

#### Holy Ghost Orthodox Church 714 Westmoreland Avenue PO Box 3 Slickville, PA 15684-0003

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### SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yurij, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yurij's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, 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, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop 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, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with

cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciow, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, 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], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pyrch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece],

Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Marianne Mulroy, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Confused: In Pittsburgh concelebration was forbidden by hierarchs and what replaced the Traditional Sunday of Orthodoxy Triumph Service was a humble—nicely sung—Lenten Vespers Service. Yet there are photos from across the country of concelebrated Triumph services with the various Orthodox jurisdictions concelebrating. Igumen Patrick

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!

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!

### REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

<u>Communion Fasting:</u> 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 <u>CALL FATHER BOB</u> at [412] 279-5640.

#### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

SUNDAY, MARCH 24—OBEDNITZA-SAINT BASIL THE GREAT-DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM

2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS-ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA; SYNAXIS OF ALL VENERABLE FATHERS OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; SAINT SOPHRONIUS-PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM; HIEROMARTYR PIONIUS OF SMYRNA & THOSE WITH HIM; TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF

### MARTYR EPIMACHUS OF PELUSIUM TO CONSTANTINOPLE; SAINT SOPHRONIUS THE RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Hebrews 7:26-8:2; Galatians 5:22-6:2 Mark 2:1-12; John 10:9-16; Luke 6:17-23

Litany in Blessed Memory of Evelyn Burlack-40 days-Fr. Bob

SUNDAY, MARCH 31—OBEDNITZA-SAINT BASIL THE GREAT-DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM

3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS; SAINT CYRIL-ARCHBISHOP OF JERUSALEM; MARTYRS TROPHIMUS & EUCARPUS OF NICOMEDIA; SAINT ANANIAS-PRESBYTER & MONK OF THE EUPHRATES

> Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Mark 8:34-9:1

SUNDAY, APRIL 07—OBEDNITZA-SAINT BASIL THE GREAT-DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM

4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS—SAINT JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT; THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS; MARTYR VICTORIA

Hebrews 6:13-20; Hebrews 2:11-18 Mark 9:17-31; Luke 1:24-38

Litany in Blessed Memory of Frank & Ollie Pendlyshok, John Cherepko, Rose Lopushanski, Mary Haluszczak, Vladimir Hanczar, Michael Brittan, Deacon Dennis Lapushansky, & Lynn Giglione—Fr. Bob Parastas in Blessed Memory of Katherine Debick—40 days—Fr. Bob

#### **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 24 MARCH 2019**

OBEDNITZA-SAINT BASIL THE GREAT-DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS-ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA; SYNAXIS OF ALL VENERABLE FATHERS OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; SAINT SOPHRONIUS-PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM; HIEROMARTYR PIONIUS OF SMYRNA & THOSE WITH HIM; TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF MARTYR EPIMACHUS OF PELUSIUM TO CONSTANTINOPLE; SAINT SOPHRONIUS THE RECLUSE OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

#### **TROPARION—TONE 8**

- O Light of Orthodoxy! Teacher of the Church! Its confirmation!
- O Ideal of Monks and invincible Champion of Theologians!
- O wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and Preacher of Grace! Always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

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

#### **KONTAKION—TONE 4**

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying: Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; But forgive us, O Master of All,

So that we may receive the incorruptible crowns.

#### **PROKEIMENON-TONE 5**

**READER:** Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation forever!

PEOPLE: Thou, O Lord, shall 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, shall protect us and preserve us from this

generation forever!

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

**PEOPLE: From this generation forever!** 

#### **ALLELUIA VERSES**

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! The righteous will be remembered forever; he is not afraid of evil things!

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#### The Matter of our Salvation Fr. Stephen Freeman

Perhaps the most obvious thing for a visitor to an Orthodox Church are the presence and place of icons.

They are literally everywhere. Some Churches are covered completely with iconography and no Orthodox Church is ever without them. That Churches are so decorated might not strike someone as unusual.

After all, many Catholic Churches, particularly in Europe are highly decorated (think of the Sistine Chapel). But the difference is that a visitor will quickly notice that the icons are more than decorations, for the faithful seem to have a relationship with them. Icons not only illustrate various things. They themselves are clearly participating in the service. And it is this, the veneration of icons, that tends to trouble the non-Orthodox. Being troubled about icons is nothing new. In the 8th and 9th centuries, a period of iconoclasm ("icon-smashing") broke out under Imperial sponsorship in

the Byzantine world. Understanding the Orthodox response to this controversy takes us to the heart of the ancient Christian faith.

Those who opposed the icons, during the period of the Iconoclast Controversy, did so in the name of the prohibition against images in the Ten Commandments. They also added the theological claim that the "Divine cannot be pictured." However, they themselves continued to venerate the image of the Cross. They did not oppose art in and of itself. They continued to decorate buildings with nature scenes and the like. Their enmity was directed against the cult of images (their making and veneration). It was argued then, and is to this day by most Protestant Christians, that the making and veneration of icons shares too much in common with the worship of idols in the pagan world.

