



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

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, Father Anthony Dimitri, 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, Rachele, 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, Bryan, Ben Bonifield—a classmate of Alex, Peter Special, Amy Boe, Doris Artman, Maureen Sams, 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 Icon Wall Calendars & Envelopes are still available downstairs.

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, January 18 **Divine Liturgy & BLESSING OF WATER STRICT FAST 10:30 AM**
31ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
MARTYRS THEOPEMPTUS-BISHOP OF NICOMEDIA & THEONAS, VENERABLE SYNCLETIA OF ALEXANDRIA, PROPHET MICAH, VIRGIN APOLLONIA OF EGYPT, VENERABLE FORISTIRIUS & MENAS, VENERABLE GREGORY-MONK OF CRETE

Tone 6
1 Timothy 4:5-8
Mark 1:1-8
Litany in Blessed Memory of Mary Pekich—40 Days—Fr. Bob

Monday, January 19 **Obednitza & House Blessings** **10:30 AM**
HOLY THEOPHANY—BAPTISM OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
Titus 2:11-14
Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday, January 25 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
32ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY
MARTYR TATIANA OF ROME & COMPANIONS, MARTYR MARTIUS OF MAURETANIA, VENERABLE EUPRAXIA OF TABENNA IN EGYPT

Tone 7
Ephesians 4:7-13
Matthew 4:12-17
Litany in Blessed Memory of Helen Pytlak—40 Days—Fr. Bob

Sunday, February 1	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
33RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, ZACCHAEUS SUNDAY, VENERABLE MACARIUS THE GREAT OF EGYPT, VIRGIN-MARTYR EUPHRASIA OF NICOMEDIA, VENERABLE MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, SAINT ARSENIUS-BISHOP OF KERKYRA IN CYPRUS, TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF SAINT GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, SAINT MARK-ARCHBISHOP OF EPHESUS, VENERABLE MACARIUS THE SYTLITE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, VENERABLE MACARIUS-DEACON OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, BLESSED THEODORE OF NOVGOROD-FOOL-FOR-CHRIST, SAINT ANTHONY THE HERMIT OF GEORGIA, VENERABLE MACARIUS THE ROMAN OF NOVGOROD		
<i>Tone 8</i>		
1 Timothy 4:9-15		
Luke 19:1-10		
<i>Litany in Blessed Memory of Milton G. Chicka, Daniel Pysh, Sara Chicka, & Mary Lokie—Fr. Bob</i>		

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 18 JANUARY 2009

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

**MARTYRS THEOPEMPTUS-BISHOP OF NICOMEDIA & THEONAS,
VENERABLE SYNCLETIA OF ALEXANDRIA, PROPHET MICAH, VIRGIN
APOLLONIA OF EGYPT, VENERABLE FORISTIRIUS & MENAS,
VENERABLE GREGORY-MONK OF CRETE**

TROPARION—TONE 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave, Seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord who didst rise from the dead: 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 6

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,
Raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His might hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race.
He is the Savior of all,
The Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 6

READER: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
PEOPLE: **O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.**
READER: To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me.
PEOPLE: **O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.**
READER: O Lord, save Thy people.

PEOPLE: And bless Thine inheritance.

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 6

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.

He will say to the Lord: My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in whom I trust.

The medicine and great secret for children's progress is humility. Trust in God gives perfect security. God is everything. No one can say that I am everything. That cultivates egotism. God desires us to lead children to humility. Without humility neither we nor children will achieve anything. You need to be careful when you encourage children. You shouldn't say to a child, 'You'll succeed, you're great, you're young, you're fearless, you're perfect!' This is not good for the child. You can tell the child to pray, and say, 'The talents you have, have been given to you by God; pray and God will give you strength to cultivate them and in that way you will succeed. God will give you His grace.' That is the best way. Children should learn to seek God's help in everything. *+Elder Porphyrios*

Praise is harmful to children. What does Scripture say? O my people, those who call you blessed lead you astray, and pervert the path of your feet. The person who praises us leads us astray and perverts the paths of our life. How wise God's words are! Praise does not prepare children for any difficulties in life and they grow up badly adjusted; they lose their way and in the end they become failures. Now the world has gone hay-wire. Little children are constantly being praised. We are told not to scold children, not to go against their will and not to impose on them. The child learns to expect this, however, and is unable to deal maturely with even the slightest difficulty. As soon as it encounters opposition, it is defeated and drained of all strength. *+Elder Porphyrios*

