



***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 ~ January 2005*

## **Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful**

### **Theosis: Ultimate Home of the Human Soul**

"When human beings completely obliterate their own egotism and reach the state of Theosis," Father Maximos explained as we reached elder Paisio's gate, "then whatever they wish is what God wishes, and it is given. There is little separation between the individual ego and God, between the will of the perfected, Christified individual, and the will of God."

"Such is the state of sainthood, the state that elder Paisios reached after his lifelong ascetical struggles. He freed himself of egotistical passions to such a degree," Father Maximos explained, "that he became a purified vessel through which the blessings and energies of the Holy Spirit were channeled."

Before elder Paisios opened the door for us, Father Maximos hastened to clarify that a "Christified" human being continues to maintain a personal identity within that state of unity with God. In the Christian mystical tradition, the ultimate state of Theosis does not imply the obliteration of one's individuality."

*-- From **The Mountain of Silence** by Kyriacos C. Markides*

#### **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM FATHER STEPHEN:**

As of January 1, 2005, all confessions and consultations on Sunday mornings shall take place from 9 AM to 10 AM before the Divine Liturgy. Thank you.

**Father Stephen** may be reached at **267-973-9775**, Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM; e-mail: [ssiniari@covenanthousepa.org](mailto:ssiniari@covenanthousepa.org)

### **Events & Announcements**

#### **Liturgical Schedule - January/February 2005**

**CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST/ST. BASIL THE GREAT - SATURDAY, JANUARY 1**  
- *No Services at SS Peter & Paul*

**THEOPHANY OF CHRIST - THURSDAY, JANUARY 6** - *No Services at SS Peter & Paul*

**THE GREAT BLESSING OF WATER - SUNDAY, JANUARY 9** - Divine Liturgy, 10 AM

**PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2** - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

#### **Church News & Reminders**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES 2005** - Dues are \$100 per person and can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** - Normally held the 1st Monday of every month, 7 PM. 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.

**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** - *In December, 11 casseroles, hand soaps, dental floss and other personal items were delivered to St John's Hospice.* 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!*

**NEW CENSER & NEW ICON DONATIONS** - Donations are needed for a new censer and for the purchase of new Icons. Our Icons need to be updated and the following Saints need to be purchased: St. Nicholas, St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. Barbara, St. Antigone, St. Dimitri, SS Peter & Paul (together & separately), the 4 Evangelists, as well as others. *We thank you for your support in this project. Please donate generously.*

**POOR BOX DONATIONS** - Please continue to remember those who are less fortunate than we are.

**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.

**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**

**MEETING** - Sunday, **January 9**, after Divine Liturgy

## **Events**

**ICON PLEDGE SUNDAY** *Postponed* **UNTIL SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2005** - Immediately following the Divine Liturgy. This is SS Peter & Paul's single largest fundraiser of the year. It is integral in funding our operating expenses. Please make every effort to attend and please bid generously. Absentee bids are also accepted.

**ORDINATION OF GREGORY VRATO, JR.** - His Grace Bishop Nikon will be at SS Peter & Paul on **Sunday, February 20, 2005**, for the ordination of Gregory Vrato, Jr. as a Deacon.

**SPECIAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - Sunday, February 27, 2005**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend this most important meeting. Among the agenda items at this time are: 1) Election of delegates to Archdiocesan annual assembly in Toronto in July. 2) Discussion of long term goals for parish. 3) Filling anticipated vacancies in the Church Board.

### **Of General Interest**

**A SINCERE THANK YOU** to Fr. Gregory Dudash and to Fr. Sergius Willis for coming to serve Liturgy during the Nativity Season.

**A QUESTION BOX** has been set up in the Church Hall upstairs. If you have a question for Fr. Stephen, please fill out a question form (they are in the box) and leave it in the box. Father will answer a few of the questions each month in the Bulletin.

**SS PETER & PAUL BULLETINS - NOV '02 TO THE PRESENT** are now available for viewing at any time. They are in a white binder on the top shelf of the bookcase in the office.

### **Miscellaneous**

**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](mailto: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](mailto:alicia17@mac.com). The deadline for the next Bulletin is **Sunday, January 30**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on **Sunday 2/6/05**. 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 **January** Birthdays: **Lyudmila Chervinchik, Connie Douris, Kakhaber Okropiridze, Liliya Skuratovskiy, Vicki Steffa**

*May God grant them all many, many years!*

**A VERY SPECIAL WELCOME** is extended to the newest members of our Parish, Jason and Katia Vansuch. *May God grant Jason & Katia many years!*

**A SINCERE THANK YOU** to the following parishioners who helped with the preparation and decorating of our Church for Nativity: **Belinda Mentzer, Sandy & Lester Speero, Sophie & Joe Bacon, Edna Bachelor, Martha Murianka, Christina Murianka**. And a most special **THANK YOU** to any people whose names were inadvertently omitted.

**HELP IN PREPARATION OF SIMPLE WILLS** is being provided to any parishioners who wish to take advantage of this service. This is a free service to the Church and anyone using this service can make a donation to the Church if they wish. For details see Helen Banushi, call 267-978-2126, or contact Fr. Stephen.

