



## Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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## NATIVITY FAST—SAINT PHILIP'S FAST--PILIPKIVA

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Jovan, 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 George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Deacon Dennis Lapushanski, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, 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, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Charles & Esther Holupka, Wanda Mefford, 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, 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, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], Mel & Charlotte Malik, David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Susan "Billie" Mason, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [child with cerebral palsy], 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, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Susan Bertram, Rita McConnell, Gail, Pete Special, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Fred DeNorscia, Sandi Anderson, Donald Uebing, Sabrina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Kareen Milcic, Ella Campbell, Kurt Smith, Tom Hyatt, Kenneth Miller [double-lung transplant], Joan Szymonifka, Jeaneen McCartney Thomson, Peggy Uhring [Eddie Behun's girlfriend], Bill Jancio, Jean Symanko & Wilbur Camback-Andy's sister and uncle, William Lemonakis, Barbara McDougall, and Daria Masur ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our December babies:** Scot Brunermer on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Joe Nezolyk on the 15<sup>th</sup>, Donna Karas on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and Jean Stuchell on the 29<sup>th</sup>! May God grant them all many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'nohaya Lita!

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!**

Since the icon talk was so well received, Alex and Pani Gina suggested having Fr. Bob answer questions of interest to our parish family. Alex will be constructing an "Ask Your Priest" box for your questions that will be placed in the parish basement hall. If you have a question, please write it down and place it in the box. Father Bob will try to answer as many questions as he can at Coffee Hour after Liturgy...if he doesn't know the answer, he will research it and have an answer for the next Sunday! We are all learning every day, so we will continue to learn together! God Bless!  
Fr. Bob

**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 01** Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM  
**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYR PLATON OF ANCYRA;  
MARTYR ROMANUS THE DEACON OF CAESAREA & CHILD-MARTYR BARULAS OF  
ANTIOCH; MARTYRS ZACCHAEUS THE DEACON AND ALPHAEUS OF CAESAREA  
IN PALESTINE**

*Tone 6*

Ephesians 2:4-10

Luke 12:16-21

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Caroline Holupka—Mike Holupka  
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Victor & Walter Burlack--Evelyn*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 08** Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM  
**TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; APODOSIS OF THE ENTRY OF  
THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE; HIEROMARTYR CLEMENT-  
POPE OF ROME; HIEROMARTYR PETER-ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA;  
VENERABLE PETER THE SILENT OF GALATA IN SYRIA**

*Tone 7*

Ephesians 2:14-22

Luke 13:10-17

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Thomas Bryan, John Hanczar, Helen Pytlak, Mary Blitzkan, Marjorie Yarmeak, Mary Sharon, Rose Pyrch, Frank Barankovich, Mary Krevanich, Katherine Holowaty, & Robert Vetosky—Fr. Bob  
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Helen Pytlak—Bob & Rene Pytlak*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15** Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM  
**TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; PROPHET HABAKKUK; MARTYR MYROPE OF CHIOS; SAINTS JOHN, HERACLEMON, ANDREW, & THEOPHILUS OF EGYPT; SAINT JESSE-BISHOP OF TSILKANI IN GEORGIA; SAINT ATHANSIUS "THE RESURRECTED"—RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; SAINT ATHANASIUS-RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA-WHOSE RELICS ARE IN THE FAR CAVES**

*Tone 8*

Ephesians 4:1-6

Luke 28:18-27

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 01 DECEMBER 2013**

**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYR PLATON OF ANCYRA; MARTYR ROMANUS THE DEACON OF CAESAREA & CHILD-MARTYR BARULAS OF ANTIOCH; MARTYRS ZACCHAEUS THE DEACON AND ALPHAEUS OF CAESAREA IN PALESTINE**

### **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.

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE USA  
CONSISTORY OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS  
PRESS RELEASE

**Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA**

**Archpastoral Message for 2013 Thanksgiving Day:**

*We Offer Praise and Thanksgiving*

Once again, our nation pauses to celebrate Thanksgiving. Our tables will be spilling over with food and our homes will resonate with laughter and conversation as we gather to celebrate this special day. Thanksgiving is a quintessentially North American holiday. It is a day when we remember the hardships faced by the first immigrants to this great land, and the gracious kindness with which the native people greeted them. The familiar traditions that surround the origins of Thanksgiving Day when the Native Americans and the settlers of the Plymouth colony came together indicate that gratitude to God was the focus of that first thanksgiving feast. Gratitude to God expressed by those two very different peoples sharing with one another at the same table.

