



Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America ~ <http://www.aoaa.org>
SS Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church
9230 Old Bustleton Avenue ~ Philadelphia, PA 19115 ~ Church Phone: 215-676-3311
Pastor: Father Stephen Siniari ~ Phone: 609-385-3757 ~ Email: frsiniari@gmail.com

FATHER STEPHEN'S MESSAGE TO THE FAITHFUL

Whisper of the Snake

Fourth Monthly Installment: **Chapter I: Propriety** *(continues)*

They huddled in a group there, chastising the air and each other with postures and gestures exacting and sharp. The warming of engines and the backs of their winter coats formed for me a wall of no-entry, absorbing their muffled conversations, allowing only phrases and laughter to evaporate on the rising steam of their voices.

The one female voice belonged to dark-haired Tasilika, sad-eyed, sallow Tasilika. Her family was one of the few who still lived within the sound of the church's bell. She was a lonely figure, who, at the age of 44, remained in fact, a child. Showered, hair combed, slippered, robed, and in her canopied-pink and stuffed-doll bed every night by nine, her irritability at the meeting I forgave. After all, she was up past her bedtime.

One of the many of her generation who for reasons now bitter and hazy had never married, reasons which long ago had ceased to make the slightest sense. Outwardly pleasant men and women, not unattractive, industrious, and simple... People who had

somehow been constrained by a code written in another language for a different world and time... An endogamous code which carried as its penalty, ostracism for those who dared abate their loneliness and longing by recognizing love outside the clan... And for its observance, a sentence of derision and despair.

She would be the first to leave the huddle at the pavement's edge. I watched as she walked away through the trees behind the church like a solitary nun. Her hands in her pockets, head bent forward, stepping deliberately onward, her collar turned up against the wind. A chilling wind that faltered for a moment, and then drawing in its breath, mimicked our forlorn and graceless choir as it rattled through the darkened barren branches dancing just about her head.

The men closed the doors of their cars and once again I alone remained, sealed in stillness as the frosted red of their tail-lights turned slowly out of sight.

Next Month: Chapter II All The Generations

Special Announcements from Fr. Stephen

Father Stephen may be reached at **609-385-3757**, Monday - Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM or by email: **frsiniari@gmail.com**. 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 and Announcements

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE - DECEMBER 2011 / JANUARY 2012

- + NATIVITY - SUNDAY - DECEMBER 25 - Divine Liturgy, 10 AM
- + CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD; ST BASIL THE GREAT - SUNDAY - JANUARY 1 - Divine Liturgy, 10 AM
- + THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD & GREAT BLESSING OF WATER - FRIDAY - JANUARY 6 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

SCHEDULE OF OTHER SERVICES

BIBLE STUDY - EVERY WEDNESDAY - 7 PM - 8:30 PM in the Church Hall - Led by *Fr. Dn. Gregory*

CHURCH NEWS AND REMINDERS

ICON PLEDGES DUE BY DECEMBER 31, 2011.
Can be paid at any time to our treasurer, James Schaeffer.

COFFEE HOUR - The Coffee Hour sign up sheet is located upstairs in the Church Hall by the door to the kitchen. Please write your name, email address and phone number by the date you sign up for. Questions, see Linda Biando.

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.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - Monday, December 5, 7 PM. All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

THE JOY OF GIVING

COLLECTION SUNDAYS - May God bless you for your generosity!

1st Sunday of each month - Collection for the Poor

2nd Sunday - IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities)

3rd Sunday - Pastoral Fund

OTHER DONATIONS:

Church Library

Pop Tab Collections for Ronald McDonald House

Wine: Altar wine: **Manischewitz Concord Grape** (please do not donate any other brand of concord grape)

Oil: **Virgin Olive Oil**

FUTURE EVENTS AT SS PETER & PAUL

LADIES SOCIETY ANNUAL PENNY PARTY - Sunday, December 4 - All donations (including cash) gratefully accepted, especially toys for the children's table. **Please donate only new items.** To help in any way, please see any member of the Ladies Society.

Please help the Ladies Society make this year another great success!



SS PETER & PAUL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD - Deadline: Sunday, December 4 - Donation: \$10. If you wish to have your name included on our Annual Community Christmas Card, please see **Jim Bachelor** ASAP. You can also email Jim at: **Beqari@aol.com**. Your donation (check made out to: "SS Peter & Paul Albanian Orthodox Church") can be mailed to the Church, but **must be received by Saturday, 12/3**, or your name will not be included.



