



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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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, 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.

2009 Church Calendars are available downstairs. Also, please see Debbie Paouncic if you would like to purchase the \$25 All Saints Calendar Raffle—before January 1, 2009!

Abba John the Short said, "Who sold Joseph?" A brother replied, "It was his brethren." The old man said to him, "No, it was his humility which sold him, because he could have said, "I am their brother" and have objected, but, because he kept silence, he sold himself by his humility. It was also his humility which set him up as chief in Egypt."

Please remember David Weaver in Mosul, James John Logue, and 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, December 21 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, VENERABLE PATAPIUS OF THEBES, HOLY APOSTLES OF THE 70: SOSTHENES, APPOLLOS, CEPHAS, TYCHICUS, EPAPHRODITUS, CAESAR & ONESIPHORUS, HOLY 362 MARTYRS OF AFRICA BY THE ARIANS, MARTYR VICTORIA, MARTYR ANTHUSA AT ROME, VENERABLE CYRIL-ABBOT OF CHELMOGORSK

Tone 2
Ephesians 6:10-17
Luke 13:10-17

Litany in Blessed Memory of Mary Pekich—40 Days—Fr. Bob

Sunday, December 28 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
28TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS, HIEROMARTYR ELEUTHERIUS-BISHOP OF ILLYRIA & HIS MOTHER ANTHIA & MARTYR CORIBUS-EPARCH, VENERABLE PAUL OF LATROS, SAINT STEPHEN THE CONFESSOR-ARCHBISHOP OF SUROZHA IN CRIMEA, MARTYR ELEUTHERIUS AT CONSTANTINOPLE, VENERABLE PARDUS-HERMIT OF PALESTINE, MARTYR BACCHUS THE NEW, MARTYR

SUSANNA THE DEACONESS OF PALESTINE, VENERABLE TRYPHON-ABBOT OF PECHENGA [KOLSK] & HIS DISCIPLE JONAH

Tone 3

Colossians 3:4-11 [of the 29th Sunday]

Luke 14:16-24 [of the 29th Sunday]

Litany in Blessed Memory of Archimandrite Gregory [Woolfenden]—40 days—Fr. Bob

Sunday, January 4

Divine Liturgy

10:30 AM

29TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY, SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS, GREAT-MARTYR ANASTASIA & HER TEACHER CHRYSOGONUS & WITH THEM MARTYRS THEODOTA, EVODIAS, EUTYCHIANUS, & OTHERS WHO SUFFERED UNDER DIOCLETIAN

Tone 4

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23

Matthew 1:1-25

Litany in Blessed Memory of Steve Kuzman & Nicholas Vitosky—Fr. Bob

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 21 DECEMBER 2008

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

VENERABLE PATAPIUS OF THEBES, HOLY APOSTLES OF THE 70:
SOSTHENES, APPOLLOS, CEPHAS, TYCHICUS, EPAPHRODITUS,
CAESAR & ONESIPHORUS, HOLY 362 MARTYRS OF AFRICA BY
THE ARIANS, MARTYR VICTORIA, MARTYR ANTHUSA AT ROME,
VENERABLE CYRIL-ABBOT OF CHELMOGORSK

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!

And (St. Nicholas's) hand was outstretched to the needy, on whom it poured alms richly, as a water-filled river abounds in streams. Here is one of his many deeds of mercy.

There lived in the town of Patara a certain man, prominent and rich. Falling into extreme poverty, he lost his former prominence, because of the uncertain life of this age. This man had three daughters who were very beautiful in appearance. When he was already deprived of all necessities, so that there was nothing to eat and nothing to wear because of his great poverty, he planned to give his daughters to prostitution and turn his house into a brothel so that by this means he might obtain a livelihood for himself and acquire also food and clothing for himself and his daughters. O woe! To such unworthy thoughts does extreme misery lead! Having this unclean thought this man wanted already to fulfill his evil design. But the All-good Lord, not desiring to see a man in perdition and, in His love for mankind, helping in our misfortunes, placed a good thought in the mind of His servant, the holy priest Nicholas, and by inspiration sent him secretly to the man who was perishing in soul, for consolation in poverty and forewarning from sin.