Paradoxically, at a time when we reflect on the richness of the life that God has given us to live, there is a note of profound reality as well. This is inevitably so, as we remember that the benefits that we enjoy now have been paid for by the willing and unwilling sacrifice of so many. We think of the millions who arrived on these shores in shackles to build this nation's wealth. We are reminded of the peoples who occupied these lands for

millennia before the arrival of Europeans, the natives who received these “newcomers” warmly, and then paid for their hospitality by losing everything.

As those native people and first immigrants gave hearty thanks to the Creator for the feast that they were about to share, so must we be sharply attentive and grateful to the source of our food – the first Source, of course, being God, the Almighty Creator – Who has always provided the clean water and food we need to survive. Like the pilgrim newcomers, who in order to avoid starvation, became dependent upon the natives and their ability to utilize God’s creation to sustain themselves, we must today give thanks to God for those upon whom we depend for our daily nourishment. Never before in all of human history have so many been so completely dependent on others for food and water. Never before in human history have so many been so completely cut off from the land upon which they ultimately depend for their sustenance.

As Orthodox Christians, we affirm the sacredness of all Creation. Consequently, we must never forget that both our food choices and food production processes have a profound impact on God's beloved Creation. In this season of Thanksgiving, we encourage you to consider the following issues: How does our food get on our table? Where does it come from? Who puts it there? What is the real cost, both short and long term, and who pays the price? And, as importantly, but perhaps less obviously: What is our relationship to the place that feeds us? In the season of abundance, how is that in our country, with its widespread system of food production and distribution, many remain hungry?

In many parishes of our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, the pastors and faithful, in particular, many Ukrainian Orthodox League chapters, answer these questions by hosting community Thanksgiving meals or collect food and prepare bountiful baskets for families which are unable to afford such bounty with their own resources. In this manner we become the ones depended upon. What a powerful example of “gratitude in action”. This is the expression of love-charity and compassion taught to us by Christ our Lord.

Thanksgiving Day brings families together for a festive meal to enjoy one another's company and love. At those family tables a prayer of gratitude to God is raised, properly including God in the joy of the moment. Our prayer is that more and more of our parishes invite their faithful to gather around the Table of our Lord on this national holiday to give thanks FIRST to God during Divine Liturgy. Though it is not an official ecclesiastical holy day—it is altogether proper to offer gratitude to God that we live in a nation that sets aside such a day for “thanksgiving”.

As you gather on Thanksgiving Day, wherever it is you gather and with whomever you gather, we hope you have a great day! We hope you will enjoy the traditions of the day. But be sure to remember that for us—Orthodox Christians, Thanksgiving is more than a Thursday in November. It's more than enjoying turkey, pumpkin pie and football. It is about giving thanks and being a blessing for those around us.

May you all have safe journeys in your comings and your goings this holiday week and may the Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with all of you this Thanksgiving Day.

With deep gratitude to God for each of you as our spiritual children,  
**+Antony, Metropolitan**  
**+Daniel, Bishop**

In 1621 after a terrible year in which half their number died of starvation or disease, the Pilgrims set aside three days in December to praise the Lord for a bountiful harvest of corn. Many years later in 1789, President George Washington proclaimed November 26 as a national day of Thanksgiving unto the Lord. This was in response to God's granting America independence from Britain. The First Thanksgiving Observance was a Proclamation Signed in Script Type by George Washington Appearing in The Massachusetts Centinel of October 14, 1789 during his first year as President.

**GENERAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION...BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Given under my hand at the City of New York, the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

WHEREAS; it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas, both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a DAY OF PUBLIC THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

NOW THEREFORE; I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY of NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all

the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed;-- for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been able to establish Constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted;-- for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge;-- and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions;-- to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us); and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Again, this Thanksgiving our family will remember each of you in prayer and give thanks for your proven faithfulness in allowing your hearts to be continually broken for those things that break God's heart. It has taken you to all parts of the earth to share the Gospel of Christ. Our prayer is that God will place a hedge of protection around you as a shield and keep you and the family you represent safe from all harm and danger. We pray He will be faithful to His Word and increase all aspects of your life – just as your soul increases. We give thanks to Him each day for allowing us to be partners in travel to sold-out Christians, like all of you, for over 30 years.

Blessings both now and always,

Blake Stiles Lawson, Founder  
reservations@viningstravel.com



Dr. Fredrick Frankenstein: "Would you mind telling me whose brain I did put in?"

Igor: "Abby someone."

Dr. Frankenstein: "Abby who?"

Igor: "Abby Normal."

- From Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein

Allow me to repeat the words: *'Keep your mind in hell, and despair not'*. Father Sophrony, when he heard these words for the first time, **he felt that they were divine words, not only for St. Silouan and his own salvation, but for an entire generation, for all the lack of hope that takes shape in a world so full of despair**, as he knew it then, after the First World War. I'd like to add these words also: when God says *'do not despair'*, I've seen many strain themselves – that they were already so stressed, as in what should I do to not despair so that I don't make God angry? No, brethren, it's not about that, **God does not forbid lack of hope, but he tells us that...we don't need to lose hope! We don't need to despair!**

**When you can't take it anymore, when you feel you are going crazy...** as Fr. Sophrony once told a hermit: *'go and make a cup of tea'*. Or, as St. Isaac The Syrian told another hermit: *'when you feel that the thoughts of blasphemy are over-powering you, cover yourself and go to sleep.'* I'll say also, in our modern language: **'Take a nap', allow yourself to recover physically, and then, you continue...** Fr. Sophrony told that hermit the things he was experiencing himself, seeing the spiritual state that he was in (the hermit was asking for a word on salvation) – he was hosting him, offering him tea, some biscuits and whatever else he had. So: comfort yourself. **And when you regain strength, you can continue.** The same thing he was doing himself. Continue in what way? **Knowing that God's Providence is working something which you have not yet discovered.**

**In the most horrific moments of our lives, not only is it needed to not lose hope, nor give ourselves over to death, nor lock ourselves in that despair; but, more so: often times, if not every time, the most horrific moments of our lives are, potentially, the most demanding.** Those are the times when you have to go on for yet another moment... Think about a sailor who was caught by a wave on the deck of the ship and for a second or two the deck will be underwater: well, is that the right time to let go of the pole? No, that's not even the moment to try to run so you don't lose the cabin. No, that's when you only do one thing: you hold on to the pole. And you also hold your breath until the wave passes. When the ship is above the waves again, that's when you can go,

fast, to the cabin, if the case... So, the hardest, most painful, and tragic moments, are potentially the most demanding (...)

I've talked about our personal lives, but it's applicable to the world in general. For, we are talking about an eschatological period, meaning one about the end ...(...) **I take it this period, if it's a tragic one..., actually, no: the more tragic and cruel it is, the more demanding it will be, not just concerning our personal lives, but our adamic condition, our history.** What will be? We shall see, but we live with hope in our God.

**And we ask God that He cultivates in us that which man cannot accomplish by himself, according to His word: "*With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.*"** And, more so than any other time we must say this prayer more frequently: "*Lord, come and abide in me and You Yourself work in me the things that are pleasing to You!*". **From the things that are pleasing to God, nowadays, we need Faith that is able to take us through the hardest events that are becoming more and more unimaginable.** Not only is this not the time to lose hope, but it is the time to hold on to the pole more than ever, until the wave passes. Who knows what will be and in what way? The words that remain essential: '*Keep your mind in hell, and despair not*' (...)

