



## Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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## NATIVITY FAST—SAINT PHILIP'S FAST—ADVENT

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Bishop Robert, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John Nakonachny, Deacon Dennis Lapushanski, Protopresbyter Peter Hotrovich, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Joshua Agosto and his family, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George & Mika Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Doris Artman, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Charles & Esther Holupka, Wanda Mefford, Lynn (Bush) Gill, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, Julie Eiler, Glenn Miller, Vince Ferro, Michael Pawlyshyn, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie— young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—21-year-old with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Woloschak, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Pete Niederberger, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy,

Diane McDaniel, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Tony Butecoff, Carl & Margaret Reed, Theodore Demopoulos, Jillian Bowman, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Doug Smith [Millie Kerr's son-in-law], Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], Mel & Charlotte Malik, Paula Pasquinelli, David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, June Miller, Corey Guich, Monica Salvatore, Glenda Tickerhoof, Robert Vangrin, Juliana Leis, Susan "Billie" Mason, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, LuAnne [Mike Horvath's daughter], Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [child with cerebral palsy], Thomas Stutzman, Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Jamie Gardner, Patrick, Linda Morris, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**PRAYER LIST: Please help update our prayer list. If you or someone you know no longer needs to be on the prayer list or if there is someone who needs to be on the list please let Father Bob know. Remember—Prayers are ALWAYS FREE! Thank you!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men 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 Debbie Paouncic's class. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP!

**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 ask 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 30** Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM  
**THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS;  
HOLY PROPHET DANIEL & 3 HOLY YOUTHS-ANANIAS, AZARIAS, & MISHAEL;  
SAINT DANIEL THE CONFESSOR [IN SCHEMA STEPHEN] OF SPAIN & EGYPT**

*Tone 5*

Colossians 3:4-11; Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Luke 14:16-24; Luke 11:47-12:1

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 06** Obednitsa followed by Great Compline  
10:30 AM

**THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY;  
EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST; NUN-MARTYR EUGENIA OF ROME; SAINT  
ANTIOCH-MONK OF PALESTINE; SAINT VITIMIONUS OF SCETE**

*Tone 6*

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40; Hebrews 1:1-12

Matthew 1:1-25; Luke 2:1-20

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Stephen Kuzman & Nicholas Vetosky—Fr. Bob  
Parastas in Blessed Memory of John Holupka—Mike Holupka*

Holy Supper for Nativity Eve 1:00 PM

**MONDAY, JANUARY 07** Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM  
**NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST  
THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI: MELCHIOR, CASPAR, & BALTHASAR**

**\*\*\*Page 221 in the black Divine Liturgy Book\*\*\***

Galatians 4:4-7

Matthew 2:1-12

**JANUARY 7 THROUGH JANUARY 18 IS A FAST FREE PERIOD—SVIATKI!**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 13** Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom  
10:30 AM

**THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER THE  
NATIVITY; SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY; SAINT MELANIA THE YOUNGER-NUN  
OF ROME; SAINT PETER MOHYLA-METROPOLITAN OF KIEV**

*Tone 7*

Galatians 1:11-19; I Timothy 4:5-8

Matthew 2:13-23; Mark 1:1-8

**BULLETIN INSERT FOR 30 DECEMBER 2012  
THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF THE  
HOLY FOREFATHERS; HOLY PROPHET DANIEL & 3 HOLY  
YOUTHS-ANANIAS, AZARIAS, & MISHAEL; SAINT DANIEL  
THE CONFESSOR [IN SCHEMA STEPHEN] OF SPAIN & EGYPT**

**TROPARION—TONE 5**

Let the faithful praise and worship the Word,  
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit;  
Born for our salvation from the Virgin;  
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,  
To endure death,  
And to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection!

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

### **KONTAKION—TONE 5**

Thou didst descend into Hell, O my Savior,  
Shattering its gates as almighty;  
Resurrecting the dead as Creator,  
And destroying the sting of death.  
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse,  
O Lover of Man,  
And we all cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 5**

**READER:** Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.

**PEOPLE: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.**

**READER:** Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

**PEOPLE: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.**

**READER:** Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us...

**PEOPLE: From this generation forever.**

### **ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 5**

I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.

Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever, and my truth will be prepared in the heavens.



## **BSA Chief visits Newtown, presents Spirit of the Eagle Award to Tiger Cubs' parents** *20 December 2012*

In a touching gesture, the two [Tiger Cubs killed in last week's shootings](#) at Sandy Hook Elementary School have been awarded the Spirit of the Eagle Award.