St. Nicholas, having heard of the extreme poverty of this man and knowing through revelation from God of his evil intention, felt great pity for him and decided to draw him out, together with his daughters, from poverty and sin, as from fire. However, he did not wish to show his good deed to this man openly, but intended to give generous alms secretly. St. Nicholas did thus for two reasons. On the one hand, he wanted to escape vain, human glory, following the words of the Gospel: Take heed that ye do not your alms before men; on the other hand, he did not want to offend the man who once was rich and now had fallen into extreme poverty. For he knew how painful and insulting alms are to him who has fallen into pauperism, because it reminds him of his former prosperity. Therefore St. Nicholas considered it better to act according to the teaching of Christ: Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand

doeth. He so much shunned the praise of men that he tried to hide himself even from him whom he benefited.

He took a large sack of gold, came at midnight to the house of that man and, throwing this sack in the window, hastened to return home. In the morning this man arose and, finding the sack, untied it. At the sight of gold, he fell into great consternation and did not believe his eyes, because from nowhere could he expect such a favor. However, in examining the money with his fingers, he was convinced that it was in fact gold before him. Having rejoiced in spirit and wondering at it, he wept for joy, for a long time he pondered over who could show him such a favor, and could think of nothing. Attributing this to the action of divine providence, he continually thanked his benefactor in his soul, rendering praise to the Lord Who cares for all. After this he gave his oldest daughter in marriage, giving her as dowry the gold miraculously given to him. St. Nicholas, knowing that this man acted according to his wishes, loved him and decided to do a like mercy also to the second daughter, intending by a lawful wedding to protect her also from sin. Preparing another sack of gold like the first one, he by night, hidden from all, by the same window threw it into the house of man.

Arising in the morning, the poor man again found gold in his house. Again he was astonished and, falling to the earth and drenching himself with tears, he said: "O merciful God, Author of our salvation, Who hast redeemed me by Thine Own Blood and now redeemest by gold my home and my daughters from the nets of the enemy, do Thou Thyself show me the minister of Thy mercy and Thy philanthropic goodness. Show me this earthly angel who preserves us from sinful perdition, so that I might know who hath snatched us from the poverty which oppresses us and delivers us from evil thoughts and intentions. O Lord, by Thy mercy secretly done for me by the generous hand of Thy servant unknown to me, I can give my second daughter lawfully in marriage and with this escape the snares of the devil, who desired by a tainted gain, or even without it, to increase my great ruin."

Having prayed thus to the Lord and having thanked Him for His goodness, this man celebrated the wedding of his second daughter. Hoping in God, the father nourished undoubting hope that He would also grant a lawful husband to the third daughter, again secretly giving by a beneficent hand the gold necessary for it. In order to learn who brought gold to him, and whence, the father did not sleep for many nights, watching for his benefactor and desiring to see him. Not much time passed when the awaited benefactor appeared. The servant of Christ, Nicholas, quietly came also a third time and, having stopped at the usual place, threw in the same window a similar sack of gold, and immediately hurried to his home. Hearing the clink of the gold thrown in the window, the man ran after the servant of God as rapidly as possible. Having caught up with him and recognizing him, because it was impossible not to know the saint by his virtues and illustrious origin, the man fell at his feet, kissing them and calling the saint a deliverer, a helper, and a savior of souls which came to the edge of ruin.

"If," said he, "the Lord great in mercy had not raised me up through thy generosity, then I, an unfortunate father, already long ago would be lost together with my daughters in the fire of Sodom. Now we are saved through thee and delivered from a horrible fall into sin."

And yet many similar words he tearfully said to the saint. Just after raising him from the earth, the holy servant of God took from him an oath that during his life he would tell no one about what had happened to him. Telling him yet many things to his profit, the saint dismissed him to his home.

St. Nicholas of Myra, commemorated 6/19 December

Prayer is an uplifting of the mind to God or a petitioning of God for what is fitting. How then did it happen that our Lord offered up prayer in the case of Lazarus, and at the hour of His passion? For His holy mind was in no need either of any uplifting towards God, since it had been once and for all united in subsistence with the God Word, or of any petitioning of God.

For Christ is one. But it was because He appropriated to Himself our personality and took our impress on Himself, and became an example for us, and taught us to ask of God and strain towards Him, and guided us through His own holy mind in the way that leads up to God. For just as He endured the passion, achieving for our sakes a triumph over it, so also He offered up prayer, guiding us, as I said, in the way that leads up to God...

St. John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, 3.24 (68)

St. John of Damascus, commemorated 4/17 December

troparion and icon at: <http://www.comeandseeicons.com/j/mdg03.htm>

a word from the desert

Abba Zeno said, "If a man wants God to hear his prayer quickly, then before he prays for anything else, even his own soul, when he stands and stretches out his hands towards God, he must pray with all his heart for his enemies. Through this action God will hear everything that he asks."