CHILDREN'S NATIVITY CHORAL PROGRAM - Sunday, December 18 - Immediately following Divine Liturgy.

Events and Announcements *(Continued)*

PLEDGES & DONATIONS

SUPPORT OF THE NEW CHANCERY - SS Peter & Paul has pledged **\$5,000** to support the new Chancery for the Archdiocese. We are asking for pledges from our parishioners and friends, to be paid off within the next 2 years. Please see Jim Schaeffer to make your pledge. *Please do not send your donation/pledge to the Archdiocese, but give it to our Church, so we can fulfill our commitment to the Archdiocese. Thank you for your continued generosity!*

PLEDGES FOR OUR NEW LIFT - The projected total cost will be **\$70,000**. We have received pledges totaling **\$11,000** thus far. We ask that you prayerfully consider a pledge or donation (which can be fulfilled over a 2 year period) towards completion of the Lift Project which will benefit many in our community for years to come. **Contact our Parish Treasurer, James Schaeffer, or any member of the Parish Board to make your pledge and support the community of SS Peter & Paul. Thank you for your generosity!**

MISCELLANEOUS

WEBSITE: <http://sspeterpaulphila.org>

E-MAILS: New Bulletins are available online by Saturday 8 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 Alicia an e-mail at: aliciaj17@mac.com

SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH STORE - Open Sundays at 9:30 AM (1/2 hour before Divine Liturgy) **Items available:** **SS Peter & Paul 90th Year Celebration DVD** (\$15); Divine Liturgy Books, Icons; Crosses (Baptismal, lapel pins, Georgian style, orthodox); Prayerbooks (English); Censors; CDs and cassettes; Religious Books. Also available: **IN THEIR OWN TONGUE**, a documentary chronicling the Albanian Archdiocese in America

"DAILY BREAD" - A daily email containing scripture readings for the day and the commemorated saints. To add your name (or the name of anyone who would enjoy getting it) please forward the email address to the Church email address: sspeterpaul2@verizon.net

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL LIGHTS - Envelopes are available at the Church Store counter for special prayers to be said during the week in conjunction with the burning of the Seven-Day Votive Light hanging above the Royal Doors. Sug-

gested offering: \$10, which will go towards building up our Pastoral Fund with the ultimate goal of supporting a full time priest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS ABOUT PARISHIONERS - If you have any items to include in next month's Bulletin, please see **Alicia** or call her at **215-530-0118** or email: aliciaj17@mac.com. *The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, December 18. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the January Bulletin at the Church on Sunday 12/25/11.* 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. ***Please note: You cannot arbitrarily be removed from the Prayer List. You must let Alicia know to remove your name. Thank you.*

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.

GENERAL INTEREST

ANCIENT FAITH RADIO 24 hour a day internet Orthodox radio station: <http://ancientfaithradio.com>

MAKE A PURCHASE THROUGH AMAZON AND HELP ST GEORGE CATHEDRAL IN SOUTH BOSTON - Go to the Cathedral website: www.saintgeorgecathedral.com and scroll down to "Shop Amazon" on the left side.

Parishioner's Corner



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

May God grant them all many, many years!

Parishioner's Corner *(continued)*

DONATE AN ITEM A MONTH CAMPAIGN - We are still in need of the following items: **napkins, paper towels, wax paper, toilet paper.** *Your continued help is truly appreciated! A sincere "Thank You" to all parishioners who so kindly donated any requested items.*



NATIVITY GREETING CARDS FOR SALE - **\$24** per box of 16 or **\$1.50** each. *All proceeds benefit our Pastoral Care Fund.* Please see **Donna Bacon**, call her at **973-989-1591**, or email her at: **dab0893@optonline.net**. To view the cards online, go to our website's **Announcements** page: <http://sspeterpaulphila.org/announcements.html>

