



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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NATIVITY FAST

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Archbishop Vsevolod, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father John Monronko, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendlshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, 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, 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 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Jeff, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Bill, Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Claudia [Horvath] Gradicheck, Alverta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Pete Special, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Aubrie—6-month-old with Cystic Fibrosis, Kathy Ciranni, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Donna Kerr [stroke], Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Marjorie Robison, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Tone 4
Colossians 3:4-11
Luke 18:18-27

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Nicholas & Katherine Behun—Behun Family

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 02 DECEMBER 2007

27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPHET OBEDIAH OF THE 12, MARTYR BARLAAM OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA, MARTYR HELIODORUS IN PAMPHYLIA, MARTYR AZES IN ISAURIA & 150 SOLDIERS WITH HIM, VENERABLE BARLAAM & IOSAPH PRINCE OF INDIA & HIS FAHTER SAINT ABENER THE KING, VENERABLE HILARION-MONK & WONDERWORKER OF GEORGIA, VENERABLE BARLAAM-ABBOT OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, SAINT PATROCLUS OF BOURGES IN GAUL

TROPARION—TONE 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead!
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
All the powers of heaven cried out:
O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 2

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior,
Seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam,
Beheld this and rejoiced with Thee!
And the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 2

READER: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

PEOPLE: **The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

READER: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to death.

PEOPLE: **The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

READER: The Lord is my strength and my song.

PEOPLE: **He has become my salvation.**

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 2

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

Feasts and Saints of the Orthodox Church

Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew--16/29 NOVEMBER 2007



The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, was also named Levi (Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27); he was one of the Twelve Apostles (Mk 3:18; Lk 6:45; Acts 1:13), and was brother of the Apostle James Alphaeus (Mk 2:14). He was a publican, or tax-collector for Rome, in a time when the Jews were under the rule of the Roman Empire. He lived in the Galilean city of Capernaum. When Matthew heard the voice of Jesus Christ: "Come, follow Me" (Mt 9:9), left everything and followed the Savior. Christ and His disciples did not refuse Matthew's invitation and they visited his house, where they shared table with the publican's friends and acquaintances. Like the host, they were also publicans and known sinners. This event disturbed the pharisees and scribes a great deal.

Publicans who collected taxes from their countrymen did this with great profit for themselves. Usually greedy and cruel people, the Jews considered them pernicious betrayers of their country and religion. The word "publican" for the Jews had the connotation of "public sinner" and "idol-worshipper." To even speak with a tax-collector was considered a sin, and to associate with one was defilement. But the Jewish teachers were not able to comprehend that the Lord had "come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mt 9:13).

Matthew, acknowledging his sinfulness, repaid fourfold anyone he had cheated, and he distributed his remaining possessions to the poor, and he followed after Christ with the other apostles. St. Matthew was attentive to the instructions of the Divine Teacher, he beheld His innumerable miracles, he went together with the Twelve Apostles preaching to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:6). He was a witness to the suffering, death, and

Resurrection of the Savior, and of His glorious Ascension into Heaven.

Having received the grace of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, St. Matthew preached in Palestine for several years. At the request of the Jewish converts at Jerusalem, the holy Apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel describing the earthly life of the Savior, before leaving to preach the Gospel in faraway lands.

In the order of the books of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew comes first. Palestine is said to be the place where the Gospel was written. St. Matthew wrote in Aramaic, and then it was translated into Greek. The Aramaic text has not survived, but many of the linguistic and cultural-historical peculiarities of the Greek translation give indications of it.

The Apostle Matthew preached among people who were awaiting the Messiah. His Gospel manifests itself as a vivid proof that Jesus Christ is the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and that there would not be another (Mt 11:3).

The preaching and deeds of the Savior are presented by the evangelist in three divisions, constituting three aspects of the service of the Messiah: as Prophet and Law-Giver (Ch. 5-7), Lord over the world both visible and invisible (Ch. 8-25), and finally as High Priest offered as Sacrifice for the sins of all mankind (Ch. 26-27).

