



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 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

Litany in Blessed Memory of Thomas Bryan, John Hanczar, Helen Pytlak, Mary Blitzkan, Marjorie Yarmek, 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 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 SOPHORONIOS-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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom 10:30 AM
TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF THE HOLY
FOREFATHERS; PROPHET HAGGAI; MARTYR MARINUS OF ROME; BLESSED
EMPRESS THEOPHANIA OF BYZANTIUM

Tone 2
Colossians 3:4-11
Luke 14:16-24

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 15 DECEMBER 2013

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; PROPHET
HABAKKUK; MARTYR MYROPE OF CHIOS; SAINTS JOHN,
HERACLEMON, ANDREW, & THEOPHILUS OF EGYPT; SAINT
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"THE RESURRECTED"-RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; SAINT
ATHANASIUS-RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA-WHOSE RELICS
ARE IN THE FAR CAVES

TROPARION—TONE 8

Thou didst descent from on high, O Merciful One!
Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings!
Our Lord, our Life and Resurrection, 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 8

By rising from the tomb,
Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam.
Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,
And the world celebrates Thy Rising from the dead,
O greatly Merciful One!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 8

READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!
PEOPLE: **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**
READER: In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!
PEOPLE: **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**
READER: Pray and make your vows.
PEOPLE: **Before the Lord our God!**

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 8

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms.

The carnal man considers the Christian's freedom as slavery; for instance, attending Divine service, fasting, preparation for the sacrament, confession, communion, all the Sacraments, and does not know that all this is a requirement of his nature, a necessity for his spirit. *St. John of Kronstadt*

Be, therefore, merciful. How great the reward of mercy we receive under the law of Divine adoption! Walk in the way of mercy that you may merit this divine blessing. The kindness of God spreads far and wide. It rains upon the unthankful; and the fruitful earth does not deny its yield even to the wicked. The same light of the world shines on impious and God-fearing alike. *St. Ambrose of Milan*

Metropolitan Philip's Letter to President Obama

December 7, 2013

The President and Mrs. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President and Mrs. Obama,

Greetings and best wishes to you and to your two precious daughters in the spirit of this Holy Christmas season. I was honored to receive your invitation to attend a White House holiday reception on Friday, December 6th, 2013.

I remember fondly my attendance at the White House reception two years ago. The photograph which we took together on that auspicious occasion continues to adorn my office. Unfortunately Mr. President, I did not attend your holiday reception this year because while I do have the joy of Christmas, I do not have the peace of Christmas. This is the peace which the angels proclaimed on that Holy Night "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14). Although I am Lebanese by birth and a proud American citizen for the past fifty-seven years, I received my secondary education in the cities of Homs and Damascus, Syria.

Mr. President I do not have the peace of Christmas because there is no peace either in Lebanon or in Syria. During the time which I spent in Syria as a student

and secretary to the late Patriarch Alexandros Tahan, I ate the bread of Syria, I drank the water of Syria, I breathed the air of Syria and I enjoyed the most generous hospitality of the Syrian people.

No Mr. President, I do not have the peace of Christmas while two of my brother archbishops Boulos Yazigi and Youhanna Ibrahim are still in captivity in northern Syria with no news since their abduction. Actually Mr. President, we do not know whether they are alive or dead. Two weeks ago, Mr. President, twelve of our Orthodox nuns were abducted from the convent of St. Thekla of Maaloula, Syria. These nuns are innocent women who care for some orphans in the convent. These peaceful women do not have arms and do not fight but pray for peace every day and night. I contacted the State Department and spoke to Ambassador Ford who promised me that he is doing everything possible to gain the release of the two abducted Archbishops and the nuns, but to no avail.

Recently a video appeared on Al-Jazeera network which reportedly showed the nuns and the Abbess of the convent, Mother Pelagia in captivity, and she said that they were living in a villa. What a mockery! If the abductors wanted the nuns to escape the bombardment of Maaloula, they could have sent them to the Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus, which can accommodate one hundred nuns. We know the truth Mr. President. The truth is that the video was made under extreme psychological pressure, which these nuns are enduring every day. There is every reason to fear for their safety.

Finally Mr. President, anything that you can do as the leader of the free world to stop the bloodshed and destruction in Syria will be very deeply appreciated. May the peace of Christmas which this broken world does not understand dwell in your hearts and in the hearts of your family forever.