With children what is required is a lot of prayer and few words. All things are achieved through prayer, silence and love. Have you understood the effects of prayer? Love in prayer, love in Christ. That is what is truly beneficial. As long as you love your children with human love — which is often pathological — the more they will be mixed-up, and the more their behavior will be negative. But when the love between you and towards your children is holy and Christian love, then you will have no problem. The sanctity of the parents saves the children. For this to come about, divine grace must act on the souls of the parents. No one can be sanctified on his own. The same divine grace will then illuminate, warm and animate the souls of the children. People often telephone me from abroad and ask me about their children and

about other matters. Today a mother phoned me from Milan and asked me how she should behave towards her children. What I said to her was this:

'Pray, and when you have to, speak to your children with love. Lots of prayer and few words. Lots of prayer and few words for everyone. We mustn't become an annoyance, but rather pray secretly and then speak, and God will let us know in our hearts whether the others have accepted what we have said. If not, we won't speak. We will simply pray mystically. Because if we speak we become an annoyance and make others react or even infuriate them. That is why it is better to speak mystically to the heart of others through secret prayer rather than to their ears.' *+Elder Porphyrios*

Pray and then speak. That's what to do with your children. If you are constantly lecturing them, you'll become tiresome and when they grow up they'll feel a kind of oppression. Prefer prayer and speak to them through prayer. Speak to God and God will speak to their hearts. That is, you shouldn't give guidance to your children with a voice that they hear with their ears. You may do this too, but above all you should speak to God about your children. Say, "Lord Jesus Christ, give Your light to my children. I entrust them to You. You gave them to me, but I am weak and unable to guide them, so, please, illuminate them." And God will speak to them and they will say to themselves, "Oh dear, I shouldn't have upset mommy by doing that!" And with the grace of God this will come from their heart.' *+Elder Porphyrios*

The sanctity of the parents is the best way of bringing up children in the Lord. We must see God in the faces of our children and give God's love to our children. The children should learn to pray. And in order for children to pray they must have in them the blood of praying parents. This is where some people make the mistake of saying, 'Since the parents are devout and pray, meditate on Holy Scripture and bring up their children (Ephesians 6:4) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it is natural that they will become good children.' But nevertheless we see the very opposite result on account of coercion. *+Elder Porphyrios*

"Two brothers went to market to sell the things they had made. The first fell into fornication as soon as he separated from his companion. He met his brother who said to him, 'My brother, let us go to our cell', but he replied, 'I am not going'. The other persisted, saying, 'My brother, why not?' He said, 'Because when you had left me, I fell into fornication.' His brother, wishing to win him over, said to him, 'The same thing happened to me, too, when you left me; come, let us go and do strict penance and God will forgive us.' They went to tell the old men what had happened to them, and the old men gave them commandments for doing penance. Then one of the brothers did penance for the other as though he had sinned himself. But God, seeing the affliction he was giving himself for love's sake, made known to one of the old men,

after some days, that because of the great love of the brother who had not sinned, he had forgiven the one who had sinned. See what it is to give one's soul for one's brother."—From the Desert Fathers.

The Athonite Father N., and unfortunate man who had no knowledge of divine experience like that of St. Silouan, said to a visiting person, "I wonder why they go to him. I guess he does not read anything."

"He does not read anything but he practices everything, unlike those who read a lot but do not do a thing," the visitor replied.

from An Athonite Gerontikon

From: alexandra chakos <atchakos04@msn.com>

Subject: Sergio Valaam

To:

Date: Saturday, January 10, 2009, 9:58 PM

Dear Friends and Family,

I am writing to tell you of some exciting news and to ask for your assistance.

On Monday, January 12, we will be awaiting the arrival in Pittsburgh of two nuns, Madre Ines and Madre Maria, from the Hogar Rafael Ayau orphanage in Guatemala, and five-month-old Sergio Valaam.


Only three days after his birth, Sergio was abandoned at the orphanage by his mother. She did not have the means to care for a child with a disability. Sergio was born with a corneal opacity in his right eye. When our Mission Team visited the Guatemalan orphanage in December, our hearts went out to little Sergio as we watched him struggle to comprehend the world with his limited vision. That's when two of our team members, Cynthia Raftis and Demetria Pappas, went to work, arranging to bring Sergio to the U.S. for medical treatment.

