship helps me to see myself as I am and Christ as He is.

Second, Worship Enlivens. When we pray at the Liturgy, we do not just pray for ourselves. When we worship, we do not worship by ourselves. When we praise God, we do not praise God only for ourselves. No, Orthodox worship is "for the life of the world." This vision of worship reinforces the cosmic truth that when we Orthodox do our Divine Liturgy, we are acting as the "royal priesthood" for the whole of creation.

But we also pray for our fellow worshippers. During the Liturgy we offer up "ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our God." The whole point of the Divine Liturgy is the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ so we can be made truly "alive unto God" by His eternal life!

Finally, Worship Enriches. No one leaves the Liturgy hungry unless they choose to harden their hearts and reject the benefits that flow from this encounter with the Living God. The Liturgy is filled with theology and scripture all meant to teach, encourage, challenge, and change us by bringing us into the very Presence of the Holy Trinity. Every opportunity to worship is another opportunity to know God and be changed by that very knowing. Worship is meant to acclimate you to the environment of eternity. Worship is meant to train your whole person to the rhythm of heaven. Worship strengthens persons, families, and communities. Worship is what we were made for!

But all of these benefits of worship are only available to you when you are purposefully engaged in the Divine Liturgy. The same river water can wash over a sponge and a rock, but only the sponge is saturated by the water. So also the soul that comes expecting to meet with God Himself at the appointed time of worship, to act as the "royal priesthood" for all creation, and to commune with God Himself at His "table," will always receive the beauties and the blessings of worship. As the old Ray Stevens song says, "There is none so blind as he who will not see." This weekend you and your family will walk hand in hand into the "House of God." Will you be able to "see" the opportunity before you in the timeless beauty of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy? I pray you will.

This week I speak with Rev. Dr. Alkiviadis C. Calivas, liturgy professor at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and he will give us some powerful insights into the wisdom and wonder of our weekly worship service. Don't let another Sunday go by and miss the riches spread before you in the Divine Liturgy.

Until next week.

Yours for the spread of Orthodoxy,

Fr. Chris Metropulos

P.S. This is such a busy time of year, but please don't forget us during the holidays. I'm sending all our friends a special letter next week. When you get it, open it and respond! Also, would you email me this month about how this ministry is benefiting you? Email me directly at <mailto:frchris@receive.org>

SCOBA

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For immediate release

December 13, 2006

IOCC RECEIVES \$5.16 MILLION FOR LEBANON DEVELOPMENT

U.S. Government Grants Target Most War-Ravaged and Marginalized Areas with Aid for Villages, Schools, Farms, and Small Businesses

Beirut (IOCC) – International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) has received two grants from the United States Government to significantly expand its ongoing work to help Lebanon recover from the war. A grant of \$3.46 million has been awarded to IOCC by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the repair and development of 154 public schools in southern Lebanon, the Beqaa valley, and Mount Lebanon. A \$1.7 million extension grant from the U.S. Government's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) will expand IOCC's current program to help returnees rebuild their lives in southern Lebanon and southern Beirut.

IOCC, which has been operational in Lebanon since 2001 with a school feeding and nutrition program, will be able to draw on its extensive network of cooperation between public schools, municipalities and churches to launch its new initiative for Lebanon's public schools. IOCC's two-year USAID-funded program will benefit 90,000 public school students (about 37% of Lebanon's total public school population) with repairs to sanitary facilities, new equipment and furniture, laboratory supplies for science instruction, and new computer labs with internet access.

"Throughout this crisis, IOCC's work has been distinguished for delivering quality aid that meets the highest humanitarian aid standards," says His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, the primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and a member of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), the organization that founded IOCC.

IOCC's school development program will also improve the learning environment by training students and parents on the importance of health and nutrition through educational materials and the creation of parent associations. "Children from low-income families represent a significant percentage of public school enrollments in Lebanon," says IOCC Director of Operations Matthew Parry. "Especially in the immediate aftermath of an armed conflict, children require special protection and care, over and above what the family and extended family can normally provide," he added.

The \$1.7 million grant will extend IOCC's current \$2 million OFDA-funded program to help returnees in 64 towns and villages located south of the Litani River, the area that is closest to the Israeli border

and that suffered the most damage during last July's war. Assistance will also be focused on the heavily destroyed areas of southern Beirut. The original program is assisting an estimated 2,500 vulnerable families including families of victims, people with disabilities, families caring for orphans and elderly people living alone. IOCC is also repairing 23 schools and installing water systems in 30 villages.

