



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 ~ April 2010

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

Doubting Thomas

"Faith in God, then, is not all the same as the kind of logical certainty that we attain in Euclidean geometry.

God is not the conclusion to a process of reasoning, the solution to a mathematical problem. To believe in God is not to accept the possibility of His existence because it has been 'proved' to us by some theoretical argument, but it is to put our trust in One whom we know and love. Faith is not the supposition that something might be true, but the assurance that someone is there.

Because faith is not logical certainty but a personal relationship, and because this personal relationship is as yet very incomplete in each of us and needs continually to develop further, it is by no means impossible for faith to coexist with doubt. The two are mutually exclusive.

Perhaps there are some who by God's grace retain throughout their life the faith of a little child, enabling them to accept without question all that they have been taught. For most of those living in the West today, however, such an attitude is simply not possible. We have to make our own the cry, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief'. For very many of us this will remain our constant prayer right up to the very gates of death. Yet doubt does not in itself signify lack of faith. It may mean the opposite -- that our faith is alive and growing."

--*Bishop Kallistos Ware* in The Orthodox Way



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.

Holy Days and Name Days in April

April 1	- Holy Thursday
April 2	- Holy Friday
April 3	- Holy Saturday
April 4	- Pascha - Feast of Feasts
April 7	- Repose of St Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow
April 9	- Monk Martyr Vadim of Persia
April 11	- St Thomas Sunday
April 14	- St Martin, Confessor, Pope of Rome
April 16	- Holy Martyrs Agape, Irene & Chionia
April 18	- Holy Myrrhbearing Women
April 23	- Holy Greatmartyr, Victorybearer and Wonderworker George
April 25	- Sunday of the Paralytic; Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark
April 28	- St Jason & St Sosipater
April 30	- Holy Apostle James, Brother of St John; St Ignatius Brianchaninov

Apostle and Evangelist Mark (Commemorated April 25)

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark, born in Jerusalem, also known as John Mark (*Acts 12:12*), was one of the Seventy Apostles, and was also a nephew of St Barnabas. The house of his mother Mary adjoined the Garden of Gethsemane. As Church Tradition relates, on the night that Christ was betrayed Mark followed after Him, wrapped only in a linen cloth. He was seized by soldiers, and fled away naked, leaving the cloth behind (*Mark 14:51-52*). After the Ascension of the Lord, the house of his mother Mary became a place where Christians gathered, and a place of lodging for some of the Apostles (*Acts 12:12*).



St Mark was a very close companion of the Apostles Peter and Paul and Barnabas. In the city of Paphos in Cyprus, St Mark witnessed the blinding of the sorcerer Elymas by St Paul (*Acts 13:6-12*).

After working with the Apostle Paul, St Mark returned to Jerusalem, and then went to Rome with the Apostle Peter. From there, he set out for Egypt, where he established a local Church. He met St Paul in Antioch and from there went with St Barnabas to Cyprus, and then he to Egypt again, where he and St Peter founded many churches. Then he went to Babylon. From this city the Apostle Peter sent an Epistle to the Christians of Asia Minor, in which he calls St Mark his son (*1 Pet 5:13*).

When the Apostle Paul came to Rome in chains, St Mark was at Ephesus, where St Timothy was bishop. St Mark went with him to Rome where he wrote his holy Gospel (*ca. 62-63*).

From Rome St Mark traveled to Egypt. In Alexandria he started a Christian school, which later produced such famous Fathers and teachers of the Church as Clement of Alexandria, St Dionysius of Alexandria, and St Gregory Thaumaturgos. Zealous for Church services, St Mark composed a Liturgy for the Christians of Alexandria.

St Mark preached the Gospel in the inner regions of Africa, and he was in Libya at Nektopolis.

During these journeys, St Mark was inspired by the Holy Spirit to go again to Alexandria and confront the pagans. There he visited the home of Ananias, and healed his crippled hand. The dignitary happily took him in, listened to his words, and received Baptism.

Following the example of Ananias, many of the inhabitants were also baptized. This roused the enmity of the pagans, and they wanted to kill St Mark. Having learned of this, St Mark

made Ananias a bishop, and the three Christians, Malchos, Sabinos, and Kerdinos were ordained presbyters to provide the church with leadership after his death.

The pagans seized St Mark when he was serving the Liturgy. They beat him, dragged him through the streets and threw him in prison. There St Mark was granted a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who strengthened him before his sufferings. On the following day, the angry crowd again dragged the saint through the streets to the courtroom, but along the way St Mark died saying, "Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

The pagans wanted to burn the saint's body, but when they lit the fire, everything grew dark, thunder crashed, and there was an earthquake. The pagans fled in terror, and Christians took up the body of St Mark and buried it in a stone crypt. This was on April 4, 63. The Church celebrates his memory on April 25.

