



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 ~ November 2008

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

Joseph Was an Old Man

Joseph was an old man
An old man was he
Betrothed to Virgin Mary
The Queen of Galilee

As Joseph and Mary was walkin'
Was walkin' one day
"Here are apples, here are cherries,"
Mary did say

Then Mary said to Joseph
So meek and so mild
"Uncle gather me some cherries
For I am with child"

Then Joseph flew in anger
In anger flew he
"Let the father of the baby
Gather cherries for thee."

Jesus spoke a few words
A few words spoke he
"Give my mother some cherries,
Bow down, cherry tree.

Bow down, cherry tree
Low down to the ground"
Mary gathered cherries
And Joseph stood around

Joseph took niece Mary
All on his right knee
"What have I done, Lord?"
Have mercy on me."

Then Joseph took niece Mary
All on his left knee,
"Oh tell me, little baby,
when will thy birth be?"

"On the sixth of January
My birth day will be,
When the stars in the elements
Will tremble with glee."

*— American version
of Olde English Carol*

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 -November/December 2008

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S FEASTDAY & HIS GRACE BISHOP NIKON'S VISIT TO OUR SISTER PARISH - DECEMBER 20 - 21 - *NO SERVICES AT SS PETER & PAUL*

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

EVE OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & ST BASIL THE GREAT - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31 - **Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St Basil, 6 PM**

Schedule of Other Services

BIBLE STUDY - EVERY WEDNESDAY - 7 PM - 8:30 PM in the Church Hall - Bible Study led by **Fr. Dn. Gregory**. The title for the Bible Study is "*Seeking the Treasure of Christ Throughout Scripture*." The study will use the new Orthodox Study Bible of the Old and New Testament as a base. The first topic of discussion will be the meaning of the story of Adam and Eve and the discussions will proceed with a journey through the Hebrew Bible.

Church News & Reminders

ICON PLEDGES - Due by end end of December 2008 and can be paid at any time to our treasurer, James Schaeffer. **Please note:** when returning your Icons, please return them to the Church Store. You will be given a receipt for all Icons returned. **All icons are to be returned as soon as possible.**

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - The 1st Monday of each 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. *Please note: if the services of the Church Choir are required, please notify the Choir Director, Christina Murianka, as soon as possible.*

Memorials: Any help in setting up and cleaning up from the families involved is truly appreciated and welcomed by the Ladies Society.

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

CHURCH LIBRARY DONATIONS - We are greatly in need of monetary donations for buying books to establish our Church Library to help all of us continue to learn about the Orthodox Faith. Any amount is truly appreciated and can be given to our Treasurer, James Schaeffer, at any time. *May God bless you for your generosity!*

PASTORAL FUND/POOR BOX - Please note: There are now 2 collection boxes in the back of the church, **the Poor Box AND a Pastoral Fund Box**. *Please donate generously!*

CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS - In October: *7 casseroles, 1 bag of toiletries and 1 bag of towels were delivered. Additionally, 6 bags of canned goods were delivered to a local church food bank. Disposable razors and individual/small tubes of hand lotion are still needed.* Please continue to help feed the hungry. Frozen casseroles are collected 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.

POP TAB COLLECTION PROGRAM FOR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE - RJ (and his parents, Debbie & Bob Krimetz) is collecting flip tabs from any aluminum cans to donate to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. *Help by bringing in your tabs! Thank you*

Ladies Society News

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR - Sunday, December 7, after Divine Liturgy. Donations of new, **unused** items for the raffle are welcomed. Monetary donations are also welcomed. *Please help with your time, donations, or special talents! Thank you!*

General Interest

"UNITY FOR THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA" CONFERENCE - Saturday, November 15, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM - at St Michael's Orthodox Church, 4th & Fairmount, Phila. **Registration:** Adults, \$20; Senior Citizens, \$15; Students, Free. *Includes coffee hour, lunch, speaker fees. Last minute registration at the door.* If you can't afford it, come anyway; no one turned away! **EVERYONE IS WELCOME! BRING FRIENDS!**

Topics/Speakers: *"The Necessity for American Orthodox Unity"* and *"The Future of American Orthodox Unity"* -- Archpriest Chad Hatfield (Chancellor of St Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NJ); *"Historical Attempts at American Orthodox Unity"* -- Archpriest Vincent Severino (Pastor of St Michael's Church, Phila., PA)

Contact: Fr John Udics, 610-713-9358 or john.udics@comcast.net. For last minute information, call St Michael's Church, 215-627-6148.