Abba James said: "Just as a lamp lights up a dark room, so the fear of God, when it penetrates the heart of a man illuminates him, teaching him all the virtues and commandments of God."

Abba Silvanus and his disciple Zacharias went to a certain monastery one day. They were given something to eat a little before taking the road. When they got outside his disciple found some water beside the path and wanted to drink. The old man said to him, "Zacharias, it is a fast day."

The latter said to him, "But, Father, have we not eaten?" The old man said to him, "What we have eaten came through charity but, my child, let us keep our own fast."

I once asked a very experienced father how humility is achieved through obedience. This was his answer: "A wisely obedient man, even if he is able to raise the dead, to have the gift of tears, to be free from conflict, will nevertheless judge that this happened through the prayer of his spiritual father; and so he remains a stranger and an alien to empty presumption. For how could he take pride in something that, by his reckoning, is due to the effort not of himself but of his father?"

The Story of the Eat'n Park Christmas Star Commercial

It's hard to believe that December is here and the holidays are already upon us. While there are busy schedules and stress that sometimes come along with this time of year, there are also long-beloved traditions that we look forward to all year long.

One long-running tradition here at Eat'n Park is our cherished Christmas Star commercial. Every year, we are moved by the comments we hear about this classic spot. Many of you have told us that it is what gets you in the holiday spirit, and that it reminds you of what the holidays are all about. We've even heard that the commercial has been referenced in Christmas Eve sermons!

This year marks the 26th anniversary of the commercial – and because it's so timeless, it's hard to believe that it has been around for so long. And just how did this classic come to be?

It all started in early 1982. Eat'n Park was just beginning to blossom into the family restaurant chain that you're now familiar with, and the company was prospering. Our CEO at the time, Jim Broadhurst (who recently retired), wanted to create a holiday card on video to thank the city of Pittsburgh for their support of Eat'n Park.

So, Jim charged Ketchum, our ad agency at the time, with creating a message that would "last for 20 years." Easy, right? Craig Otto, then a young Art Director, and Cathy Bowen, a fledgling Copy Writer at the time, lead the project. The pair worked for 3 weeks to generate over 30 ideas, none of which were met with approval. Eventually, they hit upon the idea of an animated commercial, but they still weren't sure where they were going with it.

One Sunday shortly thereafter, Craig decided to come into the office. He sketched out a star, a traditional holiday image, and then stopped. "How does the star get to the top of the tree?" He played around with a few ideas until deciding that, of course, the star would need some help from the tree itself. In a fateful coincidence, Cathy had also decided to come in to the office that Sunday. So, while Craig worked out the illustrations, Cathy devised a simple, yet perfect sentiment to wrap up the commercial.

Jim immediately loved the spot, and an ageless favorite was born. Even better, the commercial has outlasted his original expectations. The idea of the relationship between the tree and the star illustrates a timeless holiday lesson – by helping another, you’re helping yourself, and you’re making the world a better place.

So, from everyone here at Eat’n Park, here’s hoping that the special lift you get this holiday season lasts all year long!

A St. Nicholas Day Reflection

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

The Orthodox Church’s main hymn (troparion/apolytikion) for the feast of St. Nicholas of Myra is the general hymn for all of the Church’s holy bishops. As such, for example, it is sung the day after the feast of St. Nicholas for the celebration of St. Ambrose of Milan. This hymn tells us what a Christian bishop (and, by extension, also a presbyter) ought to be for his people. And so it also tells us how all Christians should be.

The song begins by telling us that “the truth of things” reveals a real Christian pastor “to his flock” as three things.

First, “the truth of things” reveals the bishop (or presbyter) as a “canon of faith.” This means that the holy pastor incarnates God’s Gospel in Jesus Christ in a living and vital way in absolutely everything he is, says and does. He not only “rightly divides (or distributes) the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15), but he himself is a living “rule” and “norm” for everyone about what they should know and believe, and how they should be and behave as Christians.

