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SAINT PHILIP'S FAST—NATIVITY FAST--ADVENT

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, 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 Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Charles Mezzomo, Ollie Pendylshok, 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, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, 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, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 7-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 3-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Robert McKivitz, Cliff Dow, Marjorie Pershing, Amy Kemerer, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Helen Pytlak, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Mary Ann, Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Michael Spak, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci,

Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Please remember especially in your prayers: Walter Burlack & Liz Obradovich.

Please remember David Weaver in Mosul, James John Logue & George Senita assigned to Iraq, Matthew Machak, and 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 Sixth Grade and Matt’s Fourth Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Love, 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, November 30 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SAINT GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER—BISHOP OF NEO-CAESAREA, VENERABLE LAZARUS-ICONOGRAPHER OF CONSTANTINOPLE, MARTYR GORBRON & 133 SOLDIERS OF GEORGIA, SAINT NIKON-ABBOT OF RADONEZH-DISCIPLE OF VENERABLE SERGIUS, SAINT LONGINUS OF EGYPT, SAINT GENNADIUS OF VATOPEDI—MOUNT ATHOS, SAINT MAXIMUS-PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT GREGORY-BISHOP OF TOURS & WITH HIM SAINT AREDIUS-ABBOT OF LIMOGES & SAINT VULFOLIAC-STYLITE OF TRIER

Tone 7
Ephesians 2:14-22
Luke 12:16-21

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Charlie & Tillie Pawlyshyn—Fran Letter & Family

Sunday, December 07 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, GREAT-MARTYR CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA, GREAT-MARTYR MERCURIUS OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA, MARTYRS AUGUST-EMPRESS, PORPHYRIUS, & 200 SOLDIERS AT ALEXANDRIA WITH CATHERINE, VIRGIN MASTRIDIA OF ALEXANDRIA, SAINT GREGORY OF PONTUS, MARTYR ALEXANDER AT CORINTH, VENERABLE LUKE-STEWARD OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, SAINT HERMOGENES-BISHOP OF AGRIGENTUM, SAINT PORTIANUS OF AUVERGNE, MARTYR MERCURIUS OF SMOLENSK, VENERABLE MERCURIUS THE FASTER OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

Tone 8
Ephesians 4:1-6
Luke 13:10-17

Litany in Blessed Memory of Thomas Bryan, John Hanczar, Mary Blitzkan, Marjorie Yarmeak, Mary Sharon, Frank Barankovich, Mary Krevanich, Katherine Holowaty, & Rose Pynch—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Joseph Yakim, Eva P. Thompson, & John Pendlyshok—Ollie

Sunday, December 14

Divine Liturgy

10:30 AM

26TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPHET NAHUM, RIGHTEOUS PHILARET THE MERCIFUL OF AMNIA IN ASIA
MINOR, MARTYR ANANIAS OF PERSIA, SAINT IOANICIUS OF DEVIC, SERBIA

Tone 1

Ephesians 5:9-19

Luke 18:18-27 [Gospel of the 30th Sunday]

Litany in Blessed Memory of Victor Burlack—Walt & Evelyn

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

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 30 NOVEMBER 2008

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SAINT GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER—BISHOP OF NEO-
CAESAREA, VENERABLE LAZARUS-ICONOGRAPHER OF
CONSTANTINOPLE, MARTYR GORBRON & 133 SOLDIERS OF
GEORGIA, SAINT NIKON-ABBOT OF RADONEZH-DISCIPLE OF
VENERABLE SERGIUS, SAINT LONGINUS OF EGYPT, SAINT
GENNADIUS OF VATOPEDI—MOUNT ATHOS, SAINT MAXIMUS-
PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT GREGORY-BISHOP OF
TOURS & WITH HIM SAINT AREDIUS-ABBOT OF LIMOGES &
SAINT VULFOLIAC-STYLITE OF TRIER

TROPARION—TONE 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise!
For the Myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy.
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
To proclaim that Thou art risen, granting 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 7

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,
For Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers!
Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry:
The Savior has come to those in faith!
Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 7

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

READER: Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 7

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High!

To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night!