The theological content of the Gospel, besides the Christological themes, includes also the teaching about the Kingdom of God and about the Church, which the Lord sets forth in parables about the inner preparation for entering into the Kingdom (Ch. 5-7), about the worthiness of servers of the Church in the world (Ch. 10-11), about the signs of the Kingdom and its growth in the souls of mankind (Ch. 13), about the humility and simplicity of the inheritors of the Kingdom (Mt 18:1-35; 19:13-30; 20:1-16; 25-27; 23:1-28), and about the eschatological revelations of the Kingdom in the Second Coming of Christ within the daily spiritual life of the Church (Ch. 24-25).

The Kingdom of Heaven and the Church are closely interconnected in the spiritual experience of Christianity: the Church is the historical embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world, and the Kingdom of Heaven is the Church of Christ in its eschatological perfection (Mt 16:18-19; 28:18-20).

The holy Apostle brought the Gospel of Christ to Syria, Media, Persia, Parthia, and finishing his preaching in Ethiopia with a martyr's death. This land was inhabited by tribes of cannibals with primitive customs and beliefs. The holy Apostle Matthew converted some of the idol-worshippers to faith in Christ. He

founded the Church and built a temple in the city of Mirmena, establishing there his companion Platon as bishop.

When the holy apostle was fervently entreating God for the conversion of the Ethiopians the Lord Himself appeared to him in the form of a youth. He gave him a staff, and commanded him to plant it at the doors of the church. The Lord said that a tree would grow from this staff and it would bear fruit, and from its roots would flow a stream of water. When the Ethiopians washed themselves in the water and ate the fruit, they lost their wild ways and became gentle and good.

When the holy apostle carried the staff towards the church, he was met by the wife and son of the ruler of the land, Fulvian, who were afflicted by unclean spirits. In the Name of Christ the holy apostle healed them. This miracle converted a number of the pagans to the Lord. But the ruler did not want his subjects to become Christians and cease worshiping the pagan gods. He accused the apostle of sorcery and gave orders to execute him.

They put St. Matthew head downwards, piled up brushwood and ignited it. When the fire flared up, everyone then saw that the fire did not harm St. Matthew. Then Fulvian gave orders to add more wood to the fire, and frenzied with boldness, he commanded to set up twelve idols around the fire. But the flames melted the idols and flared up toward Fulvian. The frightened Ethiopian turned to the saint with an entreaty for mercy, and by the prayer of the martyr the flame went out. The body of the holy apostle remained unharmed, and he departed to the Lord.

The ruler Fulvian deeply repented of his deed, but still he had doubts. By his command, they put the body of St. Matthew into an iron coffin and threw it into the sea. In doing this Fulvian said that if the God of Matthew would preserve the body of the apostle in the water as He preserved him in the fire, then this would be proper reason to worship this One True God.

That night the Apostle Matthew appeared to Bishop Platon in a dream, and commanded him to go with clergy to the shore of the sea and to find his body there. The righteous Fulvian and his retinue went with the bishop to the shore of the sea. The coffin carried by the waves was taken to the church built by the apostle. Then Fulvian begged forgiveness of the holy Apostle Matthew, after which Bishop Platon baptized him, giving him the name Matthew in obedience to a command of God.

