



SS Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church
9230 Old Bustleton Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19115
Church Phone: 215-676-3311

Pastor: Father Stephen Siniari
Rectory Phone: 1-609-385-3757



Church Bulletin ~ December 2006

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

JESUS CHRIST — Christmas/The Day of His Dawning in the World

How — Not If

"The way we observe Christmas reveals how well we grasp its tremendous reality. While some may ask if we celebrate Christmas, it is much more important to consider how we celebrate it.

How would you receive a very important guest who came at great difficulty and expense to help you in time of need? You would anticipate and prepare. You would go to meet him and welcome him with real warmth. You would give him your attention and your thanks.

This is how Christ should be received, not by emphasizing earthly preoccupations of food, drink, and neatly wrapped presents, but by attending to and lavishing our gratitude on the heavenly God who comes to us offering the gift of life.

The services for the Feast of the Nativity, with their poetic proclamation of the Gospel in song, open our hearts and spirits to the Lord. We are invited to "go forth to meet Him, our hearts filled with fervor and joy."

At Thy first coming to us, O Christ
Thou didst desire to save the race of Adam
When Thou wilt come again to judge us,
Show mercy to those who honor Thy holy birth.

In the Orthodox Church, the Feast of Christ's birth has always been related to our anticipation of His Second Coming on the Last Day.

In Reality, the way we receive Him now (at Christmas) as the Word of the Father, will determine how He will receive us on the final and eternal day.

Our Lord has warned us about this, telling us not to be distracted by worldly activities: "As it was in Noah's day, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating and drinking, marrying wives and husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the Ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all... It will be the same when the day comes for the Son of Man to be revealed." Luke 17:26, 27-30

Our feasts and customs are no excuse for us to avoid keeping watch for Christ's coming, the vigilance we observe now is the vigilance with which we will welcome Him when He comes again in glory.

Our exchange of gifts on Christmas morning is no reasonable pretext for spurning the gift of Christ's own life at the Festal Liturgy.

On the day of His dawning in the world, He offers us His light.

-- Father Thomas Hopko

Special Announcements from Fr. Stephen

*** *Father Stephen* may be reached at **609-385-3757, Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM** or by e-mail: **ssiniari@covenanthouse.org**

Please remember that all confessions and consultations on Sunday mornings shall take place from 9 AM to 10 AM before the Divine Liturgy. Thank you.

Events & Announcements

Liturgical Schedule - December 2006/January 2007

NATIVITY OF CHRIST - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 - **Divine Liturgy, 10 AM**

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD; ST BASIL THE GREAT - MONDAY, JANUARY 1
- *No Services at SS Peter & Paul*

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD & GREAT BLESSING OF WATER - SATURDAY,
JANUARY 6 - **Divine Liturgy, 10 AM**

Schedule of Other Services

AKATHIST SERVICE - PLEASE NOTE: WEDNESDAY AKATHIST SERVICES
HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Church News & Reminders

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2007 - Dues are **\$115** per person and can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

ICON PLEDGES - Due by **the end of December** and can be paid at any time to our treasurer, James Schaeffer. **Please note:** *The Icons are due back to the Church ASAP. When returning your Icons, please return them to the treasurer, James Schaeffer.*

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - To be announced. All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

SPECIAL SERVICES - If you are planning to have a special service in the Church, please be considerate and notify either Father Stephen or the Church Committee one week in advance. When you are planning for a Baptism, Wedding, Funeral, or any other Prayer Service in the Church, please speak with Father Stephen in advance to determine if there is any way you can contribute to help the Church in helping others. Thank you. Please note: *if the services of the Church Choir are required, please notify the Choir Director, Christina Murianka, as soon as possible.*

NO SMOKING/NO CELL PHONES - Please remember that SS Peter & Paul has a no smoking policy in the building and that ringers on cell phones should be off during the Divine Liturgy.

