



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

[www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org)

Very Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

**SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS OF HALYCH/GALICIA & ODESSA**  
**Saints Peter & Paul Fast—Apostles' Fast**

**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 Yuriy, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yuriy'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, 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 Luciw, 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, Gaele 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 Slaughaupt, 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, Joe Samchuck—vocations,*

*Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.*

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our July babies: Harry Batch on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Natasha Sudol on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Zach Sudol on the 2<sup>nd</sup>! May God grant them all Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'nohaya Lita! God Bless them all!**

**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!**

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, JULY 07      OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL      10:30 AM**  
**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SYNAXIS OF HALYCH/GALICIAN SAINTS;**  
**SYNAXIS OF ODESSA SAINTS; NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST;**  
**MARTYRS ORENTIUS, PHARNACIUS, EROS, FIRMUS, FIRMINUS, CYRIACUS, &**  
**LONGINUS—IN GEORGIA**

*Tone 2*

Romans 5:1-10; Romans 13:12-14:4  
Matthew 6:22-33; Luke 1:1-25, 57-68, 76, 80

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Olga Stock, Anna Kitch, Joseph Yarmeak, Sophie Carrerea, Susan Justina Sredich, Stella E. Cherepko, Emil Joseph Paouncic, Igumen George [Owen], & Claudia Horvath—Fr. Bob*

**SUNDAY, JULY 14      OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL      10:30 AM**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY & WONDERWORKING UNMERCENARIES**  
**COSMAS & DAMIAN; MARTYR POTITUS; VENERABLE PETER THE PATRICIAN;**  
**SAINT ANGELINA-DESPOTINA OF SERBIA**

*Tone 3*

Romans 6:18-23

Matthew 8:5-13

**SUNDAY, JULY 21      OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL      10:30 AM**  
**5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY GREAT-MARTYR PROCOPIUS OF**  
**CAESAREA IN PALESTINE**

*Tone 4*

Romans 10:1-10

Matthew 8:28-9:1

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 07 JULY 2019**

**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SYNAXIS OF HALYCH/GALICIAN SAINTS; SYNAXIS OF ODESSA SAINTS; NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST; MARTYRS ORENTIUS, PHARNACIUS, EROS, FIRMUS, FIRMINUS, CYRIACUS, & LONGINUS—IN GEORGIA**

### **TROPARION—TONE 2**

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,  
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead!  
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,  
All the powers of heaven cried out:  
O Giver of Life! Christ our God! 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 2**

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior,  
Seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!  
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam,  
Beheld this and rejoiced with Thee!  
And the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever!

## **PROKEIMENON—TONE 2**

**READER:** The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

**PEOPLE: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

**READER:** The Lord has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to death.

**PEOPLE: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

**READER:** The Lord is my strength and my song.

**PEOPLE: He has become my salvation.**

## **ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 2**

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

### **Miracle of St. John Maximovic**

Once, at the beginning of the summer holidays, Valya was unwell. The girl's condition quickly deteriorated, the fever did not subside. When Valya, because of a severe sore throat, refused not only to eat, but also to drink, the parents sounded the alarm. The hospital was overcrowded, there were no free beds, and the doctor, providing them with medicine, sent them home. The night turned out to be difficult for the whole family: girl lost consciousness, then came to herself again, it became difficult for her not only to swallow, but also to breathe.

In the morning, mother, tired, with sunken eyes, went to her daughter and said in a deliberately cheerful voice: "Valya, Vladyka is here, he came to visit you!"

The patient's eyelids were heavy, as if filled with lead, and she opened her eyes with difficulty. At that moment, Vladyka approached her bed and, blessing, affectionately said: "I came to tell you a joke."

And Vladyka John began to tell some funny story that Valya did not understand and did not even hear clearly. lay in silence, and she was so bad, and Vladyka, meanwhile, began to laugh at his own story. The faces of Valya's parents appeared in the doorway. They looked at the bishop with bewilderment, but he seemed not to notice them.

"You didn't like this joke, well, I'll tell you another one!"

And Vladyka told her a few jokes in a row, accompanying each with a loud laugh. Of them seemed funny to the sick girl, and the grimace of suffering never left her pale face. Valya hardly looked into the doorway: her father was no longer just perplexed, he was angry. But Vladyka paid no attention to Valya's parents and continued:

"I'm sure the next joke will make you laugh." Here, listen. Once, a bishop, just like me, had a cell mate and a subdeacon. They fought, and then went to the bishop to explain the situation. The bishop asks the subdeacon: "How did he hit you?" And the sub-deacon answers: "Not in a nice way, but with a candlestick!"