Sincerely yours,

Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba)

Primate

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Patriarch John X Speaks on the Abducted Nuns of Maaloula, Syria



His Beatitude John X, Patriarch of [Antioch and All the East](#), issued the following remarks on December 5, 2013 at a press conference in Balamand, Lebanon:

Amidst the calamities besetting Syria and the bloodshed afflicting our people and amidst the uncertainty that still surrounds the fate of our

metropolitans Boulos and Youhanna in Aleppo, it is with deep pain that the Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East has received news of the abduction of her daughters, nuns and orphans of the Monastery of Saint Thekla in Maaloula on December 2, 2013 and their being transported to Yabroud. Because our initial attempts to obtain the release of our abducted daughters did not achieve the desired outcome, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East calls upon the international community and all governments to intervene and make efforts to release them safely. She likewise calls upon the conscience of all humanity and upon the spark of living conscience that the Creator, may He be exalted, sowed in the souls of all those who worship God, including the kidnappers, to release our sisters the nuns and the girls of the orphanage.

Our appeal to the international community: Although we are grateful for all the feelings of solidarity, we no longer need denunciation, condemnations, or "feelings of concern" about the assault on human dignity that is occurring, because all this is engraved in the conscience of every one of us. Today, however, we need concrete actions, not words. We do not want voices of condemnation from decision-makers, whether regional or international, but rather efforts, pressure and action leading to the release of those whose only fault was their clinging to their monastery and refusing to leave it.

We reiterate our call to stop the logic of conflict in Syria and replace it with the logic of peaceful dialogue and not to use stalling the start of dialogue to make gains on the ground because Syria is bleeding and with her too our hearts. Let all know that one drop of innocent blood shed on this earth is holier and more precious than all the slogans in the world. Let all understand that the bells of our churches, we the Christians of the Middle East, which were hung and rang in time immemorial, shall continue to ring out and be heard as the sound of our love and our peace for others, with their various religions, throughout the world.

The cruelty of the present days shall not uproot us from our land, because it is our being, our essence and a piece of our heart. Given the new circumstances exemplified by the abduction of the nuns and orphans of Maaloula, with regret we announce the suspension of our official patriarchal pastoral visit to our children and parishes in the countries of the Arabian Gulf, which had been scheduled between the sixth and seventeenth of

December 2013, and our return to Damascus to follow closely all efforts and communications related to this latest incident. I greet all of our children in those countries and all those who labored to prepare the schedule for the aforementioned visit. I hope that my visit to them will be at the nearest opportunity. You, our children in the Gulf, you whose sweet and honored faces, dear to my heart I was eagerly looking forward to meeting tomorrow, I apologize to you all for suspending this visit after you had made all arrangements for its success. I pray for your health, blessing and success. May God protect Syria, Lebanon and the Middle East and the people of the Middle East.

Thank you to the media who have made it possible for Antioch's pain and Antioch's hope to be heard in all the world.

Translation provided with permission by [Notes on Arab Orthodoxy](#).

[And I Believe in the Holy Spirit](#)

by [Father Alexis](#)

Breathing in and breathing out—inspiration and expiration—are basic physiological processes that often go unnoticed, but without which no life is possible. The Holy Spirit constitutes the very breath of the Christian spiritual life, without which no pure virtue can be attained, no holy mystery can open the heavens, and no deep transformation can touch the human soul. This article in the Creed is about belief in life, in spiritual life, and in God providing us with the spiritual oxygen our souls require by shedding the love of God “abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us” (Romans 5:5). Saint Seraphim of Sarov once summed up the goal of the Christian life as the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. He said, “Prayer, fasting, vigil and all other Christian activities, however good they may be in themselves, do not constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as the indispensable means of reaching this end. The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.” The Saints knew full well that this belief in the Holy Spirit must also be experienced through the purification and illumination of the human heart. This most basic process in the spiritual life requires our cooperation and collaboration. And through this [synergy](#), the Holy Spirit within man continues the salvific work of the Word of God made flesh for us. When the

divine Spirit is present, the Creed becomes a transparent window, now unshuttered, revealing all the wondrous truths and mysteries of God.

Saint Gregory Palamas, whose heart had become a pure dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, through his spiritual struggles and the gift of unceasing prayer, spoke of these mysteries and the Holy Spirit's abiding activity from the creation of the world unto its ongoing re-creation in Christ. In his Sermon 24 on Pentecost, Saint Gregory writes, "The Holy Spirit had been active before: it was He Who spoke through the prophets and proclaimed things to come. Later He worked through the disciples to drive out demons and heal diseases. But now He was manifested to all in His own person through the tongues of fire, and by sitting enthroned as Lord upon each of Christ's disciples, He made them instruments of His power. Why did He appear in the form of tongues? It was to demonstrate that He shared the same nature as the Word of God, for there is no relationship closer than that between word and tongue. It was also because of teaching, since teaching Christ's gospel needs a tongue full of grace. But why fiery tongues? Not just because the Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son—and our God is fire (cf. Hebrews 12:29), a fire consuming wickedness—but also because of the twofold energy of the apostles' preaching, which can bring both benefit and punishment. As it is the property of fire to illuminate and burn, so Christ's teaching enlightens those who obey, but finally hands over the disobedient to eternal fire and punishment." To believe in the Holy Spirit means to believe in what the Holy Spirit accomplishes in disclosing the will of God, in revealing the Person of Christ, and in healing the human soul. It means believing in the Spirit's ability to illumine and in our capacity to be illumined. Yes, it is a belief about God, but it is also a belief about ourselves.