In the year 310, a church was built over the relics of St Mark. In 820, when the Moslem Arabs had established their rule in Egypt and oppressed the Christian Church, the relics of St Mark were transferred to Venice and placed in the church named for him.

In the ancient iconographic tradition, which adopted symbols for the holy Evangelists borrowed from the vision of St John the Theologian (Rev 4:7) and the prophecy of Ezekiel (Ez. 1:10), the holy Evangelist Mark is represented by a lion, symbolizing the might and royal dignity of Christ (Rev 5:5).

St Mark wrote his Gospel for Gentile Christians, emphasizing the words and deeds of the Savior which reveal His divine Power. Many aspects of his account can be explained by his closeness to St Peter. The ancient writers say that the Gospel of Mark is a concise record of St Peter's preaching.

One of the central theological themes in the Gospel of St Mark is the power of God achieving what is humanly impossible. The Apostles performed remarkable miracles with Christ (Mark 16:20) and the Holy Spirit (Mark 13:11) working through them. His disciples were told to go into the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures (Mark 13:10, 16:15), and that is what they did.

~ Reading & Icon Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~

Events & Announcements

Liturgical Schedule - March/April /May

- + ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM - MARCH 28 - Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Palms, 10 AM**
- + HOLY WEDNESDAY - HOLY UNCTION,, MARCH 31 - 7 PM**
- + HOLY THURSDAY - TWELVE PASSION GOSPELS, APRIL 1 - 7 PM**
- + HOLY FRIDAY - VESPERS, TAKING DOWN FROM CROSS,, APRIL 2 - 3 PM; LAMENTATIONS AT TOMB - 7 PM**
- + HOLY SATURDAY - VESPERAL LITURGY OF ST BASIL, APRIL 3 - 9 AM; ORTHROS/PASHKAL CANON/LITURGY - 11 PM**
- + PASCHA SUNDAY - AGAPE VESPERS, GOSPEL IN MANY LANGUAGES, APRIL 4 - Noon**
- + HOLY ASCENSION THURSDAY - MAY 13 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM**
- + HOLY PENTECOST SUNDAY - MAY 23 - Divine Liturgy, 10 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 & Reminders

◇ **ICON PLEDGES** - 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.*

◇ **MEMBERSHIP DUES 2010** - Membership Dues for 2010 are \$125. *Dues* can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

◇ **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.

◇ **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** - Tuesday, April 12, 7 PM. All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

The Joy of Giving

◇ **EASTER FLOWERS DONATION** - Please donate generously to defray the cost of Pascha flowers. **You may give your donation directly to Belinda Mentzer or or to our Treasurer, Jim Schaeffer (please inform Jim that your donation is for Pascha flowers).** Thank you!

◇ **CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS** - *In March: 13 casseroles, 1 frozen turkey and 1 bag of toiletries were delivered to the Hospice. Thanks to all!* 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. Disposable razors and individual/small tubes of hand lotion are still needed. *Thank you!*

◇ **HAITI RELIEF DONATIONS** - The *International Orthodox Christian Charities* website is: <http://iocc.org>. Or mail a check to: **IOCC, PO Box 630225, Baltimore, MD 21263-0225.** 92% of resources go towards emergency relief and development programs. *Please pray for the people of Haiti.*

◇ **COLLECTION SUNDAYS** - **May God bless you for your generosity!**

1st Sunday of each month - *Collection for the Poor*; **2nd Sunday** - *Orthodox Herald*;

3rd Sunday - *Pastoral Fund*

◇ **OTHER DONATIONS: Church Library; Pop Tab Collections for Ronald McDonald House; Wine & Oil:** Altar wine (**Mavrodaphne of Patras** - available at most PA State Stores); Virgin Olive Oil

Ladies Society News

◇ **ROAST BEEF SANDWICHES & CAKE SALE** - **Sunday, April 18,** after Divine Liturgy

◇ **A REQUEST...** if you have borrowed any containers, trays, bowls, coffee carafes, etc. from the kitchen, **please return them as soon as possible.** These items are used for many of the functions held in the Church Hall and they are needed. *Thank you!*

Sunday School News

◇ **HUSH! PLEASE!** - Please, if you are upstairs in the Church Hall when Sunday School is in session, make an effort to speak softly so as not to disturb the teaching! Thank you!

Future Events at SS Peter and Paul

◇ **SOUP SALE SUNDAY** - **March 28,** immediately following Divine Liturgy. There will be 5 different kinds of soups available to eat at the Church Hall or take home in larger containers. All proceeds to benefit Covenant House.

◇ **POT LUCK PASCHA WITH FR STEPHEN & PRIFTESHA MARGOT - Sunday, April 4,** immediately following Agape Vespers, Fr Stephen and Priftesha Margot will be celebrating Pascha in the Church Hall. Bring your Pascha basket or your favorite dish and come and share this meal with your brothers and sisters.