Then Vladyka laughed so fervently that the sick girl could not stand it and laughed with him. Parents looked at them with round eyes in amazement, and this made Valya laugh even harder. While the girl was laughing, something in her throat burst open. As she learned later, she had a severe form of diphtheria and when she was laughing, it burst, which prevented her from swallowing and breathing.

Vladyka immediately broke off laughter and told his parents: "Clean everything up, make sure that Valya rinses your mouth and throat. Now she will be fine."

After that, he blessed the girl and left. Valya noticed that Vladyka looked terribly tired, as if it wasn't he who was laughing so cheerfully now. When she rinsed her mouth and throat, she felt instant relief and fell asleep. Her sleep was calm and light, the fever was asleep.

In the afternoon, an alarmed doctor came and carefully asked Valya's mother if the patient was alive. And the mother answered even cheerfully: "Not only alive, but also healthy. Her temperature is normal and she is sleeping peacefully."

The doctor could not believe her words. After seeing the girl, he said only: "This is a miracle. This is nothing but a miracle."

**ENTHRONEMENT ADDRESS—HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP  
ELPIDOPHOROS**

Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New York, New York (June 22, 2019)  
Secretary Azar,

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Avgoustinos of Germany, Personal Representative of  
His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew,

Your Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, beloved and esteemed predecessor,

Your Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, Archdiocesan Vicar, and Beloved  
Brothers of the Holy Eparchial Synod and Bishops of the Holy Archdiocese of America,

Your Eminences and Graces, Hierarchs of our Sister Orthodox Churches and Ancient Oriental Churches,

Reverend Abbots of the of the Monasteries of the Holy Mountain and the Monasteries of our Holy Archdiocese,

Devout and Reverend Clergy and Presvyteres of this Holy Archdiocese of America, Honored Members of Ecumenical, Interfaith, and Academic Communities, Esteemed Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Archons, Members of the Order of St. Andrew, the Archdiocesan Council, the National Philoptochos, AHEPA, and Holy Cross Hellenic College,

Beloved brothers and sisters, my dear children in the Lord,

Today, I stand before all of you, humbled and grateful, declaring with the Holy Prophet and Psalmist David:

Ἐτοίμη ἡ καρδία μου ὁ Θεός. Ἐτοίμη ἡ καρδία μου!

Ready is my heart is O God. Ready is my heart! (Psalm 57:7)

Indeed, my heart, soul, and mind are ready and eager to embark on this great challenge and charge that our Thrice-Holy God has granted to me by His grace, with my election, at the recommendation of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, by the most reverend members of the Holy and Sacred Synod, in order that I might serve you, the beloved faithful of America, as your spiritual father and pastor, the seventh Archbishop of the Holy Archdiocese of America. The fact that this sacred commission took place on May 11<sup>th</sup>—coinciding with the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodios, peers of the apostles and illuminators of the Slavs—reminds me of the principal conviction and commitment of the First Throne of Constantinople to an ecumenical worldview and mission. This sign further inspires me to stir and sustain the grace that flows from God to the Mother and Daughter Churches of Constantinople as well as to our Archdiocese here in America—and to increase this gift, in the words of the Gospel of John, “from grace to grace” (John 1:16), through the intercessions of the All-Holy Theotokos whose City, Constantinople, from 330 A.D. to this day celebrates its foundation on May 11!

Therefore, I gratefully “remember among the first” (ἐν πρώτοις) my Archbishop and Patriarch Bartholomew, who bears the foremost burden and first responsibility of unity in the Church. It is he who instructed me in his “daily concern for the welfare of all the churches of God” (2 Corinthians 11:28). It is he who entrusted and encouraged me from the earliest moments of my ministry. It is he who prepared and predisposed me to serve the people of God.

As a young deacon in the Patriarchal Court, the Ecumenical Patriarch encouraged me to sharpen every skill for the ministry of the Church. As a priest, he entrusted me with the administration of the Chief Secretariat of the Holy and Sacred Synod. And as Metropolitan of Bursa and Abbot of the Holy Trinity Monastery at Halki, he commended to my care the welfare of an ancient See and the well-being of our precious Theological School and Monastery, which remains unjustly closed since 1971. For 150 years, that historical and trailblazing school

educated and trained the clergy of the Great Church of Christ—the Sacred See of Constantinople—where Ecumenical Councils convened, where doctrinal definitions were articulated, where liturgical traditions were shaped, where saints and confessors were recognized, and where the All-Holy Mother of God was especially honored.

