



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: 856-616-0782



Church Bulletin ~ January 2004

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

Example of a Priest's Prayer for his Parishioners

O Lord, God my Savior,
You have called me, a great sinner,
to Your service,
and lo, I stand before You,
ready to carry out Your will,
to fulfill all that You shall command me.

But I am weak and without strength.
You are Christ, the Anointed One:
do You anoint me with Your strength,
fill me with Your love,
and let me not depart from You
or fall into indifference.

Give me strength to remain always
in union with the Holy Church, Your Body,
and grant all the clergy
to remain in unity and brotherly love.

Help me to bear my daily cross
without complaint, with patience, and love.

Extend Your mercy unto your flock whom I serve,
and to all that I have baptized, confessed,
given Communion, wedded, buried, taught, edified,
and whom I have served in Your name.

Forgive, O Lord, my sloth, negligence, and carelessness
with regard to your flock whom You have called me to serve,
forgive, Lord, all grief, insult, and offence
that I have caused them,
whether voluntary or involuntary, in word, or in deed.

Save, have mercy and do not punish
those who have grieved, insulted, or offended me.
Lead them all into Your Kingdom.
May all peoples come to know You and be saved.

Amen.

Events & Announcements

The Nativity Season

NATIVITY SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 1 (New Year's Day), Feast of St. Basil - *No services at our Parish.* Fr. Stephen will be away.

Sunday, January 4, The Great Blessing of Water

Church News & Reminders

ICON PLEDGE SUNDAY 2004 - Will be held the 2nd Sunday in January, 1/11/04, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Please plan to attend. Icon Pledges will be accepted prior to Icon Pledge Sunday, 1/11/04. Pledges can be made by contacting George Kendro, the treasurer, or Stephen Murianka with the Saint's name and the amount.

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2004 - Dues are \$100 per person and can be paid at any time to George Kendro, treasurer

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS - Will be held the 2nd Monday in January, 1/12, 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 - Harry Halkedis will continue to collect casseroles the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. A donation of \$10 to purchase a casserole for the less fortunate can be made at any time. Please see Harry, George Kendro, Jim Schaeffer, or any board member to make a donation to feed the hungry. Thank you!

Harry is also collecting towels, blankets, and sheets for the homeless. Please help if you can.

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

A HUGE THANK YOU - To all parishioners who contributed and/or helped out with their time to make the Christmas Bazaar a huge success.

HOT DOG SUNDAY - Will be held Sunday, January 11, in conjunction with Icon Pledge Sunday.

MEETING - Sunday, **January 18**, after Divine Liturgy

Events

BUS TRIP TO ST. TIKHON'S MONASTERY - After Pascha 2004 - The bus will be leaving St. John Chrysostom's at 9 AM. Lunch, tour of Museum and Monastery, spiritual talk by Monk Nickodemos, Vespers, etc. Reservations are \$20. Please contact Nick Naum at 856-429-2099 for information and/or reservations.

Miscellaneous

SUNDAY & HOLY DAYS DONATION ENVELOPES - Can be picked up in the office at any time. Please see George Kendro if you do not remember your number. Thank you!

INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION - Please call the Church at **215-676-3311** to find out if Divine Liturgy is scheduled for a particular Sunday. Steve Murianka is most diligent about putting that information on the answering machine.

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 (just click on the tip link "**Church Bulletin**"). 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: **alicia17@mac.com**. The deadline for the next Bulletin is **Sunday, January 25**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on **Sunday 2/1/04**. Bulletins will be mailed to any Parishioners unable to attend.

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.

PLEASE RECYCLE YOUR BULLETIN ENVELOPES in either of the two wire baskets. Thank you!



Parishioner's Corner

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY is wished to the following parishioners and friends who are celebrating **January** Birthdays: **Lyudmila Chervinchik, Connie Douris, Seminarian David Fox, Kahaber Okropiridze, Liliya Skuratovskiy, Vicki Steffa**

May God grant them all many, many years!