Although doctors have advised us that a corneal transplant is not an option for Sergio, we feel that a thorough medical examination will lead us to a procedure that can improve his condition. While several doctors have offered their services free of charge, the cost for the facility, Children's

Hospital, has been estimated at \$6000. Our Holy Cross Philoptochos Society has undertaken to facilitate Sergio's medical treatment, but their funds are limited. Generous individuals have blessed us with all the clothing, shoes, baby equipment, and toys that we need, but I still need your help.

First and foremost, what I ask of you are your fervent prayers for the health and safety of Sergio while he is in our care. Pray, also, that the doctors are able to find a way to help him. Then, from any of you who are able to contribute, I would ask for financial assistance to help defray the medical costs. A donation in any amount would be much appreciated and can be sent to the Holy Cross Agape Fund (123 Gilkeson Road; Pittsburgh, PA 15228), with "Sergio" written on the memo line.

Thank you so much and may God bless you in kind for your prayerful support of little Sergio. Please feel free to forward this email to anyone who may be interested in helping.

With love,
Sandy 

Saint Seraphim of Sarov—January 2/15—Life and Teachings
Bishop Alexander (Mileant)--Translated by Nicholas and Natalia Semyanko

Contents: Life of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Teachings of the Saint: About God. The Reasons for Christ's Coming. Faith. Hope. Love for God. Love for Neighbor. Alms. Non-Judgment and Forgiveness of Offenses. Penitence. Fasting. Patience and Humility. Illnesses. Spiritual Peace. Feats. Purity of Heart. Identifying Movements of the Heart. Excessive Care. Sorrow. The Active and the Contemplative Life. The Light of Christ. Acquiring the Holy Spirit.

St. Seraphim of Sarov

St. Seraphim (born Prohor Moshnin) was born in 1759 to a merchant family in Kursk. At the age of 10, he became seriously ill. During the course of his illness, he saw the Mother of God in his sleep, who promised to heal him. Several days later there was a religious procession in Kursk with the locally revered miracle-working icon of the Mother of God. Due to bad weather, the procession took an abbreviated route past the

house of the Moshnin family. After his mother put Seraphim up to the miracle-working image, he recovered rapidly. While at a young age, he needed to help his parents with their shop, but business had little appeal for him. Young Seraphim loved to read the lives of the saints, to attend church and to withdraw into seclusion for prayer.

At the age of 18, Seraphim firmly decided to become a monk. His mother blessed him with a large copper crucifix, which he wore over his clothing all his life. After this, he entered the Sarov monastery as a novice.

From day one in the monastery, exceptional abstinence from food and slumber were the distinguishing features of his life. He ate once a day, and little. On Wednesdays and Fridays he ate nothing. After asking the blessing of his starets (i.e., a spiritual elder), he began to withdraw often into the forest for prayer and religious contemplation. He became severely ill again soon after, and was forced to spend most of the course of the next three years lying down.

St. Seraphim was once again healed by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Who appeared to him accompanied by several saints. Pointing to the venerable Seraphim, The Holy Virgin said to the apostle John the Theologian: "He is of our lineage." Then, by touching his side with Her staff, She healed him.

His taking of the monastic vows occurred in 1786, when he was 27 years old. He was given the name Seraphim, which in Hebrew means "fiery," or "burning." He was soon made a hierodeacon. He justified his name by his extraordinarily burning prayer. He spent all of his time, save for the very shortest of rests, in church. Through such prayer and the labors of religious services, Seraphim became worthy to see angels, both serving and singing in church.

During the liturgy on Holy Thursday, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the form of the Son of man, proceeding into the Church with the Heavenly host and blessing those praying. The saint could not speak for a long time after being struck by this vision.

In 1793, St. Seraphim was ordained a hieromonk, after which he served every day and received Holy Communion for a year. St. Seraphim then began to withdraw into his "farther hermitage" — the forest wilderness about five kilometers from Sarov Monastery. He achieved great perfection at this time. Wild animals — bears, rabbits, wolves, foxes and others — came to the hut of the ascetic. The staritsa (i.e., eldress) of the Diveevo monastery, Matrona Plescheeva, witnessed how St. Seraphim fed a bear that had come to him out of his hand: "The face of the great starets was particularly miraculous. It was joyous and bright, as that of an angel," she described. While living in this little hermitage of his, St. Seraphim once suffered greatly at the

hands of robbers. Although he was physically very strong and was holding an axe at the time, St. Seraphim did not resist them. In answer to their threats and their demands for money, he lay his axe down on the ground, crossed his arms on his chest and obediently gave himself up to them. They began to beat him on the head with the handle of his own axe. Blood began to pour out of his mouth and ears, and he fell unconscious. After that they began to hit him with a log, trampled him under foot, and dragged him along the ground. They stopped beating him only when they had decided that he had died. The only treasure which the robbers found in his cell was the icon of the Mother of God of Deep Emotion (Ymileniye), before which he always prayed. When, after some time, the robbers were caught and brought to justice, the holy monk interceded on their behalf before the judge. After the beating, St. Seraphim remained hunched over for the rest of his life.