Second, “the truth of things” manifests the bishop (or presbyter) as an “icon of meekness.” This means that the pastor learns from Christ, the Good Shepherd, who said “learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matthew 11:29) And having so learned, the pastor becomes a living pattern and image to his people about Christ-like meekness which, according to the saints, is a divine quality that no creature can adequately comprehend or explain. This meekness is the ability to express, exemplify and incarnate God’s Gospel in Jesus Christ in a clear, sound, true, sober and gentle manner, without anger, annoyance, irritation or aggression in any way. It is to be and to act like Christ himself: to affirm people’s freedom, to safeguard their dignity and to instruct them by example.

Third, “the truth of things” reveals the bishop (or presbyter) as a “teacher of self-control.” Self-control is how the Greek word *enkrateia* (in Slavonic *vozderzhaniye*) is translated into English in the RSV Bible, as, for example, as the final virtue in St. Paul’s listing of “the fruit of the Holy Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22) In the KJV Bible this word is

translated as temperance. Sometimes in English translations of ascetical writings the word is rendered as self-discipline or self-limitation, or as abstinence or continence. Sometimes it is rendered as spiritual freedom.

So the Christian pastor is a canon, icon and teacher for his flock. He is a canon of faith, an icon of meekness, and a teacher of self-control.

Two other things are then proclaimed in the hymn about the holy pastor.

The first is that "through humility" the good pastor acquires "high things". The word humility (in Greek *tapeinosis*) means lowliness, emptiness, powerlessness according to the flesh. It means that a person has nothing his own: no knowledge, wisdom, power or authority of any kind. Humble people understand that everything is a gift and a grace, and as such, they live by God, and not themselves. They realize that none of their words, actions, powers or properties are their own, to do with as they please. Humble people have the ability to see themselves not merely as the same as everyone else, especially the lowest and weakest, but they view themselves before God as beneath every creature. Thus they are completely devoid of conceit, arrogance, lust of power, vanity, vainglory and pride. The Lord Jesus Christ joined humility (*tapeinosis*) with meekness, when he said "Learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart (*tapeinos en kardia*)."

The second proclamation about the saintly pastor is that "through poverty" he acquires "rich things." He becomes wealthy in the things of God by emptying himself, without exception, of all things earthly. In this sense the bishop (or presbyter) possesses nothing at all of his own. He is not an owner in any way. He is rather, as Holy Scripture says, a "slave" (*doulos*), a "servant" (*diakonos*) and a "steward" (*oikonomos*).

The word bishop (in Greek *episkopos*), which literally means overseer or supervisor, was the title in an ancient household (*oikos*) for the chief slave. The "epi-skopos" was the head servant and first steward who "over-saw" and "super-vised" the work of all the other slaves, servants and stewards. The "episkopos" spoke in the Master's name, held the Master's authority, wielded the Master's power, cared for the Master's properties, guarded the Master's possessions, directed the Master's services and distributed the Master's goods. But he was not the Master himself!

Thus, in the memorable saying of St. Gregory the Great, the Christian bishop (or presbyter) is the chief "servus servorum Dei," the preeminent "servant of the servants of God" in the household of God.

In reflecting on the main hymn for St Nicholas and all Christian bishops, we cannot help but recall the words of Holy Scripture about the Church's bishops and presbyters.

For a bishop (episkopos), as God's steward (oikonomos), must be blameless, must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or an active alcoholic or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and to confute those who contradict it. (Titus 1.7-9; See Also 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 4:11-16)

So I exhort the elders (presvyterous) among you, as a fellow elder (sympresvyteros) and a witness (martys) of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Pastor the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight (episkope) not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples (typoi) to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd (archpastor/archipoimenos) is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

The hymn to St. Nicholas, and to all holy bishops, concludes with the plea: "O Father Hierarch Nicholas, pray to Christ our God that our souls may be saved." "The truth of things" on this holy day clearly reveals what God wills for us, and for our Orthodox Church in America, for our souls to be saved.

Fr. Thomas Hopko
St. Nicholas Day
2007

a word from the desert

Abba Eupreprius said, "Knowing that God is faithful and mighty, have faith in Him and you will share what is His. If you are downcast, then you do not believe. We all believe that He is mighty and we believe that all is possible to Him. As for your own affairs, behave with faith in Him about them too, for He is able to work miracles in you also."

During a visit to a mental asylum, I asked the Director how do you determine whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

'Well,' said the Director, 'we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub.'

'Oh, I understand,' I said. 'A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup.'

'No.' said the Director, 'A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?'

a word from the desert

Abba Poemen said that a brother who lived with some other brothers asked Abba Bessarion, "What ought I to do?" The old man said to him, "Keep silence and do not always be comparing yourself with others."