However, it is important to come to an understanding about the hearing of the word of God. Years ago many people were not able to read. Today the opposite is true. Almost everyone can read. So in the past, the basic source of knowledge leading to the truths of God was the sense of hearing, the ear. People could not read. However, even today the hearing of the word is very basic for all people because the word is offered through a living tongue. And much like the word of God, it is alive; so when the word of God is heard through a living tongue, this makes it especially graceful. The word of God in this case can be presented along with the personal experiences of the speaker. And this can be a source of courage to listeners as far as the application of the word of God goes. It is not the same if you hear it on the radio, or if you read it in a book. It is something very different. This is why we go to hear the word of God and we do not rely on reading alone. Reading does not replace the spoken word. And the hearing of the spoken word does not replace reading. These two parallel things are equally important.

I must also tell you that the hearing of the word of God presupposes the presence of other people. The word of God is connected with the presence and vision of other people. In other words, it is connected with the Church. And this is very important, to have the word of God be heard in the Church, very beneficial and of great value. On the other hand, if I sit by myself listening to a cassette, it is like eating canned food according to the holy one of Florina, Metropolitan Augustinos Kantiotes. The canned word of God does not have the same freshness as the live participation. Of course I will listen to my cassettes; I will read my books; but I will also make it a point to go and hear the living word of God, to get together with the other faithful, my other

brothers and sisters in Christ. This is so I can become a presence and show forth the Church, not only in its liturgical worship but also in the hearing of the word of God.

From the 100 homilies on the book of the Revelation by +Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios translated by Constantine Zalalas

(Please note that these quotes are snipped from one hour length homilies given to his spiritual children over the course of several years in Greece during the mid-1980's. We are trying to give you complete thoughts but may not always be successful. Bear with us. The first book of 24 chapters is complete and being formatted as of Oct. 30, 2008)

We owe thousands of thanks to the sweetest Heavenly Father, Who providentially allows painful events to occur in our lives, so that we will not find ourselves in the other world incapable of showing that we endured something for the sake of His love. *Elder Ephraim of the Holy Mountain (Athos)*

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!

Since 15/28 November we have been observing Christmas Lent. In Ukrainian we call it *Pylypiivka* because it begins the day after St. Philip's day, 14/27 November. It lasts for 40 days, until Christmas Eve. The western Church calls it Advent, the season of the coming of the Lord. It is a time of intense spiritual preparation for the feasts of the Nativity (Christmas) and Theophany (the Baptism of our Lord.) We observe it by fasting and a good Confession and Communion.

The western Church's Advent is very rich liturgically. Each and every day has its own texts for the Mass and Divine Liturgy. There are 2 sets of hymns (early and late Advent) and a rich selection of scripture and patristic readings. Our Church, in this one instance, has a less abundant liturgical tradition for this season. When other churches have 4 (Roman) or 6 (Syriac and Ambrosian) Sundays, we have just 2: the Forefathers and the Genealogy. As regards weekday services, there are basically just the ones for the Great Vigil of Christmas (20-24 December.)

How can we "prepare the way of the Lord" within our own Byzantine-Ukrainian tradition? Here are a few suggestions:

- Keep the fast at least on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and of course on Christmas Eve.

- Prepare well for a good, holy and worthy Confession and Holy Communion.
- Aid the poor and needy with gifts of kindness, perhaps donating to a local food bank.
- Don't observe the Christmas festivities before Christmas. Parties with abundant eating and drinking belong in the post-feast, not in the fast.
- Pray intensely and do some good spiritual reading: perhaps the books of Ruth and Micah in the Old Testament. Another good book would be *The Day Christ Was Born* by Jim Bishop. It's short, easy reading and very informative. Good preparation will insure good celebration. If we observe Christmas Lent in the proper way, we will properly "prepare the way of the Lord." (Is. 40:3.)