The unparalleled history of service and sacrifice encapsulated by the Mother Church of Constantinople over the centuries is a source of inspiration and regeneration to all its daughter churches and eparchies throughout the world. This is a relationship that we are all called to nurture and reinforce unceasingly and increasingly. At this solemn hour, this sacred bond is epitomized and expressed in the venerable person of His Eminence Metropolitan Avgoustinos of Germany, who has proven a mentor and patron throughout the years of my learning and formation. I am personally and profoundly indebted to him for his precious presence among us today.

I wish to thank our brother in the Orthodox Faith, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alexander Azar, who today affords all of us the great honor of representing the President of United States. Mr. Secretary, your words filled this Cathedral with the eternal truths of the Gospel and the highest ideals of the American dream. I thank you for your commitment to both—to Athens and to Jerusalem, for they are the foundation of our civilization.

Moreover, I recognize those who have preceded me in this glorious and blessed archdiocese, all those who have shaped and defined this exceptional church. These include first His Eminence Demetrios, who has honored me with his presence today in order to transmit to me the church that he so faithfully and attentively ministered for two decades. But also Archbishop Iakovos, who boldly walked beside Martin Luther King Junior against the cultural tide of the time and even against the advice of his peers. And above all, the inspired pioneer Athenagoras, who recognized the importance of breaking down barriers with other church confessions and faith communities. My aspiration is to plant and multiply their diverse gifts in the fertile soil of this church and land as I reach out in a dialogue of love and truth to our ecumenical and interfaith brothers and sisters. My heart is certainly ready and steadfast to follow their groundbreaking lead and their illustrious example.

I would like to express my humble gratitude and sincere appreciation to my beloved brother metropolitans and bishops, as well as the pious clergy and faithful lay people, men and women—all those who represent and comprise the many ministries and manifold departments of our archdiocese—for the wholehearted welcome and genuine warmth demonstrated from the moment of my election. Their solidarity and support signal a promising and positive collaboration in the days, months and years ahead.

As Orthodox Christians, of course—to adopt the words of the Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creed, our symbol of faith—we are truly “catholic and



apostolic" only when we remember and realize that we are also "one and holy." And so my heart is ready and steadfast in the sensitive and critical matter of Orthodox unity. I sincerely pledge to devote myself—with all my heart, soul and mind—to the reaffirmation and reinvigoration of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in order that we may collaborate with greater unity, while witnessing with greater conviction and credibility to the broader American society. Our teaching is one in the sacraments and one in the life of the church; therefore, our preaching should also reflect the same unanimity and consensus in the culturally diverse and pluralistic world that we inhabit and share. In this way, we shall be ready and steadfast at all times "to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to declare the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18–19) And we shall "always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls us to account for the hope that lies in us, and to do so with gentleness and reverence." (1 Peter 3:15)

Furthermore, I acknowledge and greet with all my heart on this occasion those representing the highest political of this nation and civil authorities of this city, as well as the distinguished leaders and members of the ecumenical and academic communities. You are a powerful reminder that none of us can respond to or resolve the challenges before us without the solidarity and support of everyone without exception, without exclusion, and without discrimination. I thank each and every one of you for this important confirmation and imperative affirmation.

In addition, I thank the representatives from the National Government, the State and the City of New York, as well as those from Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey. Your participation here honors both the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. I am particularly moved to see—and to express my thanks to—my mother and my family members, who traveled across the globe in order to be with me today, along with my many friends from Greece, Cyprus, Turkey and Europe. Your love and support through the years have made me who I am today. Henceforth, I hope to inspire all those entrusted in my care as Archbishop with the same love and support that you have shown me throughout my life.

Dear and distinguished friends,

My heart is especially ready and steadfast to serve this Archdiocese and nation, both of which I have long admired since childhood and from my ministry at the Phanar. Through the decades, I have observed the development of the Church here, the challenges it has encountered, and the ground it has broken. So, I am here—your new Archbishop—to listen to you, to dialogue with you, and to work with you. My prayerful aspiration is to stand before you and beside you, to lead by example and exhortation, and to minister through service and sacrifice. Let us advance together as the Body of Christ and body of believers, as a united

Archdiocese and Church, and as a cherished Eparchy of our venerable Ecumenical Patriarchate.