Copies of the flyer will be available in the Church Hall and online via a link in the Bulletin Page.

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>

ALBANIAN FORUM ON THE INTERNET (FORUMI SHQIPTAR) - has a section on: Komuniteti Orthodhoks. It has extensive offerings on Orthodoxy in the Albanian language. They are divided into many themes, i.e. "The Birth of Christ," "The Church is One," a catechism and includes Fr. Thomas Hopko's entire Rainbow series.

Ne gjuhen shqipe: per te dhena informative mbi Kishen Orthodhokse, klikoni "Komuniteti Orthodhoks" ne uebsajten Forumi Shqiptar me poshte:

Theurlis: www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186

Miscellaneous

SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH STORE - Open every Sunday at 9:30 AM (one half hour before Divine Liturgy) and after Divine Liturgy until 1:30 PM

Items available: Icons; Crosses (Baptismal, lapel pins, Georgian style, orthodox); Prayerbooks (Georgian and English); Censors; Unique and different wearing apparel; CDs and cassettes; Religious Books

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 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 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, **November 23**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday **11/30/08**.* 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 **November** Birthdays: Yelena Alekseyeva, Marie Antony, Jim Bachelor, Spiro Costas, Alicia Jaroni, Joanne Johns, Sallie Muzekari, Al Rifkin, Dn. Gregory Vrato, Nick Zeo

May God grant them all 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!

THE UPDATED SS PETER & PAUL PARISH DIRECTORY is being included with this mailing. If you need another copy, please contact Alicia at 215-742-0492 or e-mail: aliciaj17@mac.com. Additional copies will also be available upstairs in the Church Hall.

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 7.*

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, Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Al Rifkin, Sophie Bacon, Angie Kozlowski, James Vesho, Margot Craig, Eteri Okropiridze**

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

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"Happiness resides not in possessions and not in gold,  
The Feeling of Happiness dwells in the soul"

-- Democritus

## Annual Archdiocesan Assembly 2008

Friday evening, September 26 & Saturday Morning, September 27





**Photographs courtesy of Fr. Michael Soter & Fr. Sergei Bouteneff**

### **Holy Days and Name Days in November**

- November 1 - SS Cosmas & Damian; St Theodota; Martyrs John & James
- November 8 - Synaxis for the Archangel Michael & the Other Bodiless Powers
- November 11 - Martyr Menas of Egypt
- November 13 - St John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople
- November 14 - Apostle Philip; Emperor Justinian & Wife Theodora; St Gregory Palamas
- November 15 - Beginning of Nativity Fast
- November 16 - Apostle & Evangelist Matthew
- November 17 - St Gregory the Wonderworker; St Lazarus the Iconographer
- November 21 - Entry of the Most-Holy Theotokos into the Temple
- November 24 - Greatmartyr Catherine; Greatmartyr Mercurius; St Philotheus the Romanian
- November 25 - Leavetaking of the Entry of the Theotokos; St Clement of Ochrid
- November 30 - Apostle Andrew, the First-Called

#### **Greatmartyr Catherine of Alexandria**

*(Commemorated November 24)*



The Holy Great Martyr Catherine was the daughter of Constus, the governor of Alexandrian Egypt during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-313). Living in the capital, the center of Hellenistic knowledge, and possessed of a rare beauty and intellect, Catherine received an excellent education, studying the works of the greatest philosophers and teachers of antiquity. Young men from the most worthy families of the empire sought the hand of the beautiful Catherine, but she was not interested in any of them. She told her parents that she would enter into marriage only with someone who surpassed her in nobility, wealth, comeliness and wisdom.