Archpriest Charles Mezzomo

We cannot know ourselves other than through association with our neighbors--receiving from them reproaches and vexation as a cure for our spiritual wounds; while reproaching ourselves for impatience, but not them. Instead, we must thank them; for, through them, we came to know--by God's providence--our spiritual infirmity. *St. Macarius of Optina*

a word from the desert

Amma Damiana told us this too: Once, I went to the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian and spent the whole night there. In the evening, there came an old woman, a native of Phrygian Galatia, and she gave two copper coins to everybody who was in the church. I knew her because she had often given some to me. One day, a kinswoman of mine and of the most faithful emperor Maurice came to pray at the Holy City and stayed there for a year. Taking her with me, I went to Sts. Cosmas and Damian. While we were in the oratory, I said to my kinswoman, "Look, my lady, when an old woman comes distributing two coins to each person, please swallow your pride and accept them." With obvious distaste, she said, "Do I have to accept them?" "Yes," I said. "Take them, for the woman is great in the eyes of God. She fasts through the week, and whatever she is able to gain by this discipline she distributes it among those who are found in the church. She is a widow of about eighty years of age. Take the coins she offers you and give them to somebody else. Do not refuse the sacrifice of this old woman." As we were speaking in this way, the old woman came in and began her almsgiving. In silence and with serenity she came and gave me some coins. She gave some to my kinswoman too, saying, "Take these, and eat." When she had gone, we realized that God

had revealed to her that I had said, "Take them and give them to a poor person." My kinswoman therefore sent a servant of hers to get vegetables with the two coins. These she ate, and she affirmed before God that they were as sweet as honey. This both astonished her, and led her to give thanks to God who endows His servants with grace.

John Moschos, *Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow)* 127

a word from the desert

An old man used to say, "The mirror of the monk is prayer."

Why Converts to Christian Orthodoxy are Obnoxious

In 1993, over 15 years ago, I was chrismated and joined the Eastern Orthodox Church, but only lately has it dawned on me that I must have strained friendships over the years, due to my vocal enthusiasm for my adopted church. I can't be the only one to have done this. Converts to Orthodoxy usually precede their decision with voluminous reading and research, so their friends must endure agitated lectures on church history, ancient heresies, and what words mean in Greek. Those friends benefit, no doubt, from this opportunity to practice patience and long-suffering. But why is our kind so characteristically obnoxious?

The first, most obvious explanation is that some people simply are obnoxious to start with. But that can't be the case with me, so let's press on.

A second theory is that converts of any sort have a tendency to exuberance that is wearying to outsiders. That's surely a factor, but I think there's something else going on, more specific to Orthodox converts.

Here's a clue to a third possibility. I can remember that, after I'd been Orthodox a few years, developing an increasing sense of tension or frustration. At the beginning, I thought I knew what I was getting into. My husband had been an Episcopal priest for 16 years, and we had gradually moved from evangelical-style "low church" to the more liturgically-fancy "high church." Orthodoxy looked taking that escalator up one more floor. Plenty of ceremony and beauty, but without the mainline churches' affection for keeping up-to-date.

It took me a few years to sense that there was a whole other something going on. It took awhile because I grasped it through hearing the hymns of the church year, week in and week out. Everyone associates Orthodox worship with sensory richness, but it's also rich in theological content. The basic framework of services like the Divine Liturgy

or Vespers doesn't change much, but every day of the liturgical year provides prayers for saints and feasts that can be added to that framework.

And these prayers are jam-packed. For example, on the Feast of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, the chanter launches into this:

Of the Father before the morning star Thou wast begotten from the womb without mother before all ages, even though Arius did believe Thee to be created, not God, classing Thee in ignorance and impudence with creatures...

That's just a fraction of a thorough march through what happened at the first Council of Nicaea, and why it was important (including Arius' unpleasant death from digestive indisposition: "his bowels were torn by a divine hook...in a repulsive manner his soul came out"). Hymns like these offer quite a theological education to anyone who comes to services, and if you didn't catch it all, there's a good chance they're going to sing it two more times.

It takes awhile to get it, because it's gotten by a process of immersion, by soaking in a context of worship. It's not something you can figure out by studying the Church Fathers. Each of them had his idiosyncracies, and they regularly disagree. But they all came together in worship, and were shaped by the same hymns and prayers, the appointed Scripture readings, preaching, and the "picture bible" of iconography. Rich worship taught the faith to literate and illiterate, peasant and emperor, and it's essentially the same as our worship today.