The theological response of Orthodoxy to this attack eventually resulted in the 7th Ecumenical Council and to the return of icons to the Churches in the next century in an event that is named "the Triumph of Orthodoxy." It is not an exaggeration to say that for the Orthodox, the making and veneration of icons represented, in liturgical form, the complete summary and affirmation of all the Church had taught over the centuries. Icons were not seen as a peripheral matter, but as something that expressed the very heart of the Christian faith. Their loss would be seen as a distortion of the Apostolic deposit.

I will not dwell on the simple mistakes of the iconoclasts. Their application of the prohibition against images would have argued with God Himself, who also clearly directed the making of certain images within the very Temple (particularly of angelic beings). Synagogues at the time of Christ have been documented to have been highly decorated with iconic images.

Iconoclasm was merely an aping of the errors of Islam which was enjoying military victories against the Byzantine Empire at the time (and seems to have been the primary motive behind the Emperor's new-found mandates against Christian images). I want to draw attention to what the making and veneration of icons say about the world itself and how we see it and understand it.

In our contemporary age, it has become a commonplace to think of our encounter with the world as a series of ideas and impressions in our minds. We have become utterly fascinated with this abstracted notion of reality, even going so far as to suggest that how someone *perceives* reality is, in fact, the version of reality that must be accepted. We have become alienated from the thing itself (*re ispsum*), locked in a reality that exists

only in our own minds (as well as an ongoing battle to insist that what we think our minds perceive be accepted by other minds).

The Fathers of Orthodoxy teach a far more realistic view of the world. We are not separated from the world in which we live as some sort of abstracted observers. Rather, we know things through participation. The relationship between person and representation, for example, is not primarily mental, i.e. an abstracted impression of what a painter thinks. They taught that "the icon makes present that which it represents" (St. Basil). This fundamental realism was grounded in the Incarnation itself, God's becoming flesh and dwelling among us. Matter, they taught, has an inherent worth and dignity and is itself the means by which God has worked our salvation. St. John of Damascus stated this in eloquent form: Of old, God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed was never depicted. Now, however, when God is seen clothed in flesh, and conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see. I do not worship matter, I worship the God of matter, who became matter for my sake, and deigned to inhabit matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honoring that matter which works my salvation. I venerate it, though not as God... I honor all matter, and venerate it. Through it, filled, as it were, with a divine power and grace, my salvation has come to me. Was the thrice-happy and blessed wood of the Cross not matter? Was the sacred and holy mountain of Calvary not matter? What of the life-giving rock, the Holy Tomb, the source of our resurrection—was it not matter? Is the holy book of the Gospels not matter? Is the blessed table which gives us the Bread of Life not matter? Are the gold and silver, out of which crosses and altar-plate and chalices are made not matter? And before all these things, is not the body and blood of our Lord matter? Either stop venerating all these things, or submit to the tradition of the Church in the venerating of images, honoring God and his friends, and following in this the grace of the Holy Spirit. Do not despise matter, for it is not despicable. Nothing that God has made is. Only that which does not come from God is despicable our own invention, the spontaneous decision to disregard the law of human nature, i.e., sin.

This relationship between God and matter assumes a particular kind of relationship between human beings and matter as well. For in none of these examples cited by St. John are the *thoughts* about these various material objects the point. Jesus did not become a thought. The Word became *flesh*. We are not enjoined to *think* about His Body and Blood, but to *eat* it and to *drink* it.

In the same manner, we do not simply look at icons and think about them. Interestingly, the West, under Charlemagne, took this to be the right use of images. The *Libri Carolini*, written at the command of Charlemagne, offered refutations of the Seventh Council's defense of images, in what has long been understood as a work occasioned by a complete misunderstanding. But the work offered its own defense of images. In doing so, it revealed the deep rifts that were already beginning to separate East and West. For the author of the *Libri Carolini*, the appearance of images are only the occasion for thought. It is the image "in the mind's eye" that matters. Unwittingly, the writer was engaging in his own form of iconoclasm.

Of course, this subtle form of iconoclasm, so prevalent in our modern age, does not attack the making of images. It does not necessarily attack their veneration, "If you're into that sort of thing." Its attack is found in its denial that there is anything "there" more than the image and your thoughts.

And this is where the Orthodox understanding of icons is most essential, raising the veneration of icons to the level of primary dogma. The universe exists as an act of *communion*. Communion is the proper form of true existence. The veneration of icons, rightly understood, draws us back to the true understanding of our place within creation. Indeed, an icon can only be seen if it is venerated. Creation is not an abstraction. It is real and true and can be known *in its very materiality*. Modern man is often called a materialist. He is nothing of the sort. He is a hedonist. The material world is merely an occasion for seeking pleasure, but the pleasure is an abstraction, not an act of communion. *The idea is the thing*.

