



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

714 Westmoreland Avenue

PO Box 3

Slickville, PA 15684-0003

[724] 468-5581

www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org

Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

*****FAST FREE WEEK*****

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, 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, Corey Guich, 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, Howard Simpson, Ronald Graham [Evelyn's nephew], Chris, Pastor Ed Bowen, David Hiles, Karen Johnson, Jennifer, Ann Quinn—knee surgery, Cher Mount, and Daria Masur ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

There is no greater love than that a man lays down his life for his neighbor. When you hear someone complaining and you struggle with yourself and do not answer him back with complaints; when you are hurt and bear it patiently, not looking for revenge; then you are laying down your life for your neighbor. Abba Poemen

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, FEBRUARY 24 Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE; HIEROMARTYR BLAISE-BISHOP OF SEBASTE; SAINT THEODORA-WIFE OF EMPEROR THEOPHILUS THE ICONOCLAST

Tone 5

II Timothy 3:10-15

Luke 18:10-14

*******FAST FREE WEEK*******

SUNDAY, MARCH 03 Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON; SAINT LEO THE GREAT-POPE OF ROME; SAINT AGAPITUS-BISHOP OF SYNNAIDA IN PHRYGIA; SAINT FLAVIAN THE CONFESSOR-PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE; SAINT COSMAS-MONK OF YAKHROMSK

Tone 6

I Corinthians 6:12-20

Luke 15:11-32

Litany in Blessed Memory of John Metrick, Mary Smith, Andrew Hanczar, Anna Lawrence, Michael Cicio, Chuck Shumski, Terry Reinhart, Joseph Vangrin, & Frank Riznow—Fr. Bob

THURSDAY, MARCH 07 Slickville Ecumenical Service 7:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church—Father Bob speaking

SUNDAY, MARCH 10 Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM
MEATFARE SUNDAY; SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT; SAINT TARASIIUS-ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Tone 7

I Corinthians 8:8-9:2

Matthew 25:31-46

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Joseph Vangrin—10 years—Ann Quinn

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 24 FEBRUARY 2013

*******FAST-FREE WEEK!*******

**SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE;
HIEROMARTYR BLAISE-BISHOP OF SEBASTE; SAINT
THEODORA-WIFE OF EMPEROR THEOPHILUS THE
ICONOCLAST**

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.

*Today, I share with you the February 14, 2011 posting from John Sanidopoulos' web site Mystagogy on the Orthodox Saint Valentine.
Monday, February 14, 2011*



The Orthodox Saint Valentine

St. Valentine the Hieromartyr (Feast Day - February 14 and July 6)

The ancient martyrology of the Church of Rome marks February 14th as the remembrance of "the martyr Valentine, presbyter of Rome" (Valentinus mean "vigorous" in Latin). Unfortunately the historical data for the saint is incomplete.

The Martyrdom of the Saint in Rome

Saint Valentine lived in Rome in the third century and was a priest who helped the martyrs during the persecution of Emperor Claudius II the Goth. The great virtue and catechetical activities of the saint had become familiar. For this he was arrested and brought before the imperial court.

"Why, Valentine, do you want to be a friend of our enemies and reject our friendship?" asked the emperor.

Then the saint replied "My lord, if you knew the gift of God, you would be happy together with your empire and would reject the worship of idols and worship the true God and His Son Jesus Christ."

One of these judges stopped the saint and asked him what he thought about Jupiter and Mercury, and St. Valentine boldly replied, "They are miserable, and spent their lives through corruption and crime!"

The judge furiously shouted, "He blasphemes against the gods and against the empire!"

The emperor, however, continued his questions with curiosity, and found a welcome opportunity to finally learn what was the faith of Christians. Valentine then found the courage to urge him to repent for the blood of the Christians that was shed. "Believe in Jesus Christ, be baptized and you will be saved, and from this time forward the glory of your empire will be ensured as well as the triumph of your armory."

Claudius became convinced, and said to those who were present: "What a beautiful teaching this man preaches."

But the mayor of Rome, dissatisfied, began to shout: "See how this Christian mislead our Prince."

Then Claudius brought the saint to another judge. He was called Asterios, and he had a little girl who was blind for two years. Listening about Jesus Christ, that He is the Light of the World, he asked Valentine if he could give that light to his child. St. Valentine put his hand on her eyes and prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ, true Light, illuminate this blind child." Oh the great miracle! The child saw! So the judge with all his family confessed Christ. Having fasted for three days, he destroyed the idols that were in the house and finally received holy baptism.

When the emperor heard about all these events, he initially thought not to punish them, but thought that in the eyes of citizens he will look weak, which forced him to betray his sense of justice. So St. Valentine along with other Christians, after they were tortured, were beheaded on 14 February in the year 268 (or 269).

The Relics of the Saint in Athens

After the martyrdom some Christians salvaged the body of the saint and put a bit of his blood in a vile. The body of the martyr was moved and buried in the Catacombs of St. Priscilla, a burial place of most of the martyrs. Over the years, somehow he was "forgotten" since almost every day there were buried in these catacombs new martyrs for several decades. The memory of Valentine's martyrdom however remained robust, particularly in the local Church of Rome. Officially the memory of St. Valentine was established in 496 by Pope St. Gelasius.