Soon St. Fulvian-Matthew abdicated his rule and became a presbyter. Upon the death of Bishop Platon, the Apostle Matthew appeared to him and

exhorted him to head the Ethiopian Church. Having become a bishop, St. Fulvian-Matthew toiled at preaching the Word of God, continuing the work of his heavenly patron.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich

The Prologue from Ohrid

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November 21/December 4

1. The Entry into the Temple of the Most-holy Theotokos

When the Most-holy Virgin Mary reached the age of three, her holy parents Joachim and Anna took her from Nazareth to Jerusalem to dedicate her to the service of God according to their earlier promise. It was a three-day journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem but, traveling to do a God-pleasing work, this journey was not difficult for them. Many kinsmen of Joachim and Anna gathered in Jerusalem to take part in this event, at which the invisible angels of God were also present. Leading the procession into the Temple were virgins with lighted tapers in their hands, then the Most-holy Virgin, led on one side by her father and on the other side by her mother. The virgin was clad in vesture of royal magnificence and adornments as was befitting the "King's daughter, the Bride of God" (Psalm 45:13-15). Following them were many kinsmen and friends, all with lighted tapers. Fifteen steps led up to the Temple. Joachim and Anna lifted the Virgin onto the first step, then she ran quickly to the top herself, where she was met by the High Priest Zacharias, who was to be the father of St. John the Forerunner. Taking her by the hand, he led her not only into the Temple, but into the "Holy of Holies," the holiest of holy places, into which no one but the high priest ever entered, and only once each year, at that. St. Theophylact of Ohrid says that Zacharias "was outside himself and possessed by God" when he led the Virgin into the holiest place in the Temple, beyond the second curtain-otherwise, his action could not be explained. Mary's parents then offered sacrifice to God according to the Law, received the priest's blessing and returned home. The Most-holy Virgin remained in the Temple and dwelt there for nine full years. While her parents were alive, they visited her often, especially Righteous Anna. When God called her parents from this world, the Most-holy Virgin was left an orphan and did not wish to leave the Temple until death or to enter into marriage. As that would have been against the Law and custom of Israel, she was given to St. Joseph, her kinsman in Nazareth, after reaching the age of twelve. Under the acceptable role of one betrothed, she could live in virginity and thus fulfill her desire and formally satisfy the Law, for it was then unknown in Israel for maidens to vow virginity to the end of their lives. The Most-holy Virgin Mary was the first of such life-vowed virgins, of the thousands and thousands of virgin men and women who would follow her in the Church of Christ.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Saints Joachim and Anna

The parents of the Holy Virgin
Lead her to the holy Temple,
And according to their promise
They give her to the Lord.
They lead the Temple to the Temple,
While angels chant,
And chant with joy
To the young Virgin in purest attire.

The virgins accompany our Virgin,
With hymns and tapers;
Zacharias leads her
To the Holy of Holies;
And into the Holy Place he takes her,
Where the awesome mystery is hidden.

Where the Ark of the Covenant is,
Where the golden lampstand is,
Where the staff and the manna are,
Into the guarding place of all mysteries;
There the pure Virgin is led-
The Mystical Ark of the Living Christ.

REFLECTION

Submit yourself to the will of God and do not pry too closely into God's judgments, for you can lose your mind. The judgments of God are innumerable and unfathomable. A monk in the wilderness, imagining that he had attained perfection, prayed to God that He would reveal to him His various judgments in the lives of men. God put the thought in his mind to go to a distant place to inquire of a spiritual elder concerning this. However, while the monk was on his way, an angel of God in the form of an ordinary man joined him, saying that he too wanted to go to that elder. Thus traveling together, they came upon the house of a God-fearing man, who treated them well, giving them to eat from a silver platter. When they had eaten, the angel took the platter and threw it into the sea. The monk found this both amazing and unjust, but he remained silent. The second day they came upon the house of another hospitable man who cordially received and treated them as kinsmen. Before leaving, that man brought out his only son for the travelers to bless. The angel of God then took the child by the

throat and strangled him. The monk was greatly angered and asked the angel who he was, and why he had committed such misdeeds. The angel meekly replied to him: `` The first man was pleasing to God in all things and had nothing in his house that was attained by injustice except that silver platter. By God's judgment, I threw that stolen platter away, so that the man would be righteous before God in all things. The other man was pleasing to God and had nothing in his house that would bring down the wrath of God except his son, who-had he matured-would have become a great criminal and a demonic vessel. Therefore, by God's judgment, I strangled that child in time to save his soul, for the sake of his father's goodness, and to save the father from many miseries. Behold, such are the mysteries and the unfathomable judgments of God. And you, elder, should return to your cell and not strive vainly by inquiring into that which is in the authority of the One God."