Orthodox Christians are the true materialists, for we proclaim and honor the glorious wonder of matter and the promise of the life of communion. Spirit is not the opposite of matter, and material is not the opposite of spiritual. Creation is not the mere *arena* of our salvation–it is an eager participant, groaning for its fulfillment (Romans 8:21-23). Icons are a means of *communion* with Christ and the saints who have gone before. But their veneration also teaches us the truth of our existence and how to rightly live in the world. For creation itself is icon and sacrament, God's gift in a good world.

https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2016/03/18/the-matter-of-our-salvation/

# Psalm 35:13-But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. (KJV)

Fasting when combined with prayer aids in battling illness of the soul and body. The Lord said: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting".(Mt. 17:21) The Church during Great Lent encourages the daily increase of prayer and fasting. Conscious use of the mind and body are necessary for increased prayer and fasting.

## Psalm 69:10-When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach . (KJV)

The Church places great emphasis on the condition of soul during Great Lent. Cleansing and purification of the soul are to occur during the Lenten journey. Active personal efforts with repentance of the heart are of primary importance. The Church expects believers to actively participate in the full Lenten journey. The Lenten journey is an annual opportunity to invest in the Kingdom of God,

## Psalm 109:24-My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. (KJV)

Fasting is a way to shed aspects of life having no benefit to the soul's health. Fasting requires firm resoluteness to sharpen the focus on the soul's condition. The Church encourages believers to always give priority to cleansing the soul. Great Lent gives attention to actions required to care for and cleanse the soul. Fasting enables believers to experience relief from unnecessary burdens in life.

# Daniel 9:3-And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: (KJV)

When awakening in the morning, turning to the Lord is the healthiest first step. Turning to the Lord God initially points the believer in the healthiest direction. The path to the Kingdom of God is long and arduous fraught with many perils. Fasting puts in perspective burdens believers must contend with during daily life. The value of keeping prayer and fasting as combined efforts needs emphasis.

# Joel 2:12-Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: (KJV)

Fasting is inseparable with prayer in the believer's life devoted to the Lord God. Fasting and prayer form a strong union to the great benefit of the serious believer. The Church provides the structure and environment furthering prayer and fasting. Joy in the Lord God increases proportionately

to practicing prayer and fasting. Great Lent heightens awareness of the need for the Lord God throughout life.

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Venerable Basil the Confessor, Venerable John Cassian the Roman. February 28/March 13, 2019. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

Often many misfortunes befall us, all because we have not humbled ourselves yet. When the soul is humble and bows down before the will of God, our suffering and misfortunes will cease. For then, misfortunes and suffering somehow become dear to us. We will come to have a completely different understanding of life. We do not reason anymore according to the last of this world. We see everything in a different light. Everything we look upon seems somehow brighter, full of love...

The spirits under heaven are always setting traps in our thoughts. When St. Anthony saw all the different kinds of nets that the spirits of evil set in order to ensnare us, he sighed and said, "O my God, who then can be saved?" And he heard a voice: "Only the meek and the humble. What is more, these snares cannot even touch them." You see, when the soul is humbled, when it submits to the will of God, the spirits of evil no longer have power over it, for it is protected by the Grace of the Holy Spirit and hidden by the Divine flame.

Let us fall down before the Lord with an innocent heart, using our own words in addition to the prayer rule that we all adhere to and which we very much need (for if we have no prayer rule, then the evil one will give us his own rule—all kinds of thoughts). That's why we need prayer, no matter how short. As soon as we are out of bed, let us give thanks to God for having allowed us to live through the night. When evening comes, let us give thanks for everything, for the Lord is the Giver of life and the Giver of all things. This is how we show our love toward Him, and because of this love, He will draw us into His embrace.

We Christians have put on Christ at Holy Baptism. We have put on God, and God is love. How is it that, having become one with God at Holy Baptism, we wage war with Him? How do we wage war? By our thoughts! We hold negative thoughts toward our fellow men.

~Elder Thaddeus: "Our Thoughts Determine our Lives"

#### 1st Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy

On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy icons to the churches by the Empress Theodora. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843.

About the Icon: Outwardly the Icon is showing the result of a regional synod in Constantinople, held in 843 A.D., where the controversy over the veneration of Holy Icons was finally settled.

The Icon depicting this event is often named, in Greek, the Restoration of the Holy Icons (Η Αναστήλωσις των εικόνων). At the centre is the Icon of the Virgin Hodegetria, depicting the Theotokos as the "Directress", pointing to Christ in her arms. The icon is held high by two angels, whilst gathered around are various saints and martyrs holding icons themselves. The number and identity of the surrounding saints can vary, but the ones shown in this icon are:

Top row (from left): St Theodosia (feast day May 29), Venerable Ioannikos (Nov. 4), Theodore of the Studion (Nov. 11), Theodore Graptus (Dec. 27), and Stephen the New (Nov. 28).

Bottom row: Regent Theodora, the young emperor Michael, and Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who together convened the council (Jun 14); Michael, Bishop of Synnada (May 23), and Tarasius, Bishop of Constantinople (Feb 25).

Not all of the saints gathered were at the Council, and indeed some were murdered long before the synod was convened

In Christ Service,

Fr. George L. Livanos, Proistamenos, All Saints Greek Orthodox Church