Fifteen centuries pass and we arrive at 1815, at which time the divine intention was to "disturb" the eternal repose of the saint. Then the relics were donated by the Pope to a gentle Italian priest (according to the custom of the time). After this the relics are "lost" again until 1907 where we find them in Mytilene in the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady. It seems that after the death of the priest that a descendant of his had inherited the relics who had migrated in Mytilene, which was then a thriving community of West-European Catholic Christians. There they remained until 1990 when they were moved to Athens in the Church of Saints Francis and Clara's Italian community, where they are today.

Saint Valentine the Greek

We should first say that there is not sufficient information on the national origin of the saint, though there are some other (shades of) evidence that the saint was of Greek origin. Few example, the earliest depiction of the saint bearing the inscription «O ΑΓΙΟC ΒΑΛΕΝΤΙΝΟC" in Greek, is in the Church of Our Lady the Ancient (Santa Maria Antiqua) of the 6th century which was the parish of Greeks in Rome. The church particularly venerated saints who were Greeks and generally from the East. The decoration and renovation of the church was ordered by the Greek Pope John VII (705-707) and finished by his successors, including the last Greek Pope Zacharias (741-752). But perhaps it is no coincidence that after seventeen centuries, the remains arrived in Greece. The issue here still requires research.

Saint Valentine: Patron of Lovers

Apart from the historical data we have for Valentine's life, there is accompanied various legends, such as from those who say he is the patron saint of lovers.

The saint had a reputation as a peacemaker, and one day while cultivating some roses from his garden, he heard a couple quarrel very vigorously. This shocked the saint, who then cut a rose and approached the couple asking them to hear him. Even though they were dispirited, they obeyed the saint and afterwards were offered a rose that blessed them. Immediately the love returned between them, and later they returned and asked the saint to bless their marriage. Another tradition says that one of the charges against Valentine was that he did not adhere to the command of the emperor which stated that men who had not fulfilled their military obligations were not allowed to marry; meanwhile the saint had blessed the marriage of young Christian soldiers with their beloveds.

Besides all this, the likely choice of him as the "saint of lovers" is to be associated with the pagan festival of Lupercalia, a fertility festival, celebrated by the Romans on February 15. Others connect the celebration of this feast with the mating season of birds during this period. Certainly, however, the saint has nothing to do with the commercialism (marketing) of flowers, gifts and secular centers which trivialize Eros, this great gift of God.

Saint Valentine and Orthodoxy

Many, however, raise the objection that St. Valentine is not mentioned anywhere in the calendar of the Orthodox Church. Indeed on 14 February in the calendar of the Church there are commemorated Saints Auxentios, Maron and the martyrs Nicholas and Damian. The explanation is simple: in

ancient times hagiographic directories, biographies and martyrologia were written to be primarily used locally in their own character, and the fame and reputation of a saint locally does not mean that it extended also throughout the Church. So there may be saints honored widely in one region and completely unknown in another, eg, St. Demetrios, who is famous throughout the Eastern Church, yet in the West is not honored at all, and is almost unknown, but this does not mean that he is not a saint. Another example of the modern Church: St. Chrysostomos of Smyrna († 1922) who in Greece is known, yet in Russia is completely unknown, but this does not mean that he is not a saint.

Honor Martyrs—Imitate Martyrs

We honor our saints and St. Valentine when we imitate their courage to proclaim their faith in Christ the Savior, even at the cost of their lives. We honor them when we beseech them to appeal to God to have mercy on us and forgive our many sins. We honor them when they are our models of the life in Christ. We do not honor the saints when we measure their 'worth' by worldly amusements and festivities in the best circumstances ... Honor Martyrs - Imitate Martyrs!

Bibliography

Encyclopedia New Advent (www.newadvent.org)

Patron Saints Index (www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm)

Oxford Dictionary of Saints

Ελληνισμός & Ορθοδοξία, Εκδόσεις PSL Λιβάνη

Ο άγιος Βαλεντίνος της Αθήνας, Εκδόσεις Καλός Τύπος

Source: Translated by John Sanidopoulos

Read also:

Ο Άγιος Βαλεντίνος επιστρέφει στη Μυτιλήνη...

Ο «Μυτιληνιός» Άγιος Βαλεντίνος... επιστρέφει





As an addendum to this post, I would like to mention that there is an excellent DVD available, a dramatization of the life/martyrdom of St. Valentine called *The First Valentine*. It's suitable for kids ages 8+ and adults appreciate it, too. I've used it in Sunday School classes and at St. Valentine's Day parties with my daughter's friends. You can find it as an instant play item on Amazon.com. Of course, you can order a DVD from Amazon, or better yet, from Vision Video which offers it at a deeply discounted price at this time. The theme is faith in Christ which results in sacrificial love and it is beautifully done. Pres. Candace

