



## 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 Strozh [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 Janiro, 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.

**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 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

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22                      NO SERVICE IN SLICKVILLE**  
**TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE CONCEPTION BY SAINT ANNA**  
**OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS; PROPHETESS ANNA-MOTHER OF PROPHET**  
**SAMUEL; SAINT SOPHONIOS-ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS; SAINT STEPHEN-**  
**THE "NEW LIGHT" OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

*Tone 1*

Galatians 4:22-31, Ephesians 5:9-19

Luke 8:16-21, Luke 17:12-19

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 08 DECEMBER 2013**

**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**

### **TROPARION—TONE 7**

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!  
To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise!  
For the Myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy.  
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,  
To proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

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

### **KONTAKION—TONE 7**

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,  
For Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers!  
Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry:  
The Savior has come to those in faith!  
Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 7**

**READER:** The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless  
His people with peace!

**PEOPLE:** **The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall**  
**bless His people with peace!**

**READER:** Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the  
Lord!

**PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!**

**READER:** The Lord shall give strength to His people!

**PEOPLE: The Lord shall bless His people with peace!**

**ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 7**

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High!

To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night!

Quote from the book Father (now St.) Porphyrios: The Discerning, the Forseeing, the Healer whose memory is celebrated December 2:

God knows without counting them the number of needles on these pine trees. He takes care of them from the time they start to grow until the time they die. He also knows the number of hairs on your head. Therefore, if He knows these unimportant things and cares about them, is he not aware of your problems and indifference to them? Absolutely not! Consequently, what is happening? Well, listen to me. When God does not give us something that we persistently ask for, two things may happen: either He does not give it to us for our benefit or we do not know how to ask for it. Both could happen. As for the first case, nobody knows why, the will of God is unfathomable. So I keep silent. However, I can tell you a lot of things concerning the second case. First of all, when we ask something from God, we must not obstinately say, "I want this now!" This is not only unacceptable but impious towards our Creator as well. We must ask something from God in a beseeching and gentle manner for a certain period of time. If we see that God refuses to give it to us, we stop disturbing Him. The more we want something, the farther away it goes from us. And when we have forgotten it, it will come imperceptibly. God does not forget. He receives our request, and when He knows that it is time, He answers it. Therefore we must not insist on changing God's will. We must not pursue it, but leave it in God's hands. Wait for His answer with patience, peace and faith. Stop caring about your problem if you want God to take care of it.

**Learning to Sit at Christ's Feet and to Hear His Words**

by Father Alexis

For those whose lives are characterized by Type A behavior, there is perhaps nothing so abhorrent as inactivity or a hiatus between projects or sets of goals. Since their self-image is dependent on their activity and

accomplishments, moments for reflection, contemplation, or stillness are perceived at best as idleness and at worst as a dangerous loss of self. Impatience with delays and a sense of time urgency are simply symptoms of overly identifying self-worth with accomplishments and viewing life as nothing more than a series of goal-oriented tasks. Unfortunately, this stance results in a devaluation of relationships and a prizing of productivity that construes human beings as though they were machines built to produce ad infinitum or at least until the machines break down. Of course, we are not meant to be automated robots, but living persons in communion with others. And this means that we need to learn not only to do, but also to pay attention and to listen to ourselves, to our neighbor, and to our God.

To those with Type A tendencies, one particular passage in Scripture calls out with especial clarity: "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42). As you may recall, the Lord Christ made this statement while visiting the home of Martha and Mary after Martha became perturbed at her sister for not helping her with the tasks of hospitality. According to Saint Augustine, Christ called out Martha's name twice in order to get her attention (Sermon 53) and shift her focus from the tasks at hand to the Lord before her. In commenting on this passage, Saint Augustine writes, "Our Lord then does not blame the actions, but distinguishes between the duties. For it follows, Mary has chosen that good part. It is not that yours is a bad one, but that hers is better. Why is it better? Because it shall not be taken away from her... You are still at sea; she is in the harbor" (On the Holy Trinity, Book 1, 10). Commenting on the same Gospel, Saint Theophylact writes, "Our Lord does not then forbid hospitality, but the troubling about many things, that is to say, hurry and anxiety. And mark the wisdom of our Lord, in that at first He said nothing to Martha, but when she sought to tear away her sister from hearing, then the Lord took occasion to reprove her, for hospitality is ever honored as long as it keeps us to necessary things. But when it begins to hinder us from attending to what is of more importance, then it is plain that the hearing of the divine word is the more honorable." (Explanations on the Gospels)

For those with Type A tendencies, this gospel teaches us that even when our tasks and goals are praiseworthy from the perspective of the