◇ **90TH YEAR CELEBRATION OF THE FOUNDING OF SS PETER & PAUL - SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2010** - Our Bishop, the Right Reverend Nikon, will be visiting our Parish that weekend to join us in this most joyous event. A luncheon will follow Divine Liturgy on Sunday, June 27. Anyone wishing to help, please contact Joanne Johns.

***** We are in need of someone to take pictures of the 90th Year Celebration on Sunday, June 27th.** If anyone can help with this, please contact Joanne Johns at joannejohns@aol.com or by phone at **856-229-7563** or at Church. *Thank you!*

General Interest

◇ **ANCIENT FAITH RADIO - 24 hour a day internet Orthodox radio station:**

<http://ancientfaithradio.com>

◇ **ALBANIAN FORUM ON THE INTERNET (FORUMI SHQIPTAR)** - Ne gjuhen shqipe: per te dhena informative mbi Kishen Orthodhokse, klikoni "Komuniteti Orthodhoks" ne uebsajten Forumi Shqiptar me poshte: www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186

◇ **TEAM ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM & THE SUSAN G. KOLMEN RACE FOR THE CURE - SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2010** - If you would like to join St John's Team for this marvelous, fulfilling, life-saving journey, please contact Alicia at aliciaj17@mac.com for a forward of Donna Dimitri's email with all the information you need.

Miscellaneous

◇ **"DAILY BREAD"** - The Church distributes a daily email entitled "Daily Bread" 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. Suggested offering: \$10, which will go towards building up our Pastoral Fund with the ultimate goal of supporting a full time priest.

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH STORE** - Open Sundays at 9:30 AM (1/2 hour before Divine Liturgy)
Items available: Divine Liturgy Books, Icons; Crosses (Baptismal, lapel pins, Georgian style, orthodox); Prayerbooks (Georgian and English); Censors; Unique and different wearing apparel; CDs and cassettes; Religious Books. Also available: **IN THEIR OWN TONGUE**, a documentary chronicling the Albanian Archdiocese in America.

◇ **WEB PAGE/E-MAILS** - SS Peter & Paul Webpage: <http://homepage.mac.com/aliciaj17/sspeterpaulhome1.html>. New Bulletins 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

◇ **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 email: aliciaj17@mac.com. *The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, April 18.* Thank you! *Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday 4/25/10.* 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 **April** Birthdays: Stuart Barenbaum, Terri Drobish, Belinda Mentzer, Sally O'Brien, Rose Shaloka, Sharon Spause, Margaret Vesho. *May God grant them all many, many years!*

◇ **SINCEREST THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO ALL THOSE WHO CAME TO HELP FOR CLEAN UP DAY AND WORKED VERY HARD TO BEAUTIFY OUR CHURCH AND GROUNDS:** Linda Biando, Nina Iakimenko, Najina, Harry Halkedis, Katherine Halkedis, David Lane, Belinda Mentzer, Stephen Murianka, Lester Speero. *A most grateful "Thank You" also to those who work year-round for our Church.*

◇ **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 running!*

◇ **DONATE AN ITEM A MONTH CAMPAIGN** - This month's items are: **Forks & Napkins.** *Your continued help is truly appreciated!*

**** A sincere "Thank You" to all parishioners who so kindly donated paper towels and/or ziplock bags.*

◇ **A MONTHLY CHURCH CALENDAR** will now be included with every Bulletin for your information. There will also be a link online at the top of each webpage.

◇ **A VOLUNTEER IS NEEDED TO DIRECT THE CASSEROLE PROGRAM** - Harry Halkedis is retiring in January 2010! *Thank you, Harry, for all your incredibly hard work.* We desperately need someone to take over this most worthwhile program.

◇ **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO WORK IN THE CANDLE/BOOKSTORE ROOM** - Please speak with Joe Bacon or Harry Halkedis if you are interested.

◇ **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 Vrato, Sr., Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, Mary Palmerick, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Al Rifkin, Sophie Bacon, James Vesho, Margot Craig, Eteri Okropiridze, Katherine Halkedis, Mary Ann Clark, Paulette Steffa, Alexandra Pana, Nicholas Desloges, Steven Yarrow**
God knows the names and ages of all who need His love and mercy...



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Krishti u Ngjall! Vertete u Ngjall! (Albanian)

Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti! (Greek)

Khristos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese! (Russian)

Hristus A Inviat! Adeverat a Inviat! (Romanian)

Christus ist Auferstanden! Wahrhaf

auferstanden! (German)

Kriste aghsdga! Cheshmaritad aghsdga! (Georgian)

Cristo ha resucitado! En verdad, está

Resucitado! (Spanish)

Le Christ est Resurrecté! En Verite, il est

Resurrecté! (French)