BSA Chief Scout Executive Wayne Brock and other top professionals presented the families of Chase Kowalski and Benjamin Wheeler with the award, "an honorary, posthumous special recognition for a registered youth member who has lost his or her life in an accident or through illness."

Wayne shared with the BSA family some details from his emotional visit. I can't imagine the overwhelming heartache he witnessed as he attended three wakes and a funeral for Tiger Cubs Chase and Benjamin, as well as for two girls who were sisters of Cub Scouts in Newtown's Pack 170.

The photo above, [shared by CBS Reporter Paula Reid](#), shows Scouts saluting 6-year-old Benjamin at one of those events. What a powerful image. (**Note:** *Paula tells me the Scouts will likely be featured in her story on [The CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley](#) at 6:30 p.m. Eastern today, Thursday.*)

Take a moment to read Wayne's heartfelt letter below. In it, you'll find details on the outpouring of support that's already been felt in Newtown — phone calls, e-mails, and letters from Scouting families from all over the world.

And Wayne shares info on how to send supportive cards and letters or make a donation to a memorial fund established by the Connecticut Yankee Council.

Here's the letter:

### **Wayne Brock's Letter**

To: National Board, Advisory Council, and our BSA family:

As I write this message, I am on an airplane returning from Newtown, Connecticut, where along with Scouters from the Connecticut Yankee Council, I attended three wakes and a funeral for the two Cub Scouts and two sisters of Cub Scouts who lost their lives at Sandy Hook Elementary School. We were all overcome with emotion. The outpouring of support was

wonderful. People waited in line for hours in the cold to express their condolences and support for the families of all the children lost on that tragic day.

The council president, Doug Machin, shared with families that the council established a memorial fund in the names of their loved ones and that the council has received phone calls, emails, and letters from Scouting families from all over the world.

The council director of field service, Jon Pleva, presented an American flag to the families of Cub Scouts Chase Kowalski and Benjamin Wheeler, and I presented each boy's family the Spirit of the Eagle Award on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America. I can tell you, the families were very touched and appreciative.

During times like this, we all want to do something. We feel helpless. The Scouters of Newtown understand this and asked me to express their appreciation to you. Right now, what they need most is time to heal as a community. In the weeks ahead, the Scouts and Scouters of Newtown will convene to determine if there is anything more our Scouting family can do for them. For now, our thoughts, prayers, and contributions to the memorial fund are important. If interested, donations, cards, and letters can be sent to the Pack 170 Memorial Fund, c/o Connecticut Yankee Council, P.O. Box 32, Milford, CT 06460.

I believe we can take comfort in knowing that even during the sad and disturbing times we experience in the face of national tragedies, the Boy Scouts of America is among the constants that young people and their families can look to for guidance and support. We need strong shoulders, to be sure, to bear such a burden, but it is a load that we have carried honorably and well for more than a century. Our nation's young people depend on the values we teach, and we will never let them down. I am so proud to be working shoulder to shoulder with each of you in service to the youth of America.

— Wayne Brock

*The quotation below dovetails nicely with Dee Pennock's writings based on patristic teachings in her book **God's Path to Sanity**, published by Light & Life. This is a down-to-earth, practical text on the teaching about the passions and how to overcome them. After reading the book awhile back, it so spoke to me that I distilled the admonitions found there into a prayer that can be used routinely (which follows this quote). Perhaps others will find it helpful as well. Pres. Candace*

I see today everyone, young and old, tends to justify everything with a rather satanic rationalization. Everything is interpreted for them by the

devil, and so they find themselves outside of reality. Self-justification is a satanic interpretation of reality. *Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain (Athos)*

## **GUIDANCE FROM THE PATH TO SANITY**

*Who can tell how often we offend? O, cleanse me of my hidden faults (Ps 19:12):*

Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from pride and give me self-knowledge.

Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me and deliver me from self-importance.

Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from the pride of self-importance and thinking I know best and give me self-knowledge.

*And, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? (Lk 6:46)*

- Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from self-justification and show me my sin.
- Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from self-love and vainglory and give me love.
- Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from believing and obeying idols.
- Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from anger (and hatred) and give me love.
- Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from hatred of life and self-destruction.
- Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from self-importance and willfulness.
- Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me and deliver me from willfulness and anger.
- Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me and deliver me from willfulness; and bring me into accepting, desiring and doing Your holy will.

*Every time someone bothers you, pray,*

- Lord Jesus Christ forgive me and show me my sin.