I can think of no higher calling and no finer vocation for my life than to be with you in your joys and your sorrows, your triumphs and your trials. My heart is ready and steadfast—willing and prepared—to serve you at all times and in all tasks. Of the many areas that I hope to address with a sense of pastoral urgency, I would highlight the loving ministry to our beloved youth, the reinforcement of our theological education, as well as the completion of the shrine at Ground Zero. In all these areas, we implore—above and beyond all others and all else—the strength and support of God’s grace. For “unless the Lord builds our house, those who labor do so in vain.” (Psalm 128:1)

There is a precious lesson and enduring vision about leadership as service transmitted to me by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch—and that is the importance of building bridges, of creating relationships. Such connections are precisely what the church is all about. None of us is either born or planted in a vacuum. In the Orthodox Church in particular, we breathe and bequeath the richness of a long and sacred tradition. This is what it means for bishops to be successors in the faith of the apostles. There can only be genuine progression in the church if there is also an unbroken apostolic continuity. We must never forget our forefathers and fathers, patriarchs and prophets, apostles and preachers, saints and martyrs, confessors and ascetics—all those men and women, known and unknown, who have laid the foundations for the church and paved the way for us to belong to the Body of Christ.

This is what it means for a church to look back at its traditions and to look forward to sharing its treasures by establishing its roots in the local surroundings and circumstances. This is what it means to generate connections between the global and the regional in order to reflect the universal in the local. This, finally, is what it means to integrate the cultural and the spiritual elements of a living community. Then we shall be able to address the language of heaven to the reality of this world. For then we can translate the eternal word of God in a way that truly transforms the transient nature of the world. But how shall we prepare for and respond to this calling?

First, if we are to be true to our evangelical roots and spiritual traditions, we must be a Church that embraces our young people, that embraces the strangers in our midst, that embraces all members of our community and our country. Our young people face an ever-growing deluge of information and access to knowledge that is unprecedented. The Church—which means all of us—must be ready to meet our youth where they live and where they learn: in our communities, on college campuses, with all of the range and resources of social media at our disposal. We cannot lose any time, and we cannot wait for them to reach out to us. We must offer them a taste of the sacramental life, of the living Body of Christ. We should welcome and embrace them, meeting them—just as

the Lord Jesus Himself did with His disciples—on their own terms, in their own hearts, and with their own resources.

Second, our ministry to our youth and our message to our world must be grounded in the development and expansion of our Theological School, the heart of education of clergy and formation of leaders for our Archdiocese but also beyond. I will never forget the extraordinary semester I spent teaching at Holy Cross School of Theology in the spring of 2004. You see, my dear brothers and sisters: the challenges of church management are not merely secular, mundane concerns for the Church. They touch on the very heart of our response to celebrating and communicating the gifts that we have received from God. In a very real sense, we are all deacons! We are all accountable stewards of the resources of the faithful. And if we face our challenges and hurdles humbly and collectively, then I have every confidence that we shall overcome them. If the Lord is our strength and our salvation—our consolation and our illumination—then our brightest days are surely ahead of us.

Third, as I stand on this throne—beholding all of you in this splendid cathedral and addressing so many more of you by means of modern communications—I also behold the sacred image and relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. Precisely because we believe in miracles; precisely because St. Nicholas works wonders; and precisely because the name Nicholas means “victory of the people,” we are able to echo the words of the Letter to the Romans, which proclaims: “We are able to overcome every challenge through the God who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

It is this victory and miracle that the Saint Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center represents and symbolizes—not only for our Archdiocese, but for the City of New York, and in fact for the entire American nation. On that bitter day of September 11, 2001, so many lives were lost, so much suffering was caused, and our little Saint Nicholas Church was obliterated in the collapse of the Twin Towers. Yet hatred was ultimately overcome by hope, violence was overcome by forgiveness, and despair was overcome by mercy, compassion, and love.

It is our duty and our responsibility as Orthodox Christians—but also our obligation and commitment to God and His people—to complete and open the doors of the Saint Nicholas National Shrine as a witness and vision of what is best and what is beautiful in all people of faith and religious conviction. I assure you that my heart is ready and steadfast in this task as well.