The new OFDA extension grant will allow IOCC to do even more: 2,400 families (about 10,750 individuals) will receive supplies to replant farms and rebuild farm-related small business; 3,000 highly vulnerable families will receive heating fuel to help endure the harsh winter; approximately 90,000 women and children who have suffered from war-related trauma will receive psycho-social support; and about 100,000 individuals will have safe drinking water.

IOCC has had an established infrastructure in southern Lebanon since 2001 through a USDA-funded nutrition and feeding program. The area had been selected by IOCC because it had been the most out of reach of the central Lebanese government due to Israel's 20-year occupation. "Back in 2001, there were only three NGOs working in southern Lebanon and IOCC was one of them," says IOCC Regional Director George Antoun. "We know the people. We know the area. We know the best way of doing relief."

IOCC's emergency efforts in Lebanon began as soon as the crisis broke out in July. Since then, IOCC has delivered \$100,000 in medicine and medical supplies to St. George Orthodox Hospital in Beirut and five other medical centers in the South. IOCC also distributed food and hygiene parcels to over 5,000 displaced persons taking shelter in the Matn, Alay and Chouf areas, as well as to families who returned to the village of Marjeyoun shortly after the August 14 ceasefire.

IOCC was founded in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). Since then, it has implemented over \$226 million in relief and development programs in 30 countries around the world. IOCC is a member of Action By Churches Together (ACT) International.

To help in providing emergency relief, call IOCC's donation hotline toll-free at 1-877-803-4622, make a gift on-line at www.iocc.org, or mail a check or money order payable to "IOCC." Donors can write "Lebanon Crisis 2006," in the memo line. Mail to: IOCC, P.O. Box 630225, Baltimore, Md. 21263-0225.

A pilgrim to Mt. Athos once met Monk Dionysius the Kafsokalyvitan, a fool-for-Christ's-sake, who was destitute and dressed in rags. He had no love of money at all. The pilgrim felt compassion for the poor old man and gave him a coin. This made Dionysius very upset. He looked around until he found the kindhearted pilgrim and said to him, "Why have you given me this? I'm wearing clothes. I have bread. What do I need money for?" The other fathers were trying to persuade him to keep the money in order to buy his supply of oil for his church. For a moment he consented to keep it. Then he hesitated, went into deep thought, and finally decided to rid himself of the burden. He threw the coin on the ground and ran away as fast as he could.

from An Athonite Gerontikon

Wait till the end and you will see the outcome of events. Don't fuss, don't worry yet awhile. Imagine someone who is not of the trade watching a blacksmith start melting down gold and mixing in ashes and straw. If he does not wait till the end, he will think that the poor piece of gold is going to be destroyed. Imagine someone else, born and bred on the sea, being suddenly landed on terra firma and not having the least notion about agriculture. He sees a farmer collecting grain and shutting it in a barn to protect it from damp. Then he sees this same farmer take the same grain and cast it to the winds, spreading it on the ground, maybe in the mud, without worrying any more about the dampness. Surely he will think that the farmer has ruined the grain, and he will reprove him. Is such reproof justified? Yes it is, not due to facts about the grain, but because of the man's ignorance, the pride and rashness of the judgment made. Because if this individual, before committing himself, had waited for the summer, he would change his ideas. He would see the grain waving in the fields, he would see the farmer sharpening his scythe to reap the very grain that he had scattered and left to rot, he would see how greatly that grain had multiplied. Now, if the farmer waits all the winter, so much the more ought you to await the final outcome of events, remembering who it is that ploughs the soil of our souls. And when I speak of the final outcome, I am not referring to the end of this present life, but to the future life -- God's plan for us aims at our salvation and glory.

St. John Chrysostom, On Providence 9. 1

Let us not interpret "covetousness" as consisting merely in the lust of what is another's. For even what seems *ours* is another's. For nothing is ours, since all things are God's, to Whom we ourselves belong.

Tertullian, c. 200 AD

**When you come to the end of all the light you know, and it's time to step into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing that one of two things shall happen: either you will be given something solid to stand on, or you will be taught to fly.—
Edward Teller (1908-2003)**