Sunday Sermon--11<sup>th</sup> Luke—Sunday of the Forefathers--“Excuses Sunday”  
(Delivered by Fr. Demetri Tsigas @ St. Katherine on the 16th of December, 2012)

**In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.**

You are invited. You are invited to the greatest party ever thrown—at any time, in any place, for any occasion. It is the wedding feast of God for His bride, the Church. Each of us makes up that Church. Therefore, we are not only honored guests but collectively the very bride of God. We are the whole reason for this incredible feast.

Let me provide a little background for today’s gospel reading. In antiquity, preparations for a feast were an inexact science. There were no

well-stocked supermarkets, microwave ovens or commercial kitchens like we have today. The feast was ready when all the supplies could be found and when the cooking and preparations were completed. Therefore, two invitations were sent out. The first was to invite guests to the party and to get a head count. The second went out when all was finally ready.

In today's gospel reading, at the first invitation, all the invited guests responded that they would attend. However, when the servants went out with the second invitation, all these honored guests had an excuse, something more pressing that prevented them from joining in the feast.

Can you imagine being the host of such a party? You invite all your friends, they all tell you they wouldn't miss it for the world, then nobody shows up on the day of the event. Think about how sad and angry you would be, totally dejected at being so rejected. All the time, money and work you put into this event gone to waste.

The surface and first meaning of today's gospel lesson is about how the Jews were called by God through Moses and the prophets—this is the first invitation. However, when God sends His Son, Jesus Christ, with the second invitation, they all find some excuse not to accept it. So instead of the intended honored guests, God's "chosen people", attending the eternal divine banquet, the final call goes out to all the rest of the world.

The second meaning goes out to each of us. We all know the fourth commandment, to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. We all know that there's no fine print with all kinds of exceptions to this rule. The fine print actually makes a case against all exceptions, a case against all excuses. Yet, we so easily find so many excuses, reasons and rationalizations not to attend.

We have accepted God's first invitation, to believe in Him, and to be baptized in His holy name, that of the Holy Trinity. Yet so often we allow the cares of this life to crowd Him out. Think how this must make Him feel. Think also what the eternal implications are for each us.

In the Orthodox Church, this Sunday before Christmas is referred to as Sunday of the Forefathers. In other churches, the Sunday with today's gospel reading is referred to as "Excuses Sunday" or more accurately "No Excuses Sunday". The sermon often goes something like this.

In order to make it possible for all to attend church next Sunday, we are going to have a special "No Excuse Sunday". Cots and pillows will be placed in the Narthex for those who say, "Sunday is my only day to sleep in." Visine will be made available for those with tired eyes from staying up too late watching television or being out too late on Saturday night. For those who think, "The roof would cave in if ever I came to church", heavy duty steel construction hard hats will be provided. For those who think the church is too cold, blankets will be provided, as well as fans for those who



think the church is too hot. Hearing aids will be provided for those who think the priest speaks too softly, and cotton for those who think he speaks too loudly. Score cards will be provided for those who wish to list how many hypocrites are present, to judge the sermon, the chanter or the choir. Of course the score cards have already been marked once with an "X" for you.

We will make arrangements for relatives and friends to be present for all those who like to go visiting on Sunday mornings. Lattes will be provided at coffee hour for those who prefer to do their Sunday morning "devotionals" at Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts. Takeout dinners will be provided for those who say they cannot go to church and cook dinner too. Treadmills will be provided for those who like to go for a run or a walk on Sunday mornings. A putting and driving range will be set up for those who may prefer to go for a round of golf. Two other nature sections will be set up, one with a wooded scene, the other with sand and a beach scene along wave sounds for those who prefer to seek God in nature. Finally, the sanctuary will be decorated with poinsettias, palm leaves and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the church without them – Christmas, Palm & Easter Sunday Christians. Greek Festival signs will be put up for those who only ever come then.

As you can see the excuses can come quite easily if we let them. There's always something we can come up with not to be in God's Holy Temple and worship Him on a Sunday morning.

What if God were only there for us as much as we were there for Him?...what a lonely and hopeless existence that would be. Some Church Fathers have written that our eternal relationship with God is based proportionally on our earthly one. Thus in the afterlife, there is nothing but God. None of the other distractions of this life are present. If we only spend a few minutes a week or for that matter a few seconds a year in God's presence in this life, likewise for all eternity we only get a few second or minutes a week or a year with God. The rest of the time is just empty, hopeless, endless emptiness.