Christian life, time spent listening in stillness is not only necessary, but also vital for becoming the kind of people Christ desires us to be. In fact according to Saint John of Damascus, this passage is about the need for stillness (The Sacred Parallels, PG 95.1245), whereas according to Saint Basil the Great it is about the need for the vision of divine mysteries through prayer (Ascetic Constitutions, PG 31.1328). In general, the fathers viewed prayerful stillness (hesychia) as indispensable to the curing of man's fundamental illness. Saint Gregory the Theologian wrote, "It is necessary to be still in order to have clear converse with God and gradually bring the nous back from its wanderings." (PG 95, 1245 c) Through prayerful stillness enlivened by the invocation of our Lord's name, the nous is purified and enlightened with the love and light of God. Unfortunately, someone who is constantly striving to do more and accomplish greater things is too busy with activity to engage in this healing process. When we devote ourselves solely to the busy activities of modern life, the passions are allowed free rein choking off the gift of grace offered by stillness and prayer. When left unchecked, the human heart becomes sicker until what is abnormal (workaholism) becomes the norm. Rather than providing us freedom and serenity, the opposite fruits are borne in the human heart.

Happily, there is another way to approach life and work. When hesychia is practiced and cultivated it renews and refashions our work. Work becomes an expression of ourselves rather than our whole selves. In this sense, we have a time for work, a time for prayer, and a time to love others, allowing God to fashion us and sustain us through His purifying love. For those with Type-A tendencies, it might be helpful to write out the verse, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her", hang it up in a place of prominence, and whenever seen, to take a moment to just be quiet and with one's Lord, to say and prayer and let the prayer do its work on us.

### **Santa Claus**

Here is a story for you tonight. Yes it is a bit long but I know if you start reading it you will see why you must finish it. I will have this one on my blog as well.

One Christmas, long, long ago I notice a parent sit back, tired and at peace, into their easy chair. As always the children were in their beds, the gifts wrapped and the milk and cookies were waiting by the fireplace from me as always. I watched for a while and as I did, I admired the tree with all of the decorations, as I do at each home that I visit but this time I noticed something important was missing. After a bit the parent had fallen asleep watching the twinkling lights.

I am not sure how long I watched them and admired the gifts, the decorations, all done with love before the father, and the mother awoke, realizing that they were not alone. You could imagine their surprise when they looked up and saw me "SANTA CLAUS" in the flesh standing next to their Christmas tree. As usual, I was dressed all in fur from my head to my feet just as many a story describes me. They soon noticed that on this night though that I was not my jolly old self of Christmas Legend. To them I know that I looked sad and maybe even a bit disappointed. I am sure that they even noticed the tear that decided to take a trip from my eye and down my cheek and believe me, there was plenty to follow.

"S. SSS. Santa. What is wrong?" asked the father, "why are you crying"

I sadly replied, "It the children"

"But Santa, the children love you", the father said.

"Oh, I know they love me, and they love the gifts I bring them," Santa said, "but the children of today seem to have somehow missed out on the true spirit of Christmas. It's not their fault. It's just that the adults, many of them not having been taught themselves, have forgotten to teach the children." And as Santa gets older it gets harder and harder to teach it with little help.

"Teach them what?" The father asked.

I could feel my kind old face become soft, gentler. My eyes I know began to shine with something more than tears. I began to speak softly for the message I was about to give has such importance to it that I can only repeat it once.

"Teach the children the true meaning of Christmas. Teach them that the part of Christmas we can see, hear, and touch is much more than meets the eye. Teach them the symbolism behind the customs and



traditions of Christmas which we now observe. Teach them what it is they truly represent."

I reached into my bag and pulled out a tiny Christmas tree and set it on the families' mantle. "Teach them about the Christmas tree. Green is the second color of Christmas. The stately evergreen, with its unchanging color, represents the hope of eternal life in Jesus. Its needles point heavenward as a reminder that mankind's thoughts should turn heavenward as well."

I then reached into my bag again and pulled out a shiny star and placed it at the top of the small tree. "The star was the heavenly sign of promise. God promised a Savior for the world and the star was the sign of the fulfillment of that promise on the night that Jesus Christ was born. Teach the children that God always fulfills His promises, and that wise men still seek Him."

"Red," I said, "is the first color of Christmas." I pulled forth a red ornament for the tiny tree. "Red is deep, intense, vivid. It is the color of the life-giving blood that flows through our veins. It is the symbol of God's greatest gift. Teach the children that Christ gave His life and shed His blood for them that they might have eternal life. When they see the color red, it should remind them of that most wonderful Gift."

I then found a silver bell in my pack and placed it on the tree. "Just as lost sheep are guided to safety by the sound of the bell, it continues to ring today for all to be guided to the fold. Teach the children to follow the true Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep."