CONGRATULATIONS TO LT. COL. CHRISTOPHER P. COSTA & FAMILY - Lt. Col. Costa, son of Marge Costa (Shuttie), and Donna, Paul Jospheh, and Philip have moved to Florida. Lt. Col. Costa is now working for Central Command in Tampa. Good Luck!

ISABELLE MCGINLEY returned to Church on Sunday, 12/21. She looks great and is doing very well. It is wonderful to have her back! **Heartfelt thanks** to all for the prayers and get well messages.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

The Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman

Feast of the Nativity of Christ 2003

To the Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

With these words, the Prophet Isaiah expressed the hopes of his people as they anticipated the coming of the Messiah, the One destined to bring about the long awaited reconciliation between mankind and its Creator. It was the prophets of old who struggled to prepare for the Savior's appearance, who proclaimed the ultimate Light in the midst of unbearable darkness, and who revealed "the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1:9). In the Incarnation of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, their words—and the hopes and longings of God's People— were fulfilled, as the only-begotten Son of God reconciled the world with Himself, offering new life to all who would receive it.

Sadly, the words of the prophets too often fell on deaf ears. "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him," we read in the Prologue of the Gospel of Saint John. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11-12). There were those who, failing to grasp the fullness of the prophets' words, anticipated an earthly king who would liberate them from a hostile empire. Others, refusing to repent, rejected His words and denied His miracles, sensing that their own positions would be threatened: "If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him" (John 11:48). Those who shouted

"Hosanna!" upon His entrance into Jerusalem were one and the same as those who shouted "Crucify Him!" four days later.

Ultimately, the Light of the world could not be overcome by darkness. The One Whose throne was a manger, Whose royal court was composed of shepherds, Whose choristers were the very angels who surround the heavenly throne, revealed that He was indeed "Immanuel"—"God with us."

Today's world is not unlike that into which Our Lord was born. Two thousand years after the Incarnation, the words of the prophets—as well as the words of the One Whom the prophets proclaimed—still fall on deaf ears. The name of Jesus Christ, the Savior, has been banished in many public forums, and the life-giving truth which He revealed to the world has, in too many instances, been suppressed and even rejected. Darkness once again covers the earth, and how unfortunate it is that we find countless souls with little or no understanding of the "God (Who is) with us."

As we share in the joy of this most holy feast, we cannot isolate ourselves from the world in which we live. Hostility, anger and fear, in many instances, have replaced hope. The lure of this world can indeed be potent. The Light born from the Holy Virgin may still be denied and mocked, but He—and that which He came into this world to reveal—can never be darkened, nor can it be destroyed. In this we find cause to hope, to place our faith in the Light and Love of the world, and to find comfort as the Holy Virgin comforted her newborn son in the manger, as well as on the cross.

"Be not afraid" (Matthew 14:27), Our Lord tells Peter—and us! "Be of good cheer!" The Light of all still breaks through this darkened world, embracing and warming those who would approach Him and accept that which He so graciously and freely offers. And may we, in faithfulness to the Light, become lights to the world, bringing the Good News of "God with us" to any and all who would receive it!

I offer my greetings to the clergy, clergy wives, clergy widows and clergy families, to the monastics, the faithful, and especially to all the families of our Church and extend my blessing and prayerful best wishes for a joy-filled celebration of the Lord's Nativity and a New Year that is abundant in divine blessings. May the Lord continue to bless you all with health, happiness, and all that is needful for eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

With love in the newborn Christ,

+ H E R M A N

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman

(Translated into Albanian)

Festa e Lindjes së Krishtit 2003

Mesazh Kryepastoral i Fort Lumturisë së Tij, Mitropoliti HERMAN drejtuar të Përndershmit Kler, të Vyerit Personel Monahal dhe të gjithë besimtarëve të Kishës Ortodokse në Amerikë.

Të dashurit e mi në Zotin,

Krishti u Lind! Lavdërojeni!

"Ja, Virgjëresha do të mbajë në barkun e saj dhe do të lindë djalë dhe do ta thërresin emrin e Tij Emanuel", (Isaia 7:14).