The Joy of Giving

CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS - Please continue to help feed the hungry. Frozen casseroles are collected on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month by Harry Halkedis. A \$10 donation for casseroles can be given at any time. *Thank you!*

COLLECTION FOR THE POOR - A special collection for the poor will be held on the 1st Sunday of every month. Please plan to give generously every month to those whose lives are less fortunate than ours. Donations can also be placed in the **Poor Box** at any time.

ORTHODOX HERALD COLLECTION - Collections for the *Orthodox Herald* will take place every 2nd Sunday of the month. Please donate generously.

DONATIONS OF WINE & OIL - Altar wine and virgin olive oil for the altar lamps are always needed. The name of the altar wine is **Mavrodaphne of Patras** and it is available at most PA State Stores. Please help make sure that we always have a plentiful supply.

PASTORAL FUND COLLECTION - Collections for the Pastoral Fund will take place every 3rd Sunday of the month. Please donate generously. "Pastoral Fund" donation envelopes are found in the Church foyer, on the left side of the glass partition, should you wish to donate at another time.

Ladies' Society News

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR - *December 3*, after Divine Liturgy.

Other Events at SS Peter & Paul

SS PETER & PAUL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD - If you wish to have your name included in the Community Christmas Card, please see Jim Bachelor ASAP. This is a great opportunity to support your Parish! *The donation is \$10 and the deadline is Sunday, December 10th.*

FATHER STEPHEN ON TV - The unique ministry of Father Stephen Siniari was highlighted on the Hallmark Channel's "New Morning" program on November 22, 2006. To view the video clip go to:

http://www.newmorningtv.tv/todaysshow_112206.jsp

General Interest

PETITION NOT TO ADMIT TURKEY TO THE EU UNTIL HAGIA SOPHIA IS RESTORED AS A CHURCH - A minimum of 1,000,000 signatures are needed in order to persuade the European Union to consider this proposal seriously.

Go to: **[http:// www.hagiasophiablog.com](http://www.hagiasophiablog.com)** to sign the petition.

ANCIENT FAITH RADIO - 24 hour a day *Orthodox radio station* providing high quality internet-based Orthodox programming, music, teaching, interviews, features, convert testimonies, conference recordings, and much more! The URL is: **<http://ancientfaithradio.com>**

Miscellaneous

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE 2007 - Will be printed in January 2007 Bulletin

WEB PAGE/E-MAILS - SS Peter & Paul Webpage: **<http://homepage.mac.com/aliciaj17/sspeterpaulhome1.html>**. New Bulletins can be viewed the Saturday before distribution by 7 PM. If you would like to be kept up-to-date by e-mail or to be removed from our "paper" mailing list, please send me an e-mail at: **aliciaj17@mac.com**

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS ABOUT PARISHIONERS - If you have any items to include in next month's Bulletin, please see Alicia or call her at **215-742-0492** or e-mail: **alicia17@mac.com**. The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, **December 24**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday **12/31/06**. Bulletins will be mailed to any Parishioners unable to attend.

Please remember to let Alicia know the names of our members who are ill or in need of prayer so that they can be included in our Bulletins.

Thank You to all members of the Parish who have helped out or volunteered in any way with their time and efforts, and a very special **thank you** to anyone whose name was inadvertently omitted from the Bulletin.

Parishioner's Corner

A **VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY** is wished to the following parishioners and friends who are celebrating **December** Birthdays: **Catherine Abulian, Dn Perry Angelos, Donna Bacon, Zurab Bareladze, Marge Costa, Christina Murianka, Tatyana Nilova, John Palmerick, Edna Quirias, Eurania Quirias, Hope Vreto**

May God grant them all many, many years!

SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO PROUD GRAND-PARENTS KATHERINE & HARRY HALKIDES! Their daughter, Semele, gave birth to *Stephen Heller* on Sunday, November 5th. Katherine and Harry have been in California helping out.

May God grant Stephen many, many years!