I then placed a candle on the home owners mantle and lit it. The soft glow from its one tiny flame brightened the room. "The glow of the candle represents how people can show their thanks for the gift of God's Son that Christmas Eve long ago. Teach the children to follow Christ's example... to go about doing good. Teach them to let their light so shine before people that all may see it and glorify God. This is what is symbolized when the twinkling lights shine on the tree like hundreds of bright, shining candles, each of them representing one of God's precious children, their light shining for all to see."

Again Santa reached into his bag and this time he brought forth a tiny red and white striped cane. As he hung it on the tree he spoke softly. "The candy cane is a stick of hard white candy: white to symbolize the virgin birth and sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock the

foundation of the church, and the firmness of God's promises. The candy cane is in the form of a 'J' to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth. It also represents the Good Shepherd's crook, which He uses to reach down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray. The original candy cane had three small red stripes, which are the stripes of the scourging Jesus received by which we are healed, and a large red stripe that represents the shed blood of Jesus, so that we can have the promise of eternal life."

"Teach these things to the children."

I then brought out a beautiful wreath made of fresh, fragrant greenery tied with a bright red bow. I continued, "The bow reminds us of the bond of perfection, which is love. The wreath embodies all the good things about Christmas for those with eyes to see and hearts to understand. It contains the colors of red and green and the heaven-turned needles of the evergreen. The bow tells the story of good will towards all and its color reminds us of Christ's sacrifice. Even its very shape is symbolic, representing eternity and the eternal nature of Christ's love. It is a circle, without beginning and without end. These are the things you must teach the children."

Then the Father asked me, "But where does that leave you, Santa?"

The tears gone now from my eyes, a smile broke over my very cold and red face. "Why bless you, my dear," I laughed, "I'm only a symbol myself. I represent the spirit of family fun and the joy of giving and receiving. If the children are taught these other things, there is no danger that I'll ever be forgotten."

The father replied, "I think I'm beginning to understand."

"That's why I came," said Santa. "You're an adult. If you don't teach the children these things, then who will?"

Each of you find the Santa within you and teach these things to our children and make them and you stronger by doing so.

My children, always remember Jesus so that in all your weaknesses you may find the appropriate medicine. Are you in pain? By calling on Jesus you will find relief and enlightenment. Are you in affliction? Call on Jesus and behold, consolation will dawn in the realm of your heart. Are you overcome by discouragement? Do not neglect to set your hopes on Jesus,

and your soul will be filled with courage and strength. Are you bothered by carnal thoughts that allure you to sensual pleasure? Take the consuming fire of the name of Jesus and set fire to the tares. Are you oppressed by some worldly affair? Say, "Enlighten me, my Jesus, how to deal with the matter which lies before me. Work it out in accordance with Thy holy will." And behold, you will be at peace and will walk with hope. *Counsels from the Holy Mountain, Elder Ephraim of the Holy Mountain (Athos)*

Put up with that person who grieves you and creates temptations. Put up with him joyfully. Pray for him every day. Always try to do good to him, to commend him, to speak to him with love, and God will work His miracle and he will reform. Then our Christ will be glorified and the devil, who sets up all the stumbling-blocks, will be foiled. Force yourself especially to stop criticizing and lying. Your penance is to do one prayer-rope every day for this person who hates you, so that God may enlighten him to repent...

If this person does something against you, overlook it, be patient. Let yourself be wronged, but do not wrong; let yourself be slapped, but do not slap; let yourself be criticized, but do not criticize. When you do all this, then the Son of God, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, will dwell in your soul. Fight the good fight; overlook the deeds of this person, just as our Christ has overlooked your sins. *Counsels from the Holy Mountain, Elder Ephraim of the Holy Mountain (Athos)*

Offer a gift of thanks to God: that you are among those who are able to benefit others, instead of those who require assistance; that you do not look to others' hands for help, but they to yours. Grow rich: not in property alone, but also in piety; not in gold alone, but also in virtue --- or rather in this alone. Come to be held in higher esteem than your neighbor, by proving yourself more kind. Come to be a god to the unfortunate, by imitating God's mercy. *St. Gregory the Theologian*

Before all else, let us list sincere thanksgiving first on the scroll of our prayer. On the second line, we should put confession and heartfelt contrition of soul. Then let us present our petition to the King of all. This is the best way of prayer as it was shown to one of the brethren by an angel of the Lord. *St. John Climacus*

**Here is Liz's 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!**

**Please remember Jean Stuchell in your prayers: 5244 Brinker Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-8232. . I'm sure she would also love to hear from her church friends!**