After being dunked in this sea of hymnography for a few years I began to recognize an underlying unity among all the elements of Orthodoxy—the worship, the fasting, the exhortations to humility, the companionship of the saints, all of it. There is an organic quality here, and the thing itself is inexpressibly alive. It was like seeing a face emerge from a random pattern of dots, and then wink at you. It was electrifying. And during those years of discovery, my mind was constantly cranking away as I labored to absorb new ideas and excise stubborn old ones. This absorbed my attention so much that I was apt to expound my current level of comprehension to anyone who stood still in my vicinity. Perhaps this unanticipated experience of encountering something unknown and marvelously organic accounts for the distinctive lapel-grabbing impulse among converts to Orthodoxy.

Even more obnoxious, though, must be the tendency to reject hospitality. I kept finding myself in conversations with nice people who wanted to assure me that this very thing I was so excited about in Orthodoxy is something they have in their church as well. And I would try hard, no doubt to the point of rudeness, to convince them this was not so. (Of course, for every person insisting that there were no differences, there

was another person asking me to explain the differences. If only you could get them to form two lines.)

Well, was it so? It depends on where you put the emphasis. Most people like to be polite and get along, so they highlight what we hold in common. But every church must have its distinctives, or we'd all be in the same church. At the time I was so occupied with comprehending this strange thing called Orthodoxy that I emphasized the differences, and was impatient with kindly big-tent suggestions.

As I realized what the big difference is, I grew more insistent, I'm afraid. It's that Orthodoxy still passes on the early church's knowledge of how to tune in to the presence of Christ. They saw this as a perception skill, something anyone could (with diligent practice) hone; it has nothing to do with emotion. Not that every churchgoer is following that path, not that the church administration is perfect, but that the path still existed-that's what amazed me.

I felt like Marco Polo. I had been to the east and discovered something wondrous that I assumed all Christians crave. But I slowly came to see that I can't communicate it. I think people just don't believe me, and I hardly provide a good personal example. It must sound like vague, fluffy religious talk (though in my experience it is anything but). Maybe you have to soak in it for years, till the evidence becomes overwhelming.

The last reason Orthodox converts are obnoxious resembles the reason adolescents are obnoxious. Young teens go through a few years when they are trying to understand their own unique identity, and trying to establish it in the face of-well, it would be one thing if they had to establish it in the face of hostility, because, even though that would be hard, it would be bracing and clarifying. Instead, an adolescent has to figure out and establish his adult persona in the face of affection. Granny and Pops and Uncle Pete love the little guy, and they're going to be kindly and patient with him because he's going through a phase.

But the "little guy" is not going through a phase. He senses that it's something much more profound than that, as he is turning into a different person, the adult he is destined to be. Affectionate attempts to obscure this quest feel suffocating. He has no good option for dealing with that affection, so he's either sullen or angry. There are no doubt some ways that he is the same person he will always be, and there are ways Orthodoxy and every other church has significant points in common, not least that we love the same Lord. But the impulse is to exaggerate the differences when you fear being hugged to death.

This is not just an explanation but an apology, and even an appreciation for the perseverance of friendship in the face of truly annoying behavior. My ideas haven't

changed, and I'm always glad for a good discussion, but maybe I'm past the need to belabor them. Yeah, I think I've gotten it out of my system. I hope so.

***** Frederica Mathewes-Green www.frederica.com

The Nativity Fast—from *Father George Livanos' Sunday Bulletin*

*NOTE: Dates have been adjusted to coincide with Christmas on January 7th—Father Bob
(November 28 through January 06)*

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. This is a joyous fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The fast is divided into two periods. The first period is November 28th through January 1st when 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. The second period is January 2nd through January 6th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. Here are the guidelines:

Meat: (Abstain) beef, chicken, pork, turkey, elk, veal, lamb, deer, rabbit, buffalo, and so forth

Fish: Permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays before December 20. (some permit fish Tuesdays and Thursdays also) fish with a backbone (not including shrimp, octopus, shellfish, squid, or other seafood.

Dairy: (Abstain) milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, and so forth

Wine: Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20. Some include all types of alcohol in this category

Oil: Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20/January 1. Some include all types of oil in this category. Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

* Fasting in itself is not a means of pleasing God. Fasting is not a punishment for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.

* We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.

* We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.

* Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.

* Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to “set a watch and keep the door of our lips.”

Do Not Fast

* between January 7 and 18 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays);

* if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;

* during serious illness;

* *if you require medication or have a medical condition—consult your doctor;*

* without prayer;

* without alms-giving;

* according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.