Soon after this began the "pillar" period of the life of St. Seraphim, when he spent his days on a rock near his little hermitage, and nights in the thick of the forest. He prayed with his arms raised to heaven, almost without respite. This feat of his continued for a thousand days.

Because of a special vision of the Mother of God he was given toward the end of his life, St. Seraphim took upon himself the feat of becoming an elder. He began to admit everyone who came to him for advice and direction. Many thousands of people from all walks of life and conditions began to visit the elder now, who enriched them from his spiritual treasures, which he had acquired by many years of efforts. Everyone saw St. Seraphim as meek, joyful, pensively sincere. He greeted all with the words: "My joy!" To many he advised: "Acquire a peaceful spirit, and around you thousands will be saved." No matter who came to him, the starets bowed to the ground before all, and, in blessing, kissed their hands. He did not need the visitors to tell about themselves, as he could see what each had on their soul. He also said, "Cheerfulness is not a sin. It drives away weariness, for from weariness there is sometimes dejection, and there is nothing worse than that."

"Oh, if you only knew" he once said to a monk, "what joy, what sweetness awaits a righteous soul in Heaven! You would decide in this mortal life to bear any sorrows, persecutions and slander with gratitude. If this very cell of ours was filled with worms, and these worms were to eat our flesh for our entire life on earth, we should agree to it with total desire, in order not to lose, by any chance, that heavenly joy which God has prepared for those who love Him."

The miraculous transfiguration of the starets' face was described by a close admirer and follower of St. Seraphim — Motovilov. This happened during the winter, on a cloudy day. Motovilov was sitting on a stump in the woods; St. Seraphim was squatting

across from him and telling his pupil the meaning of a Christian life, explaining for what we Christians live on earth.

"It is necessary that the Holy Spirit enter our heart. Everything good that we do, that we do for Christ, is given to us by the Holy Spirit, but prayer most of all, which is always available to us," he said.

"Father," answered Motovilov, "how can I see the grace of the Holy Spirit? How can I know if He is with me or not?"

St. Seraphim began to give him examples from the lives of the saints and apostles, but Motovilov still did not understand. The elder then firmly took him by the shoulder and said to him, "We are both now, my dear fellow, in the Holy Spirit." It was as if Motovilov's eyes had been opened, for he saw that the face of the elder was brighter than the sun. In his heart Motovilov felt joy and peace, in his body a warmth as if it were summer, and a fragrance began to spread around them. Motovilov was terrified by the unusual change, but especially by the fact that the face of the starets shone like the sun. But St. Seraphim said to him, "Do not fear, dear fellow. You would not even be able to see me if you yourself were not in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord for His mercy toward us."

Thus Motovilov understood, in mind and heart, what the descent of the Holy Spirit and His transfiguration of a person meant.

The days of the commemoration of St. Seraphim are August 1 and January 15 (July 19 and January 2 by the church calendar).

Troparion of St. Seraphim, Tone 4

Thou didst love Christ from thy youth, O blessed one,/ and longing to work for Him alone thou didst struggle in the wilderness with constant prayer and labor./ With penitent heart and great love for Christ thou wast favored by the Mother of God./ Wherefore we cry to thee:/ Save us by thy prayers, O Seraphim our righteous Father.

Kontakion of St. Seraphim, Tone 2

Having left the beauty of the world and what is corrupt in it, O saint,/ thou didst settle in Sarov Monastery./ And having lived there an angelic life,/ thou wast for many the way to salvation./ Wherefore Christ has glorified thee, O Father Seraphim,/ and has enriched thee with the gift of healing

and miracles./ And so we cry to thee:/ Rejoice, O Seraphim, our righteous Father.

Sunset at the North Pole...awesome!

e-mail from Shelley Hill in Alaska



This is the sunset at the North Pole with the moon at its closest point. This is a scene you will probably never get to see in person, so take a moment and enjoy God at work at the North Pole.

And, you also see the sun **below** the moon!