In His farewell discourse to His disciples, the Lord Christ promises that He will send the Comforter to be with His disciples and His church until the end of the age. This Comforter, this Spirit of Truth, comes to us as a consuming fire purifying us from the deadly passions and as a radiant light illumining our impenetrable darkness, so that we can experience noetically what we are unable to perceive naturally in our fallen state. Through this purification and illumination, we experience a relatedness and a relationship that is intimate, holy, and comforting. Through the Holy Spirit, we sense that we are children of our heavenly Father and begin to converse with Him

in a new and wondrous way. Saint Paul reminds the Galatians, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (4:4-7).

If we were to make "I believe in the Holy Spirit" a core belief guiding our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, we would never feel alone and disconnected. We would never consider God to be distant and relegated to some far off heaven, for we would experience Him in our heart where we would sense the love of God and the mercy of Christ. And in all our trials, tribulations, and difficulties in this strange land where we are pilgrims, we would not lose our bearings, for we would sense the Holy Spirit who guides us gently pointing the way to the Father. Saint Nikolai Velimorovich in his work *The Universe as Symbols and Signs* writes, "The symbolism of things is ever before our eyes and minds, always as new and clear as the newest edition of a book. Our guide through the forest of symbols and signals is God the Holy Spirit. Different colored lights on the crossways serve as signals to a traveler: which way is right and which way wrong, where is danger and where is free passage. Even so God through innumerable signs and symbols, as through a mirroring of nature, reveals the way we ought to travel in safety and security." Believing in the Holy Spirit means believing that we will not get lost. We are not without an interpreter. We are not without a guide. We are not without a fellow traveler and companion on our way. If there be darkness, He will illumine it. If there be filth, He will purify it. If there be pain, He will soothe it. If there be death, He will show us the way of life. These are glad tidings indeed! And they inspire the heart to cry out with joy: Glory be to the holy, undivided, consubstantial Trinity who so willed that the Holy Spirit would sanctify our souls, unite us with our neighbor, and make us one with God forever!

[Father Alexis](#) | November 16, 2013 at 6:06 pm | Categories: [Christian Hope](#), [Church Fathers](#), [Core Beliefs](#), [Nicene Creed](#) | URL: <http://wp.me/p2vytf-hZ>

The Real Santa Claus

St. Nicholas Day will soon be here (December 6). I would like to share a resource with you that a friend and I put together a few years ago for an

educational purpose. It is an Orthodox presentation on the life of St. Nicholas of Myra, parked on a closed YouTube channel.

The video was produced by myself [*sic*] and a brother in Christ from New Zealand, Frank McDonald, while my family was yet serving the Church in Alaska. As many of you know, our family is now serving the Church in New Hampshire. I apologize that parts of the presentation are "frozen in time" and credits unfinished. That said, please enjoy the presentation (just under 10 minutes long). May you find it edifying.

Here is the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh74DcbSqfk>. Because this is a "closed" YouTube channel, you won't find this presentation by searching on YouTube *unless* you have the link above.

Please keep in mind it the presentation is only for the sake of edification and education—it gives a historical profile of the "real" Santa Claus. The presentation itself is not for replication and/or sale nor should any profit be made by sharing it with others.

Wondrous is God in His Saints!

Pres. Candace Schefe

Your only defect is that you are over-sensitive. Over-sensitivity is not good. It causes a lot of problems that are hard to be solved. It is the basic cause of all disasters. You will only harm yourself and your family if you do not try and get rid of it, or at least restrict it. No one withstands an insult with pleasure, least of all an over-sensitive person. But in everyday life, all of us can be victims of insults. And what does insult really mean? It means a moral decrease, a moral harm, or doubted prestige caused by others. Well, how is one supposed to control them? Can they be controlled? Of course not. The right and just is not to insult or be insulted. It is difficult but not impossible. And just this is the aim of the Church of Christ. However, in some cases God allows a temptation to judge our endurance and our belief. And those who pass the test are very few. We must struggle to do God's will. Only His mercy will save us. *St. Porphyrios from **Father Porphyrios: The Discerning, the Forseeing, the Healer***

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!**