



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

Pastor: Father Stephen Siniari
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Church Bulletin ~ February 2005

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful Hitler, Turks, and Brezhnev

The monks of Mount Athos, while keeping their focus beyond this world, also developed a culture of diplomacy that enabled them to handle problems of this kind in the world.

When Thessaloniki, the second most important city of the Byzantine empire fell to the Ottoman Turks during the fifteenth century, the Protos of Mount Athos, accompanied by a delegation of monks representing all the monasteries, journeyed there to submit their official surrender and express their loyalty to the Turkish Pasha. The monks were well aware that it was only a matter of time before Constantinople would also fall and wished to protect the monasteries from invading Turkish troops. The Pasha appreciated their surrender, did not invade the Holy Mountain, and let the monks manage their own affairs. Consequently, Athonite spirituality survived unscathed throughout the four hundred years of Ottoman rule.

Following the same logic and similar diplomatic maneuvers, the monks managed to navigate through the convulsions of the twentieth century. When the Germans invaded Greece during World War II there were fears about the fate of Mount Athos. At that time the Protos sent a letter directly to Hitler asking him to place Mount Athos under his personal protection. So much was the Fuehrer flattered by this gesture that he ordered his generals not to interfere with the life of the monks. Although a German garrison was stationed on Mount Athos, no harm was done to any of the monasteries during the entire brutal period of Nazi occupation of Greece. It was during that time that a number of Greek Jewish women and their children found refuge on the Holy Mountain. The Athonite fathers hid them there for the entire duration of Nazi rule. In doing so they violated a morbid eleventh-century taboo* barring entrance to women. It is allegedly the only time an exception was made to that prohibition.

The integrity and autonomy of the Holy Mountain was threatened once again when Greece was under a military dictatorship from 1967 to 1974. Rumors circulated during the early seventies that the government was making plans to develop the Athonite peninsula for tourists. There was even talk of turning some semi-abandoned monasteries into casinos. The fathers were horrified. Such a development would have destroyed Mount Athos together with all of its mystical treasure. Such an action would also be a blatant violation of the Byzantine charter which established Mount Athos during the ninth century as an autonomous multi-ethnic retreat exclusively reserved for monks and hermits. In response, the Protos of Mount Athos dispatched a message to Leonid Brezhnev, then secretary general of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, urging him to intervene on behalf of the Holy Mountain. Russia, the fathers wrote, had a cultural stake by Mount Athos. Many Russian saints and great elders had come out of the Holy Mountain. Furthermore, a most famous and historic monastery there, that of Saint Panteleimon, was mostly Russian. Brezhnev obliged by sending a stern letter to the Greek colonels warning of dire repercussions in the event that the Greek state, which was only a custodian of Mount Athos, interfered with its internal integrity. Once again the autonomy of the Holy Mountain survived.

***Note:** "morbid 11th century taboo" stops short of entering fully into the spirit of monastic asceticism regarding the relation of men and women as it pertains to the eschaton.

-- 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

Events & Announcements

Liturgical Schedule - February/March 2005

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

SATURDAY EVENING VESPERS - 5 PM - begin **FEBRUARY 5**

GREAT LENT - begins **MONDAY, MARCH 14**

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY - WEDNESDAYS, 7 PM - 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20 (4/20 is the last one)

ANNUNCIATION - FRIDAY, MARCH 25 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

Church News & Reminders

ICON PLEDGE SUNDAY - A sincere *Thank You* to everyone who participated in our successful **Icon Pledge Sunday**, either in person or through absentee pledges. Pledges can still be made by contacting George Kendro, Jim Schaeffer or Stephen Murianka with the Saint's name and the amount.

SUNDAY DONATION ENVELOPES - If you have not yet picked up your Sunday donation envelopes, please do so ASAP. They are in the office on the window sill behind the desk. *Thank you!*

2005 WALL CALENDARS - have finally arrived. They can be picked up in the Church Hall.

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 - Monday, February 7, 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

TSUNAMI RELIEF FUND - Our Parish sent \$1,500 to the IOCC for the Relief Fund. *Thank you for your generous contributions.*

HOLY WATER BOTTLES - The Sunday School raised \$120 selling Holy Water Bottles for Theophany. *Thank you!*

CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS - *In January, 22 casseroles, a frozen turkey, paper goods, canned goods, and 20 blankets which **Pat Bergey** arranged for pick-up were delivered.* 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.*

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

MEATBALL/HOT DOG SUNDAY - is scheduled for Sunday, **February 13**

MEETING - Sunday, **February 13**, after Divine Liturgy

LENTEN LUNCHEON - is scheduled for Cheesefare Sunday, **March 13**

Events

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. **Please make every effort to arrive at the Church by 9:30 AM.** Luncheon with His Grace will be in the Church Hall following the Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - **Sunday, February 27, 2005**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend this most

important meeting. The theme for the meeting is: **What is the purpose of the Church and her members?** 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.

ORDINATION OF JASON VANSUCH - His Grace Bishop Nikon will ordain Jason Vansuch as a **Deacon** on **Lazarus Saturday, April 23, 2005**, at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem, PA.

Of General Interest

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/alicaj17/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: alicaj17@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: alicaj17@mac.com. The deadline for the next Bulletin is **Sunday, February 27**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on **Sunday 3/6/05**. 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 **February** Birthdays: **Edna Bachelor, Janet Bachelor, Joe Bacon, Margot Craig, Amelia Daka, Virginia Daka, Ralph John, Marge Kenny, Maria Pavucek, Andrew Quirias, Lilli Shallapi, Andi Steffa, Gregory Vreto, Sr.**

May God grant them all many, many years!