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2):

1. How God created man from the dust of the earth;
2. How He breathed the spirit of life into his nostrils;
3. How man became a living soul.

HOMILY

on the faithful as one body and one spirit

...There is one body and one spirit (Ephesians 4:4).

The Holy Apostle counsels the faithful to strive to be one body and one spirit. By one body is understood ``one Faith," without divisions, without heresies and without self-will: the whole Church is one body of which Christ is the Head. By one spirit is understood ``love," the ardent love of all the faithful for Christ, from which proceeds mutual love. The many become as one; many men become as one man. This is the miracle of the Christian Faith and Christian love. There is no power in the world which can be a stronger bond among men: not the same blood, or the same language, or the same hearth, or the same parents, or any type of common material interests. None of these is even nearly as powerful a bond as Christian faith and love. By this powerful, irresistible bond, all the members of the Church are bound to each other. The Church of God stands as one man, in time and in eternity-one body and one spirit. There is nothing more contradictory to this wondrous unity than the pride of individual men. Pride distorts faith, cools love, creates heresies, divides the Church, and sacrifices the good of the whole for individual satisfaction. Pride, in essence, is the absence of both faith and love. Brethren, may God save us from pride, the primal infirmity of the human race, that we may always be one body and one spirit in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To Thee, O Lord Jesus; to Thee, the Head of the Church, be glory and praise forever.
Amen.

THE MIDDLE WIFE by an Anonymous 2nd grade teacher

I've been teaching now for about fifteen years. I have two kids myself, but the best birth story I know is the one I saw in my own second grade classroom a few years back.

When I was a kid, I loved show-and-tell. So I always have a few sessions with my students. It helps them get over shyness and usually, show-and-tell is pretty tame. Kids bring in pet turtles, model airplanes, pictures of fish they catch, stuff like that. And I never, ever place any boundaries or limitations on them. If they want to lug it in to school and talk about it, they're welcome.

Well, one day this little girl, Erica, a very bright, very outgoing kid, takes her turn and waddles up to the front of the class with a pillow stuffed under her sweater.

She holds up a snapshot of an infant. "This is Luke, my baby brother, and I'm going to tell you about his birthday."

"First, Mom and Dad made him as a symbol of their love, and then Dad put a seed in my Mom's stomach, and Luke grew in there. He ate for nine months through an umbrella cord."

She's standing there with her hands on the pillow, and I'm trying not to laugh and wishing I had my camcorder with me. The kids are watching her in amazement.

"Then, about two Saturdays ago, my Mom starts saying and going, 'Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh!' Erica puts a hand behind her back and groans. "She walked around the house for, like an hour, 'Oh, oh, oh!' (Now this kid is doing a hysterical duck walk and groaning.)

"My Dad called the middle wife. She delivers babies, but she doesn't have a sign on the car like the Domino's man. They got my Mom to lie down in bed like this." (Then Erica lies down with her back against the wall.)

"And then, pop! My Mom had this bag of water she kept in there in case she got thirsty, and it just blew up and spilled all over the bed, like psshheew!" (This kid has her legs spread with her little hands miming water flowing away. It was too much!)

"Then the middle wife starts saying 'push, push,' and 'breathe, breathe."

They started counting, but never even got past ten. Then, all of a sudden, out comes my brother. He was covered in yucky stuff that they all said it was from Mom's play-center, so there must be a lot of toys inside there."

Then Erica stood up, took a big theatrical bow and returned to her seat. I'm sure I applauded the loudest. Ever since then, when it's show-and-tell day, I bring my camcorder, just in case another "Middle Wife" comes along.