Dear friends, sisters and brothers,

Today, we celebrate the “leave-taking” (or ἀπόδοσις) of the Feast of Pentecost, when the Orthodox Church invites “all those who are baptized and clothed in Christ” to become children led by and enlightened by the fire and force of the Holy Spirit, who calls all people to unity by shedding their divisions and doubts. As we chant in the *kontakion* of the day: “Let us together glorify the All-

Holy Spirit.” And as we declare in the communion hymn of the day: “This spirit of goodness shall guide us on the right way and lead us on level ground.” (Psalm 144:10)

Tomorrow, I shall look forward with great anticipation and expectation to celebrating and sharing with all of you the Eucharistic meal on the Feast of All Saints. We shall have the opportunity to remember all the saints—very ancient saints like St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, and very recent saints like St. Iakovos Tsalikis. At the same time, however, we shall remember that we are all called to become members of the communion of saints—fellow travelers on the magnificent journey that God has so graciously and generously prepared for us in this blessed archdiocese, church and land.

Let our hearts, therefore, remain ready and steadfast. Amen!

### **The Fast and the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul**

Bishop Thomas Joseph and Peter Schweitzer

Having celebrated the feast of feasts, the Lord's Pascha, and Pentecost fifty days thereafter, we are about to embark upon the Apostles' Fast, which this year begins on June 24, 2019, and ends with the commemoration of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul on June 29/July 12.

The Apostles' Fast is a prescribed fasting period of the Church, lasting from the day after the Sunday of All Saints to the 29th of June [July 12<sup>th</sup>], the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

It is a sad truth that many neglect this particular fast for a variety of reasons inconsistent with the apostolic and patristic tradition. Prior to reflecting upon the importance of the Apostles' Fast, a review of the ancient history of this particular fast may help us to recognize its integral place in the life of each and every Orthodox Christian.

The fast of the holy Apostles is very ancient, dating back to the first centuries of Christianity. We have the testimony of St. Athanasius the Great, St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Leo the . and Theodoret of Cyrrhus regarding it. The oldest testimony regarding the Apostles' Fast is given to us by St. Athanasius the Great (†373).

In her Diary, the pilgrim Egeria (fourth century) records that on the day following the feast of Pentecost a period of fasting began. The Apostolic Constitutions, a work composed no later than the fourth century, prescribes: "After the feast of Pentecost, celebrate one week, then observe a fast, for justice demands rejoicing after the reception of the gifts of God and lasting after the body has been refreshed."

From the testimonies of the fourth century we ascertain that in Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch the fast of the holy Apostles was connected with Pentecost and not with the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul on June 29. In the first centuries, after Pentecost there was one week of rejoicing, that is a fast-free week, followed by about one week of fasting.

The canons of Nicephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople (806-816), mention the Apostle's Fast. The Typicon of St. Theodore the Studite for the Monastery of Studios in Constantinople speaks of the Forty Days Fast of the holy Apostles. Symeon of Thessalonica (†1429) explains the purpose of this fast in this manner: "The Fast of the Apostles is justly established in their honor, for through them we have received numerous benefits and for us they are exemplars and teachers of the fast... For one week after the descent of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Apostolic Constitution composed by Clement, we celebrate, and then during the following week, we fast in honor of the Apostles."

The spiritual benefit derived from the Apostles' Fast is great. Saint Leo the Great noted that, "After the extended feast of Pentecost, the fast is particularly needed in order to cleanse our mind by ascetic labors, and to make us worthy of the gifts of the Holy Spirit." Saint Leo also reminds us, "In the Apostolic canons inspired by God Himself, the Church fathers have, at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, established first and foremost that all virtuous labors begin with fasting."

Periods of fasting such as the one upon which we are about to embark are not, as some in the West would have us believe, exercises in mortification or penance but the divinely inspired method to gain mastery over the self and conquer the passions of the flesh. It is to liberate oneself from dependence on the things of this world in order to concentrate on the things of the Kingdom of God. It is to give power to the soul so that it would not yield to temptation and sin. To St. Seraphim of Sarov, fasting is an "indispensable means" of gaining the fruit of the Holy Spirit in one's life (cf. Conversation with Motovilov), and Jesus Himself taught that some forms of evil cannot be conquered without it (Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29)

Neglecting the fast is not the only pitfall to be avoided however. Those who fast may be tempted to judge those who do not fast, thus losing the efficacy of their labors. We should not concern ourselves with what others are doing but concentrate on our own spiritual life.

Fasting periods, particularly the Apostles' Fast, assist us in avoiding the spiritual pitfalls to which we are so accustomed after the ascetical struggle of Great Lent and the joyous celebration of Pascha.