GREGORY VRATO, SR., is at the **John Neumann Nursing Home**, Room 726, at the intersection of Haldeman & Tomlinson Road (make a right on Tomlinson and the parking lot is immediately on your right). Visitors are welcome anytime from noon to 8:00 PM.

Please continue to keep Gregory in your prayers. May God grant him good health!

Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers

Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of: **Gregory Vreto, Sr., Nina Horowitz, Spiro Costas, Harry Cappo, Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, Martha Murianka, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka**

**** God knows the names and ages of all who need His love and mercy...*

The Visit of Pope Benedict to the Ecumenical Patriarchate

Article posted: 12/1/2006 1:35 PM

ISTANBUL, TURKEY — During the last week of November 2006, Roman Catholic Pope Benedict XVI visited Turkey, where he met with numerous state and religious officials.

A highlight of his trip was his visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul's Phanar district, where he was welcomed by His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

Upon the Pope's arrival at the Patriarchate, a Doxology was celebrated in the Patriarchal Cathedral of Saint George. At the conclusion of the service, Patriarch Bartholomew welcomed Pope Benedict, who responded accordingly. Before advancing to the Hall of the Throne, Patriarch

Bartholomew and Pope Benedict venerated the relics of Saints Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, both former archbishops of Constantinople and predecessors of Patriarch Bartholomew. The relics of the two saints were taken to Rome in the 1204 AD sacking of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. It was a request from Patriarch Bartholomew to Pope John Paul II, who wholeheartedly accepted, that initiated the return of the relics two years ago to their original resting place in Constantinople. Following the welcoming ceremonies, Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Benedict met privately to discuss issues regarding Orthodox Christian and Roman Catholic relations, including interreligious dialogue, world peace, and mutual understanding.

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On Thursday, November 30, Pope Benedict and his entourage attended the Patriarchal and Synodical Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Cathedral of Saint George on the occasion of the Patriarchate's patronal feast day of Saint Andrew the Apostle, the founder of the Church of Constantinople.

For a complete report, photos, and videos of the historic visit, log on to the web site of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at <http://www.patriarchate.org> and the web site of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, <http://www.goarch.org>

Photos from the Annual Assembly

Farmington Hills, MI ~ October 20, 2006

(Courtesy of Fr. Dimitrie Vincent, Fr. Joe Gallick, Max Baker & Ed Koc)





Holy Days and Name Days in December

December 4	- Great Martyr Barbara
December 5	- Ven. Sabbas the Sanctified
December 6	- St Nicholas Archbishop of Myra Wonder-Worker
December 9	- Conception of the Holy Theotokos by the Righteous Anna
December 10	- Martyr Menas; Blessed John; Blessed Angelina
December 12	- St Spyridon the Wonder-Worker
December 13	- Ven. Herman of Alaska
December 15	- Holy Martyr Eleutherius
December 17	- Sun. of Holy Forefathers; Holy Prophet Daniel & 3 Holy Youths
December 22	- Great Martyr Anastasia
December 24	- Eve of Nativity; Nun Martyr Eugenia & her Companions
December 25	- Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
December 26	- Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos
December 27	- St Stephen Protomartyr
December 30	- Virgin Martyr Anysia
December 31	- Leavetaking Nativity; Ven Melania of Rome

Hieromartyr Eleutherius the Bishop of Illyria, and His Mother *(Commemorated on December 15)*



Hieromartyr Eleutherius, his mother Evanthia and Caribus the Eparch: St Eleutherius, the son of an illustrious Roman citizen, was raised in Christian piety by his mother. His virtue was such that at the age twenty, he had been elevated to bishop of Illyria. In the reign of the emperor Hadrian, St Eleutherius was tortured for his bold preaching about Christ, then was beheaded at Rome with his mother Evanthia. The Eparch Caribus, who had tortured St Eleutherius, also came to believe in Christ and was executed.

~ Icon & Reading Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~