Brothers and sisters, we have all received an incredible invitation. Our loving Lord has sacrificially prepared the most sumptuous banquet ever in the history of the universe. We have all been notified of our invitation by His servants—all is now ready. The table is set with the Flesh and Blood of the Lamb, a divine, mystical and eternal banquet. Do you honestly have the gall to offer an excuse?

Some years ago the Cincinnati Enquirer ran a cartoon for Christmas. In it, Joseph is standing in the manger with Mary and the Christ child. He's holding a telephone. The caption reads, "First the shepherds, now the kings...they'd love to come visit but their cards aren't mailed yet, they're

still getting their Christmas lights up, they spent all morning getting the house cleaned for relatives and they still have a lot of shopping yet to finish up..."

As we near this most joyful celebration, let's be careful not to crowd Christ out of it. He is the ultimate reason not just for the season, but for all things. Take the time to invite Him into your life everyday, to visit and speak with Him. Don't end up excusing yourself from His eternal banquet because of some dumb, petty excuse you'll later regret. Keep Christ firmly at the center of your Christmas celebration.

To God be the glory, now and forever, and to the ages of ages, Amen.

Twelve days before Christmas, around 09:38  
when 20 beautiful children stormed through heaven's gate.  
their smiles were contagious, their laughter filled the air.  
they could hardly believe all the beauty they saw there.  
they were filled with such joy, they didn't know what to say.  
...they remembered nothing of what had happened earlier that day.  
"where are we?" asked a little girl, as quiet as a mouse.  
"this is heaven." declared a small boy. "we're spending Christmas at God's  
house."

when what to their wondering eyes did appear,  
but Jesus, their savior, the children gathered near.  
He looked at them and smiled, and they smiled just the same.  
then He opened His arms and He called them by name.  
and in that moment was joy, that only heaven can bring  
those children all flew into the arms of their King  
and as they lingered in the warmth of His embrace,  
one small girl turned and looked at Jesus' face.  
and as if He could read all the questions she had  
He gently whispered to her, "I'll take care of mom and dad."  
then He looked down on earth, the world far below  
He saw all of the hurt, the sorrow, and woe  
then He closed His eyes and He outstretched His hand,  
"Let My power and presence re-enter this land!"  
"may this country be delivered from the hands of fools"  
"I'm taking back my nation. I'm taking back my schools!"  
then He and the children stood up without a sound.  
"come now my children, let me show you around."  
excitement filled the space, some skipped and some ran.  
all displaying enthusiasm that only a small child can.  
and i heard Him proclaim as He walked out of sight,  
"in the midst of this darkness, I AM STILL THE LIGHT."

**Written by Cameo Smith, Mt. Wolf, PA**

Abba Doulas, the disciple of Abba Bessarion said, "One day when we were walking beside the sea I was thirsty and I said to Abba Bessarion, "Father, I am very thirsty." He said a prayer and said to me, "Drink some of the sea water." The water proved sweet and I drank some. I even poured some into a leather bottle for fear of being thirsty later on. Seeing this, the old man asked me why I was taking some. I said to him, "Forgive me, it is for fear of being thirsty later on." Then the old man said, "God is here, God is everywhere."

A brother who shared a lodging with other brothers asked Abba Bessarion, "What should I do." The old man replied, "Keep silence and do not compare yourself with others."

and finally...

A brother who had sinned was turned out of the church by the priest. Abba Bessarion got up and went with him, saying, "I, too, am a sinner."

*Abba Bessarion, commemorated 6/19 June*

Smoke from wood that is kindling a fire troubles the eyes; but then, the fire gives them light and gladdens them. Similarly, unceasing attentiveness is irksome; but when, invoked in prayer, Jesus draws near, He illumines the heart; for remembrance of Him confers on us spiritual enlightenment and the highest of all blessings. *St. Philotheos of Sinai--9<sup>th</sup> (?) century*

**REMINDER:** As you well know, many of our parishioners have indicated that they no longer drive after dark, so they would not be able to attend our Nativity Compline and Holy Supper. As discussed and agreed upon at Coffee Hour, **we will modify our Nativity Eve celebration schedule as follows, for Sunday, January 6, 2012:**  
**10:30 AM Obednitza with Holy Communion**  
**Followed by Great Compline for the Nativity**  
**About 1 PM we will have our Holy Supper**  
**Monday, January 7, 2012—10:30 AM Nativity Divine Liturgy**  
Please see Father Bob or John Pauncic with any questions...