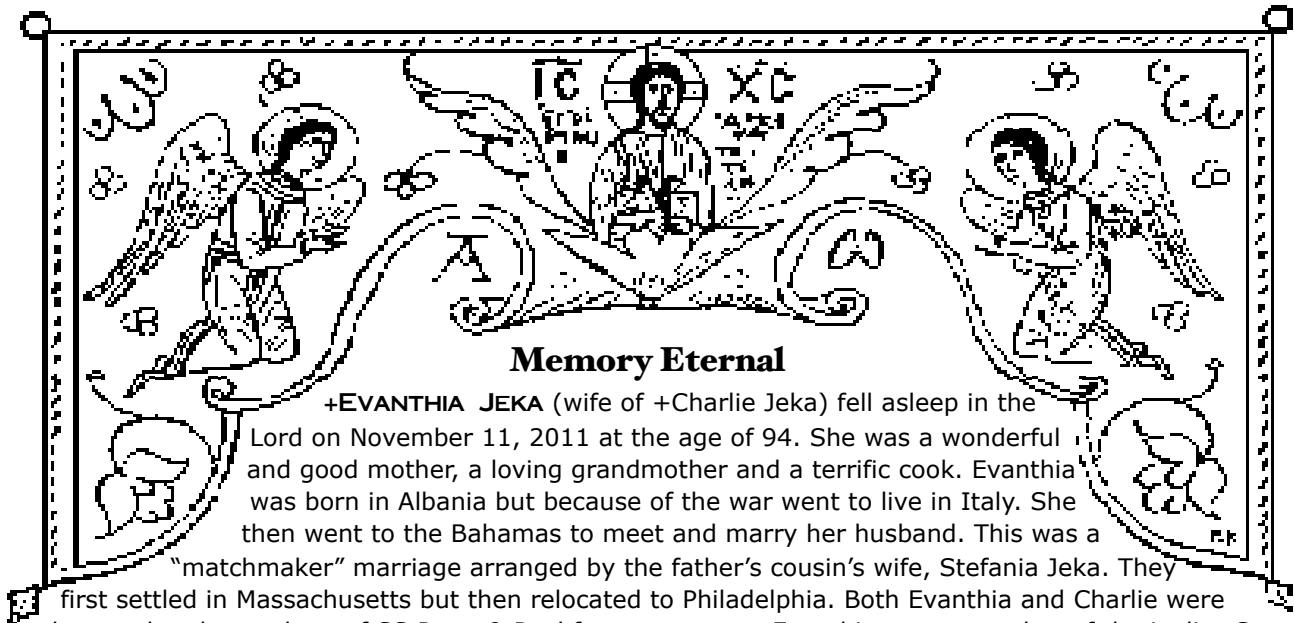
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CLEAN UP AFTER COFFEE HOUR - The sponsoring of Coffee Hour has worked out wonderfully (a big "**Thank You!**" to all those who have volunteered to sponsor), but now we are in need of volunteers to help with the clean up after Coffee Hour. If you can help with the clean up after Coffee Hour, please volunteer. Please see **Fr. Stephen** or **Nataliya** for details on how you can help. **Thank you!**

2012 ALBANIAN TOUR - "Highlights of Albania", visiting Tirana, Kruja, Durres, Berat, Vlora. This is a 6 to 7 day tour. The minimum amount of people needed is 6 to 8. Specifics of the trip will be posted on the Church bulletin board, along with a sign-up sheet, by November 6th. If you are interested, please sign up so that arrangements can be started.

GOOD COMPANY & GOOD FOOD: HELP BUILD UP OUR PASTORAL FUND - A new tradition has started -- serving a hot meal on most Sundays to build up our Pastoral Fund. If you have any ideas or are interested in participating or sponsoring a particular Sunday, please talk to **Jim Schaeffer** or **Letitia Desloges**. *Your help and support is needed to get this project up and run-*

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 PM

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



Memory Eternal

+EVANTHIA JEKA (wife of +Charlie Jeka) fell asleep in the Lord on November 11, 2011 at the age of 94. She was a wonderful and good mother, a loving grandmother and a terrific cook. Evanthia was born in Albania but because of the war went to live in Italy. She then went to the Bahamas to meet and marry her husband. This was a "matchmaker" marriage arranged by the father's cousin's wife, Stefania Jeka. They first settled in Massachusetts but then relocated to Philadelphia. Both Evanthia and Charlie were devout church members of SS Peter & Paul for many years. Evanthia was a member of the Ladies Society and received the Theotokos Award in 1982. Always helpful, loving, and kind, Evanthia is lovingly remembered and cherished by her family, friends, and the parishioners of SS Peter & Paul.

The 40 Day Memorial for +Evanthia Jeka will be on Sunday, December 18th.