Catherine's mother, a secret Christian, sent her to her own spir-

itual Father, a saintly Elder living in a cave outside the city, for advice. After listening to Catherine, the Elder said that he knew of a Youth who surpassed her in everything. "His countenance is more radiant than the shining of the sun, and all of creation is governed by His wisdom. His riches are given to all the nations of the world, yet they never diminish. His compassion is unequaled."

This description of the Heavenly Bridegroom produced in the soul of the holy maiden an ardent desire to see Him. "If you do as I tell you," said the monk, "you will gaze upon the countenance of this illustrious man." In parting, the Elder handed Catherine an icon of the Theotokos with the divine Child Jesus on Her arm and told her to pray with faith to the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of the Heavenly Bridegroom, and She would hear Catherine and grant her heart's desire.

Catherine prayed all night and was permitted to see the Most Holy Virgin, Who said Her Divine Son, "Behold Thy handmaiden Catherine, how fair and virtuous she is." But the Child turned His face away from her saying, "No, she is ugly and unbelieving. She is a foolish pauper, and I cannot bear to look at her until she forsakes her impiety."

Catherine returned again to the Elder deeply saddened, and told him what she had seen in the dream. He lovingly received her, instructed her in the faith of Christ, admonished her to preserve her purity and integrity and to pray unceasingly. She then received the Mystery of holy Baptism from him. Again St Catherine had a vision of the Most Holy Theotokos with Her Child. Now the Lord looked tenderly at her and gave her a beautiful ring, a wondrous token of her betrothal to the Heavenly Bridegroom (This ring is still on her hand).

At that time the emperor Maximian was in Alexandria for a pagan festival. Therefore, the celebration was especially splendid and crowded. The cries of the sacrificial animals, the smoke and the smell of the sacrifices, the endless blazing of fires, and the bustling crowds at the arenas defiled the city of Alexandria. Human victims also were brought, the confessors of Christ, those who would not deny Him under torture. They were condemned to death in the fire. The saint's love for the Christian martyrs and her fervent desire to ease their sufferings compelled Catherine to speak to the pagan priest and to the emperor Maximian.

Introducing herself, the saint confessed her faith in the One True God and with wisdom exposed the errors of the pagans. The beauty of the maiden captivated the emperor. In order to convince her and to show the superiority of pagan wisdom, the emperor ordered fifty of the most learned philosophers and rhetoricians of the Empire to dispute with her, but the saint got the better of the wise men, so that they came to believe in Christ themselves. St Catherine made the Sign of the Cross over the martyrs, and they bravely accepted death for Christ and were burned alive by order of the emperor.

Maximian, no longer hoping to convince the saint, tried to entice her with the promise of riches and fame. Receiving an angry refusal, the emperor gave orders to subject the saint to terrible tortures and then throw her in prison. The Empress Augusta, who had heard much about the saint, wanted to see her. She prevailed upon the military commander Porphyrius to accompany her to the prison with a detachment of soldiers. The empress was impressed by the strong spirit of St Catherine, whose face was radiant with



divine grace. The holy martyr explained the Christian teaching to them, and they were converted to Christ.

On the following day they again brought the martyr to the judgment court where, under the threat of being broken on the wheel, they urged that she renounce the Christian Faith and offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint steadfastly confessed Christ and she herself approached the wheels; but an angel smashed the instruments of execution, which shattered into pieces with many pagans standing nearby.

Having beheld this wonder, the Empress Augusta and the imperial courtier Porphyrius with 200 soldiers confessed their faith in Christ in front of everyone, and they were beheaded. Maximian again tried to entice the holy martyr, proposing marriage to her, and again he was refused. St Catherine firmly confessed her fidelity to the heavenly Bridegroom Christ, and with a prayer to Him she herself lay her head on the block beneath the executioner's sword.

The relics of St Catherine were taken by the angels to Mount Sinai. In the sixth century,, the venerable head and left hand of the holy martyr were found through a revelation and transferred with honor to a newly-constructed church of the Sinai monastery, built by the holy Emperor Justinian (November 14).

St Catherine is called upon for relief and assistance during a difficult childbirth. Pilgrims to her monastery on Mt Sinai are given souvenir rings as a remembrance of their visit.

~ Reading and Icon Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~