A brother visited Abba Victor the solitary at the lavra of Elousa (in the Desert of Beersheba) and said to him, "What shall I do, father, for I am in the grips of the spiritual disease of faint-heartedness?" The elder replied, "This is a disease of the soul. Just as those who suffer from ophthalmia have the impression of seeing more light when their disease is acute than do those whose eyes are healthy, so too do the faint-hearted quickly take offense at some small neglect and think that neglect to be something of great importance. It is just the opposite with those who are healthy in soul, for they rejoice in their trials." *John Moschus, Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow) 164*

About a mile from the holy River of Jordan there is a place which is known as the Lavra of the holy Abba Gerasimos. When we were there, the residents told us that this St. Gerasimos was walking one day by the banks of the holy Jordan when he met a lion, roaring mightily with pain in its paw. The point of a reed was deeply embedded in it, causing inflammation and suppuration. When the lion saw the elder, it came to him and showed him

the foot, wounded by the point embedded in it whimpering and begging some healing of him. When the elder saw the lion in such distress, he sat down and, taking the paw, he lanced it. The point was removed, and also much puss. He cleansed the wound well, bound it up and dismissed the beast. But the healed lion would not leave the elder. It followed him like a noble disciple wherever he went. The elder was amazed at the gentle disposition of the beast and, from then on, he began feeding it, throwing it bread and boiled vegetables.

Now the lavra had an ass which was used to fetch water for the needs of the elders, for they drink the water of the holy Jordan; the river is about a mile from the lavra. The fathers used to hand the ass over to the lion, to pasture it on the banks of the Jordan. One day when the ass was being pastured by the lion, it went away some distance from its keeper. Some camel-drivers on their way from Arabia found the ass and took it away to their country. Having lost the ass, the lion came back to the lavra and approached Abba Gerasimos, very downcast and dismayed. The abba thought that the lion had devoured the ass. He said to it, "Where is the ass?" The beast stood silent, hanging its head, very much like a man. The elder said to it, "Have you eaten it? Blessed be God! From henceforth you are going to perform whatever duties the ass performed." From that time on, at the elder's command, the lion used to carry the saddle-pack containing four earthenware vessels and bring water.

One day an officer came to ask the elder for his prayers, and he saw the lion bringing water. When he heard the explanation, he had pity on the beast. He took out three pieces of gold and gave them to the elders, so that they could purchase an ass to ensure their water supply, and that the lion might be relieved of this menial service. Sometime after the release of the lion, the camel driver who had taken the ass came back to the Holy City to sell grain and he had the ass with him. Having crossed the holy Jordan, he chanced to find himself face to face with the lion. When he saw the lion, he left his camels and took to his heels. Recognizing the ass, the lion ran to it, seized its leading rein in its mouth – as it had been accustomed to do – and led away, not only the ass, but also the three camels. It brought them to the elder, rejoicing and roaring at having found the ass which it had lost. The elder had thought that the lion had eaten the ass, but now he realized that the lion had been falsely accused. He named the beast Jordanes, and it lived with the elder in the lavra, never leaving his side, for five years.

John Moschus, Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow) 107 Abba Gerasimos of the Jordan, commemorated 4/17 March

There was a bishop in a certain city and it happened that he fell ill, and all gave him up as lost. There was a monastery of women in that place,

and the superior, knowing that the bishop was in a hopeless condition, took two sisters with her and went to visit him. And while the bishop was speaking with her, one of her charges who was standing by the foot of the bed touched his foot, and wanted to know how he was. He was overcome by the touch, and called to the superior, saying, "Since I receive no care from those nearest me, would you be willing to leave this sister with me so that she might care for me?" She suspected no evil and left her there. Empowered by the devil, he said to her, "Make me a little boiled fish, so I might eat." And she did as he told her. After he ate, he said to her, "Lie down with me and sin."

Later, when she was with child, the clergy seized her, saying, "Tell us who made you pregnant." She did not want to confess. Then the bishop said, "Let her go, for I committed this sin." When he recovered from his illness, he went into the church and laid his pallium upon the altar. Going out he took a staff in his hand and went off to a monastery where he was unknown.

The abbot of the monastery, being gifted with discernment, knew that the bishop was to come to the monastery and gave orders to the porter, saying, "Watch, brother, for tomorrow a bishop will arrive." The porter, thinking that he would come on a litter or with some of the trappings of a bishop, did not know the actual circumstances. Therefore the abbot went out to meet him, and greeted him saying, "It is good that you came, lord bishop." He was dumbfounded at being recognized, and wanted to flee to another monastery. The abbot said to him, "Wherever you go, I will go with you." After greatly comforting him, the abbot brought him into the monastery. Having truly repented, he died in peace, so much so that there were wondrous signs at his death.

Evil adheres to our nature just as rust does to metal or grime to a body. However, just as a metallurgist did not produce rust nor parents bring about grime on their children, neither did God cause evil. He implanted a conscience and reason into the human being so that he would avoid evil, knowing that it is harmful to him and only leads toward suffering. Be vigilant: in seeing someone successful in power and wealth, do not in any way praise him. But at that moment, imagine death before you and you will never wish for anything bad or earthly.

St. Mark the Ascetic, late 4th/early 5th centuries commemorated 5/18 March

Special Thanks from John Sheliga for the cards and visits—but especially the prayers. He is presently undergoing physical therapy and hopes to return to church soon!