In turning our attention to the feast of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, the connection between the feast of Pentecost, the Apostles' Fast, and the actual feast of the two preeminent apostles becomes clearer. As I noted earlier, this fast was originally connected to the feast of Pentecost and we understand this connection by examining the feast itself. As Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos writes, Pentecost had a significant place in the life of the Apostles. Having previously passed through purification of the heart and illumination—something that also existed in the Old Testament in the Prophets and the righteous—they then saw the Risen Christ, and on the day of Pentecost they became members of the risen Body of Christ. This is particularly important because every Apostle had to have the Risen Christ within Him. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit made the Disciples members of the theanthropic Body of Christ. Whereas at the Transfiguration the Light acted from within the three Disciples, through glorification, but the Body of Christ was outside them, at Pentecost the Disciples are united with Christ. They become members of the theanthropic Body and as members of the Body of Christ they share in the uncreated Light. This difference also exists between the Old Testament and Pentecost... In addition, on the day of Pentecost, the Disciples attained to "all truth". Before His Passion, Christ told His Disciples: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12-13).

These words of Christ are closely linked with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, with the revelation of the whole truth, which the Disciples were unable to bear; they could not receive it earlier, without the Holy Spirit.

This "all truth" revealed on the day of Pentecost to the Apostles is the truth of the Church as the Body of Christ: that the Disciples will become members of this risen Body and that in the Church they will know the mysteries of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God in the flesh of Christ. On the day of Pentecost they knew the whole truth. It follows that the complete truth does not exist outside the Church. The Church has the truth, because it is the Body of Christ and a community of glorification.

As the foremost of the holy apostles, it is fitting that after the feast of Pentecost, wherein the apostles received the revelation of truth in its fullness, we commemorate Saints Peter and Paul jointly. As Saint Gregory Palamas writes in his sermon on the occasion of the saints' feast. If, as we have said, we commemorate each of the saints with hymns and appropriate songs of praise, how much more should we celebrate the memory of Peter

and Paul, the supreme Leaders of the pre-eminent company of the Apostles? They are the fathers and guides of all Christians: Apostles, martyrs, holy ascetics, priests, hierarchs, pastors and teachers. As chief shepherds and master builders of our common godliness and virtue, they tend and teach us all, like lights in the world, holding forth the word of life (Phil. 2:15-16). Their brightness excels that of the other radiantly pious and virtuous saints as the sun outshines the stars, or as the heavens, which declare the sublime glory of God (cf. Ps. 19:1), transcend the skies. In their order and strength they are greater than the heavens, more beautiful than the stars, and swifter than both, and as regards what lies beyond the realm of the senses, it is they who reveal things which surpass the very heavens themselves and indeed the whole universe, and who make them bright with the light in which there is no variableness neither shadow of turning (cf. Jas. 1:17). Not only do they bring people out of darkness into this wonderful light, but by enlightening them they make them light, the offspring of the perfect light, that each of them may shine like the sun (Matt. 13:43), when the Author of light, the God-man and Word, appears in glory.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles received the fullness of the revelation of truth because the Lord Christ had prepared them for the advent of the Comforter. As the preeminent apostles, Saints Peter and Paul were the guardians of that truth which was to be passed on to the faithful. Saint Seraphim of Sarov tells us, "The true aim of our Christian life consists of the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. As for fasts, and vigils, and prayer, and almsgiving, and every good deed done for Christ's sake, are the only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God."

We know from Holy Scripture and Tradition that the Holy Spirit does not abide in a vessel that is not being purified. Saint Luke of Crimea notes, "For could the Holy Spirit possibly abide in an impure heart that is filled with sin? As smoke chases away the bees, as stench repels all people, so does the stench of the human heart repel the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives only in pure hearts, and only to them does he grant He Divine grace, His holy gifts, for He is the 'Treasury of good things'—all the true and most precious goods that the human heart could possibly possess. Could the impure heart receive them? Could the heart that is sinful and deprived of mercy and love possibly receive the grace of the Holy Spirit?"

This is precisely why, in her wisdom, the holy Church offers us the period of the Apostles' Fast soon after Pentecost and just prior to the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul who were worthy to receive the Holy

Spirit If the aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, we must engage in the struggle through fasting and continual prayer. It is only then that we may acquire the Holy Spirit and can properly appreciate and be joyous in the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

In Christ Service,

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

### **PARABLE OF THE DAY**

"Father, why do you allow all worldly news to penetrate into the monastery," the young monk asked Abba Arseniy.

"This is the best way for the brothers to have no desire to return there," answered Abba Arseniy.