### **Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers**

\*\*\* *Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of **Martha Murianka**.*

\*\*\* *Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of **Nina Horowitz**.*

\*\*\* *Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of **Spiro Costas**.*

### **Tsunami Victims Get Relief through IOCC/Church Efforts**

January 7, 2005

Baltimore (IOCC) — A global Orthodox Christian response, bolstered by a groundswell of charitable giving, is bringing life-sustaining assistance to some of the hardest hit victims of the South Asia tsunami. Urgently-needed items such as medicines, tents, blankets, foodstuffs and hygiene supplies are reaching tsunami victims through airlifts being supported by International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), a humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians.

At the same time, a team composed of IOCC staff from Greece and Hong Kong and local Indonesian church officials is gathering on the island of Sumatra to coordinate the growing response. The team's needs-assessment mission is a joint effort of IOCC and the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

The team will focus on the situation on the ground in and around Medan, the capital of North Sumatra Province in Indonesia, where the Metropolitanate has facilities and churches that can provide support to relief efforts there. Members of the team will coordinate with IOCC's longtime partners Church World Service (CWS) and Action by Churches Together (ACT).

IOCC also is participating in ongoing CWS airlifts of humanitarian supplies valued at \$4 million. The shipments contain 100 medicine boxes, each designed to provide routine medicines for 1,000 adults and children for three months, and other medical supplies; shelter and sanitation kits; blankets and emergency foodstuffs; and other critical supplies requested by IOCC partners in the region.

"We will continue to support these very concrete airlift efforts in the coming weeks," said IOCC Executive Director Constantine M. Triantafilou, "along with Or-

thodox church-based efforts in the United States – such as assembling and sending thousands of ‘Gift of the Heart’ health and school kits.”

IOCC is encouraging Orthodox Christians to continue assembling health kits, which are urgently needed for shipment to the areas hardest hit by the tsunami. To learn more about assembling the health kits, please visit [www.iocc.org/healthkits](http://www.iocc.org/healthkits).

“We are grateful for this unprecedented show of support,” Triantafilou said, “which will enable IOCC to meet the immediate needs of those affected and work toward long-term recovery and reconstruction.”

IOCC’s partnership with the Metropolitanate, CWS and ACT, and local authorities will help ensure that relief efforts are effectively coordinated, he said.

### **How You Can Help the Massive Disaster in South Asia**

SS Peter & Paul has added to donations collected last Sunday, January 2nd, for the South Asia earthquake disaster and has sent \$1,000 to the IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities). Donations and pledges are currently being accepted for those of you who have not yet contributed or wish to add to your original donation. If you wish to send a personal donation directly to the IOCC, the information is in the box to the right. Checks should be made payable to: **IOCC Asia Disaster Response**.

IOCC has an outstanding record of stewardship. When you give to IOCC, you can give confidently knowing that IOCC is committed to maintaining low administrative costs so that more funds can go directly to helping people in need. Ninety-two percent of IOCC's resources go to humanitarian relief and development programs.

The latest news release from the IOCC can be found on the previous page, page 5.

IOCC is joining with its partner Church World Service to respond immediately to the massive earthquake disaster throughout Southern Asia. Your help is urgently needed in order for us to complete the initial phase of our relief efforts. Donations may be mailed to us or submitted online at [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org). You may also call our toll-free hotline at **1-877-803-IOCC (4622)**.

P.O. Box 630225  
Baltimore, MD 21263 0225  
Toll-Free: 1-877-803-4622  
Fax: 1-410-243-9824  
Internet: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org)



### **Holy Days and Name Days in January**

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| January 1  | - Circumcision of Christ; St Basil the Great           |
| January 2  | - St Seraphim of Sarov                                 |
| January 6  | - Theophany of Christ                                  |
| January 7  | - Synaxis of St John the Baptist                       |
| January 10 | - St Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa; St Theophan the Recluse |

- January 11 - St Theodosius the Great
- January 12 - St Sava, Archbishop of Serbia; Martyr Tatiana of Rome
- January 14 - St Nina of Georgia, Equal-to-the-Apostles
- January 17 - St Anthony the Great, Founder of Monasticism
- January 18 - St Athanasius the Great; St Cyril of Alexandria
- January 19 - St Macarius the Great; St Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus
- January 20 - St Euthymios the Great
- January 21 - St Maximus the Confessor
- January 23 - Martyr Clement of Ancyra; Martyr Agathangel
- January 24 - St Xenia of Rome; Blessed Xenia of St Petersburg
- January 25 - St Gregory the Theologian
- January 26 - St David of Georgia
- January 28 - St Ephraim the Syrian; St Isaac the Syrian
- January 30 - 3 Hierarchs: St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian, St John Chrysostom

### ***The Circumcision of the Lord***

On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the Old Testament Law, accepted circumcision, which was decreed for all male infants as a sign of the Covenant of God with the Forefather Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:10-14, Lev 12:3).



Upon the performing of this ritual the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos (Lk 1:31-33, 2:21). The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, accepted circumcision in order to give people an example how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics (Docetists) taught.

Together with circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God's Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus (Savior) as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world (Mt 1:21; Mk 9:38-39, 16:17; Lk 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Phil 2:9-10). These two events, the Circumcision and Naming, remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and "are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by

the circumcision of Christ" (Col 2:11). The very name "Christian" is a sign of mankind's entrance into a New Covenant with God.

~ Reading and Icon Courtesy of the OCA Webpage ~



## **Troparion for Saints Peter and Paul**

**O Leaders of the Apostles  
And Evangelizers of the World  
Intercede with Christ our God  
To grant Peace to the World  
And Salvation to our Souls**