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**.

*** The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is asking for prayers for **Lynette Hoppe**, an OCMC Missionary in Albania, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in December. Lynette and her husband Nathan have been serving as OCMC Missionaries in Albania since 1998. After receiving the diagnosis they decided to seek treatment at the Mayo Clinic near Lynette's parents, here in the United States. They arrived in Minnesota along with their two children, Tristan and Katherine, the last week in December 2004. On January 4, 2005, Lynette had surgery where they removed 22 lymph nodes and 15 were found to have cancer. She will be starting chemotherapy in about 3 weeks. Please keep the Hoppes and their family in your prayers.

IOCC Tsunami Relief Update Relief Supplies On The Way To Indonesia

An IOCC shipment of urgently-needed humanitarian supplies is being airlifted to Indonesia in cooperation with Church World Service. The shipment, valued at more than \$800,000, is being made possible through the generous outpouring of financial support that IOCC has received since the Dec. 26 tsunami. That's enough to help 100,000 people in need, or to help restock supplies of medical clinics that were damaged or destroyed.

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman for the 2005 Mission Appeal

February 1, 2005

To the Reverend Hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America:

From this day forth, from this hour, from this minute,

let us love God above all and fulfill His holy will. – St. Herman of Alaska

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

In 1794, a group of monks from the Valaam Monastery completed a year-long journey that led them half-way around the world. They arrived on Kodiak Island, Alaska, carrying within their hearts zeal for the Gospel and the desire to fulfill the mission which had been entrusted to them. The purpose of their mission was clear — to bring the Orthodox Faith to a people eager to receive the Good News of the Gospel. Because of the exemplary lives and efforts of those first missionaries, Orthodoxy was planted on the North American continent where it has now been firmly rooted for over 210 years.

Although the world has changed greatly since Saint Herman and his monastic companions first arrived in Alaska, the mission we have inherited from them has not. Following their example,

we also are called to bring Orthodoxy to the people of North America. The mission with which we have been entrusted is unambiguous and unequivocal. It is nothing less than proclaiming the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the peoples of this land.

One of the many ways that you can take a greater role in the Orthodox Church in America's mission to the peoples of this continent is to provide financial assistance through your support of the annual Orthodox Church in America Mission Appeal. The monies raised through this annual appeal are designated for the use of small mission communities throughout North America and provides crucial financial assistance to them in their earliest stages of formation. Your generous gift will insure that these newest mission communities can continue the work of proclaiming the Gospel, following the example of Saint Herman of Alaska and the hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful who have gone before us.

Through our support of the Mission Appeal, let us recommit ourselves to the mission we have received and follow the example of our blessed Father Herman who said, "A true Christian is made by faith and love towards Christ." Focusing on Christ, may we bring new life to these words through our efforts to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel.

With love in Christ,

+ HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

By Mail: OCA Mission Appeal, Orthodox Church in America
PO Box 675
Syosset, NY 11791-0675

Online: <http://oca.org/>
(Scroll down and click on "2005 Mission Appeal")

Holy Days and Name Days in February

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| February 1 | - St Bridget of Ireland |
| February 2 | - Meeting of Christ in the Temple |
| February 3 | - Righteous Godbearer Simeon & Anna the Prophetess |
| February 6 | - St Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople |
| February 10 | - St Haralambos; St Valentina of Palestine |
| February 11 | - St Blaise |
| February 14 | - St Cyril, Teacher of the Slavs |
| February 18 | - St Leo the Great, Pope of Rome |
| February 20 | - Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee |
| February 24 | - 1st & 2nd Finding of the Honorable Head of St John the Baptist |

- February 26 - St Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza; St Sebastian
- February 27 - Sunday of the Prodigal Son; St Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
- February 28 - St Marina & St Kira

Hieromartyr Haralambos, Bishop of Magnesia

St. Haralambos, Bishop of Magnesia (Asia Minor), successfully spread faith in Christ the Savior, guiding people on the way to salvation. The saint was arrested and brought to trial, where he confessed his faith in Christ and refused to offer sacrifice to idols.



Despite the bishop's advanced age (he was 113 years old), he was subjected to monstrous tortures. They lacerated his body with iron hooks, and scraped all the skin from his body. During this the saint turned to his tormentors, "I thank you, brethren, that you have restored my spirit, which longs to pass over to a new and everlasting life!"

Seeing the Elder's endurance and lack of malice, 2 soldiers openly confessed Christ and were beheaded. 3 women also began to glorify Christ, and were quickly martyred. The enraged military commander Lucius began to torture the holy martyr, but suddenly his forearms were cut off as if by a sword. The governor then spat in the face of the saint, and immediately his head was turned around so that he faced backwards. Then Lucius entreated the saint to show mercy on him, and both torturers were healed through the prayers of St. Haralambos.

The emperor ordered St. Haralambos to be brought to him in Antioch. Soldiers twisted the saint's beard into a rope, wound it around his neck, and used it to drag him along. They drove an iron nail into his body and began to burn him with fire, a little at a time. But God protected the saint, and he remained unharmed. St. Haralambos was sentenced to beheading with a sword. During his final prayer, the heavens opened and the saint saw the Savior and a multitude of angels. The holy martyr asked Him to grant that the place where his relics would repose would never suffer famine or disease. He also begged that there would be peace, prosperity, and an abundance of fruit, grain, and wine in that place, and that the souls of these people would be saved. The saint died before he could be executed.

Many miracles were worked through his prayer: he raised a dead youth, and healed a man tormented by devils for thirty-five years.

~ Reading Courtesy of the OCA Webpage ~
 ~ Icon Courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Webpage ~