May +Evanthia's memory be eternal!

Memory Eternal

+**Evgieni Xali** (mother of Valentina Maskuti) fell asleep in the Lord. Funeral services were held on Friday, November 26th, at SS Peter & Paul.

May +Evgieni's memory be eternal!

Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers

Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of: **Gregory Vrato, Sr., Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Mary Palmerick, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Sophie Bacon, Margot Craig, Eteri Okropiridze, Mary Ann Clark, Alexandra Pana, Nicholas Desloges, Martha Murianka, Anthony Sarris, Jeannie Rifkin, Nick Zeo, His Grace Bishop Nikon, Debbie Krimetz, Christina Murianka, Eurania (Elaine) Quirias, Lester Speero, Lester Paul Speero**

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

Prayer for the Sick

O Holy Father, heavenly Physician of our souls and bodies, Who has sent Thine Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to heal all our ailments and deliver us from death: do Thou visit and heal Thy servant _____, granting him/her release from pain and restoration to health and vigor, that he/she may give thanks unto Thee and bless Thy Holy Name. of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Reflections in Christ by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Thank You, O Lord!

FINAL WORDS - *Father Alexander Schmemmann celebrated the divine liturgy for the last time on Thanksgiving Day. This was particularly appropriate since Father Alexander had devoted his whole life to teaching, writing and preaching about the Eucharist; for the word eucharist in Greek means thanksgiving. At the conclusion of the liturgy, Father Alexander took from his pocket a short written sermon, in the form of a prayer, which he proceeded to read. This was a strange occurrence since Father never wrote his liturgical homilies, but delivered them extemporaneously. These were his words, which proved to be the last ever spoken by him from the ambo in Church.*

Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.

Thank You, O Lord, for having accepted this Eucharist, which we offered to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and which filled our hearts with the joy, peace and righteousness of the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, O Lord, for having revealed Yourself unto us and given us the foretaste of Your Kingdom.

Thank You, O Lord, for having united us to one another in serving You and Your Holy Church.

Thank You, O Lord, for having helped us to overcome all difficulties, tensions, passions, temptations and restored peace, mutual love and joy in sharing the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, O Lord, for the sufferings You bestowed upon us, for they are purifying us from selfishness and reminding us of the "one thing needed": Your eternal Kingdom.

Thank You, O Lord, for having given us this country where we are free to Worship You.

Thank You, O Lord, for this school, where the name of God is proclaimed.

Thank You, O Lord, for our families: husbands, wives and, especially, children who teach us how to celebrate Your holy Name in joy, movement and holy noise.

Thank You, O Lord, for everyone and everything.

Great are You, O Lord, and marvelous are Your deeds, and no word is sufficient to celebrate Your miracles.

Lord, it is good to be here! Amen.

Courtesy of OCA Website

HOLY DAYS AND NAME DAYS IN DECEMBER

- December 4** - Greatmartyr Barbara; New Hieromartyr Alexander
- December 5** - Ven. Sava the Sanctified
- December 6** - St Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra
- December 9** - Conception of the Holy Theotokos by Righteous Anna
- December 11** - Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
- December 12** - St Spyridon the Wonderworker
- December 13** - Ven. Herman of Alaska
- December 15** - Holy Martyr Eleutherius
- December 17** - Prophet Daniel & 3 Holy Youths
- December 22** - Greatmartyr Anastasia
- December 24** - Eve of the Nativity; Nun Martyr Eugenia
- December 25** - Nativity of Christ
- December 26** - Synaxis of the Most-Holy Theotokos
- December 27** - Protomartyr Stephen
- December 30** - Virgin Martyr Anysia

VENERABLE SAVA THE SANCTIFIED

(Commemorated on December 5)

Saint Sava the Sanctified was born in the fifth century at Cappadocia of pious Christian parents, John and Sophia. His father was a military commander. Journeying to Alexandria on military matters, his wife went with him, but they left their five-year-old son in the care of an uncle. When the boy reached eight years of age, he entered the monastery of St Flavian located nearby. The gifted child

quickly learned to read and became an expert on the Holy Scriptures. In vain did his parents urge St Sava to return to the world and enter into marriage.

When he was seventeen years old he received monastic tonsure, and attained such perfection in fasting and prayer that he was given the gift of wonderworking. After spending ten years at the monastery of St Flavian, he went to Jerusalem, and from there to the monastery of St Euthymius the Great (January 20). But St Euthymius sent St Sava to Abba Theoctistus, the head of a nearby monastery with a strict cenobitic rule. St Sava lived in obedience at this monastery until the age of thirty.