Since the Industrial Revolution and The First World War a new world has begun. And, in this world, we try as much as we can to live as our Fathers did. **When we can do something we say: thanks to You, Lord,... when we can't do anything: ...patience!** As Father Cleopa (Ilie) would say: patience, patience, patience...May The Lord give you and give all of us a comforting divine Grace, so that we can go through things! The kind of comfort that the sailor has knowing that the wave will eventually pass, but for now, one thing I know: to hold on to this pole..".

(from the conference, [The Philokalia – Incarnation and eschatological premises](#))

Holding Firmly to the Life in Christ Galatians 5: 25-If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. When believers experience the Holy Baptism, belief in God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit is convincingly professed. Belief in the Holy Trinity is reaffirmed with personal use of the sign of the Cross. At the Mystery of Holy Chrismation believers are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. During the Feast of Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit is celebrated in God's Holy Church with great joy. The celebration of the Divine Liturgy has continued references throughout the service to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Orthodox Church is a Trinitarian Church In the Epistle to St. John we find these words: " For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." (I John 5:7) Believers benefit immeasurably by filling the mind and heart with the Holy Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ said: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.(Jn.5:39) Christian growth necessitates an on-going process of eliminating thoughts and personal

practices that hinder firmly following Christ. Repentance involves acknowledging personal sin and resolutely rejecting sinful ways. God needs to be firmly loved and sought with all the heart and mind. Cherishing the majesty and glory of God in the heart and mind are central in the transformation and growth of believers. Holding God in awe, with the greatest of respect and interest is central to transforming the heart of believers. Keeping God primary in the heart is essential. The devil has no room when love of God dominates believers' hearts and minds. Believers determine what they will read and what they will let take root in their hearts and minds. At Baptism and Chrismation, the whole person is dedicated to a Godly life. Evil has no place in the lives of believers. Repentance, confession and forgiveness enable believers to remain on the path to the kingdom of God. Holy Communion brings unity with Christ. Vigilance keeps evil away. Experience the life in Christ by being faithful to Christ with all the heart, mind and the soul. Unity with Christ is possible for the faithful to Christ. The lives of the saints and martyrs continuously witness to unity with Christ.

*Prepared for Adult Class. November 7/20, 2013. Holy 33 Martyrs in Melitene. Ven. Lazarus. Father Rodney Torbic*

### **Saint Philip's Fast—Advent**

We begin the approach to Christ's Nativity with a fast of 40 days. This is similar to, but normally not as strict, as Great Lent. We are asked by the Church to prepare ourselves for Christ's birth by a period of reflection, examination, and metanoia—CHANGE! We are to look at where we are right this second, as the fast begins—then look ahead to where we want to be—at Christmas—when we welcome our Lord and Savior into this world.

The path is steep—we are human and will struggle on our journey. However, and this is important—when we stumble, we must get up again and continue. If we have lost our strength to arise after our fall, He will send us angels to assist us. If we daydream and lose our way, He will nudge us and show us His Way. If we dawdle and wander aimlessly, He will give us direction. God desires that we complete the travel successfully—that we come to His entry into the world prepared with hearts full of joy and love for Him—and for each other.

Fasting is a part of this journey—replacing food and our normal daily comforts with prayer and reflection—again, moving the focus in our lives from ourselves to God. This cannot be done alone—we must constantly ask for Christ to send us the Holy Spirit to fill us, guide us, fortify us, and awaken in us the spark that keeps us going—and that makes us Christians!

As we make this trek, remember you are not alone—look around you at your family, parish family, and friends—we are all heading in the same direction. If you falter—ask for help. If you despair—ask for prayers. If you see darkness—turn to Christ's light.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be there to meet us—and we can greet each other with the millennia-old words—"Christ IS Born! Glorify Him!"

We wish you all a peaceful and successful fast and a most glorious Nativity celebration.

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

**Here is Liz's new address: Redstone, 4949 Cline Hollow Road, Apartment 207-Second Floor, Murrysville, PA 15668-1580. I'm sure she would love to hear from her church friends!**