After the death of the Elder Theoctistus, his successor blessed St Sava to seclude himself in a cave. On Saturdays, however, he left his hermitage and came to the monastery, where he participated in divine services and ate with the brethren. After a certain time St Sava received permission not to leave his hermitage at all, and he struggled in the cave for five years.

St Euthymius attentively directed the life of the young monk, and seeing his spiritual maturity, he began to take him to the Rouba wilderness with him. They

set out on January 14, and remained there until Palm Sunday. St Euthymius called St Sava a child-elder, and encouraged him to grow in the monastic virtues.

When St Euthymius fell asleep in the Lord (+ 473), St Sava withdrew from the Lavra and moved to a cave near the monastery of St Gerasimus of Jordan (March 4). After several years, disciples began to gather around St Sava, seeking the monastic life. As the number of monks increased, a lavra sprang up. When a pillar of fire appeared before St Sava as he was walking, he found a spacious cave in the form of a church.

St Sava founded several more monasteries. Many miracles took place through the prayers of St Sava: at the Lavra a spring of water welled up, during a time of drought there was abundant rain, and there were also healings of the sick and the demoniacs. St Sava composed the first monastic Rule of church services, the so-called "Jerusalem Typikon", accepted by all the Palestine monasteries. The saint surrendered his soul to God in the year 532.

Reading & Icon Courtesy of OCA Website



CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

TENTATIVE LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

JANUARY 2012 - JANUARY 2013

- JAN 1 - (Sun) CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD; ST. BASIL THE GREAT, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- JAN 6 - (Fri) THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD & GREAT BLESSING OF WATER, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- JAN 8 - (Sun) LESSER BLESSING OF WATER, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- JAN 29 - (Sun) CANAANITE WOMAN (LENTEN TRIODIAN BEGINS), Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- FEB 2 - (Thurs) MEETING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- FEB 5 - (Sun) PUBLICAN & PHARISEE, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- FEB 29 - (Wed) PRE-SANCTIFIED, 7 PM
- MAR 4 - (Sun) SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- MAR 7, 14, 21 - (Weds) PRE-SANCTIFIEDS, 7 PM
- MAR 25 - (Sun) ANNUNCIATION, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- MAR 28/APR 4 - (Weds) PRE-SANCTIFIEDS, 7 PM
- APR 7 - LAZARUS SATURDAY, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- APR 8 - (Sun) ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM, Divine Liturgy & BLESSING OF PALMS, 10 AM
- APR 11 - HOLY WEDNESDAY (Holy Unction) 7 PM
- APR 12 - HOLY THURSDAY (Twelve Passion Gospels) 7 PM
- APR 13 - HOLY FRIDAY (Vespers, Taking Down From Cross) 3 PM; Lamentations at Tomb 7 PM
- APR 14 - HOLY SATURDAY (Vesperal Liturgy of St Basil) 9 AM; ORTHROS/PASHKAL CANON/LITURGY 11 PM
- APR 15 - PASCHA SUNDAY (Agape Vespers; Gospel in many languages) NOON
- MAY 24 - HOLY ASCENSION THURSDAY, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- JUN 3 - HOLY PENTECOST SUNDAY, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- JUN ? - (Sat/Sun - *To Be Announced*) CELEBRATION OF SS PETER & PAUL FEAST DAY with His Grace Bishop Nikon; Divine Liturgy 9 AM; *Parish Meal after the Divine Liturgy*
- JUN 29 - (Fri) SS PETER & PAUL FEAST DAY, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- AUG 6 - (Mon) HOLY TRANSFIGURATION, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- AUG 15 - (Wed) DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- SEP 14 - (Fri) EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- OCT 1 - (Mon) PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- NOV ? - (Sat/Sun - *To Be Announced*) ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM FEAST DAY & His Grace Bishop Nikon's visit to our Sister Parish (****No Services at SS Peter & Paul****)
- DEC 25 - (Tues) NATIVITY, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
- JANUARY 2013**
- JAN 1 - (Tues) CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD; ST BASIL THE GREAT, Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- JAN 6 - (Sun) THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD & GREAT BLESSING OF WATER, Divine Liturgy 10 AM