Me këto fjalë, Profeti Isaia shprehu shpresat e popullit të tij duke pritur ardhjen e Mesias, Atij që ishte i destinuar të sillte pajtimin e shumëpritur midis njerëzimit dhe Krishtit të tij. Ishin profetët e vjetër, të cilët u përpoqën të përgatisin paraqitjen e Shpëtimtarit, të cilët shpallën Dritën e tejskajshme në mes të errësirës së padurueshme, të cilët zbuluan ***"Dritën e vërtetë e cila ndriçon çdo njeri që vjen në këtë botë"***, (Ioan 1:9). Në Mishërimin e Zotit tonë Jesu Krisht, fjalët e tyre, si dhe shpresat edhe dëshirat e Popullit të Perëndisë, u plotësuan kur i Vetëm-Linduri Bir i Perëndisë pajtoi botën me Vetën e Tij, duke u ofruar jetë të re të gjithë atyre që do ta pranonin atë.

Mjerisht, fjalët e profetëve shpeshherë ranë në veshë të shurdhër. ***"Ai ishte në botë dhe bota u bë nëpërmjet Tij, porse bota nuk e njohu Atë", lexojmë në Prologun e Ungjillit të Shën Ioanit. "Ai erdhi tek të Tijët dhe të Tijët nuk e pranuan Atë"***, (Ioan 1:10-11). Kishte nga ata që nuk mundën të kuptonin plotësinë e fjalëve të profetëve, duke pritur një mbret tokësor, i cili do t'i lironte ata nga perandoria armike. Të tjerët, duke refuzuar të pendohen, hodhën poshtë fjalët e Tij dhe mohuan mrekullitë e bëra prej Tij, duke ndjerë se pozitat e tyre personale do t'u rrezikoheshin: ***"Në qoftë se e lemë Atë kështu, të gjithë do të besojnë në Të"***, (Ioan 11:48). Ata që thirrën: ***"Osana!"***, përgjatë hyrjes së Tij në Jeruzalem, ishin po ata që thirrën: ***"Kryqëzoje!"***, katër ditë më vonë.

Së fundi, Drita e botës nuk mund të mposhtet nga errësira. Ai, i Cili pati si fron grazhdin, oborri mbretëror i të Cilit ishte i përbërë prej barinjsh, koristët e të Cilit ishin që në fillim engjëjt, të cilët rrethonin fronin qiellor, zbuluan që Ai ishte me të vërtetë ***"Emanueli"*** — ***"Perëndia është me ne"***. Bota e sotme nuk është më e njëjta si ajo dikur ku u lind Zoti ynë. Dy mijë vjet pas Mëshirimit, fjalët e profetëve, ashtu si edhe fjalët e Atij të Cilin profetët e shpallën, akoma bie në veshë të shurdhër. Emri i Jesu Krishtit, Shpëtimtarit, ka qenë i ndaluar në shumë forume publike dhe e vërteta jetëdhënëse të cilën Ai ia zbuloi botës, në shumë raste ka qenë shtypur bile edhe hedhur poshtë. Errësira përsëri mbulon tokën dhe ç'fatkeqësi është kur gjejmë shpirtra të panumërt që kuptojnë pak apo fare që ***"Perëndia (I Cili) është me ne"***.

Ashtu sikundër ndajmë midis nesh gëzimin e kësaj feste të shenjtë, nuk mund të izolohet veten tonë nga bota në të cilën jetojmë. Armiqësia, urrejtja dhe frika, në shumë raste kanë zëvendësuar shpresën. Joshjet e kësaj bote mund të jenë me të vërtetë të fuqishme. Drita e lindur nga Virgjëresha e Shenjtë mund të vazhdojë të jetë e mohuar

dhe e tallur, por Ai, dhe ajo për ç'ka Ai erdhi në këtë botë për të na zbuluar, nuk mund të errësohen asnjëherë dhe as mund të shkatërrohen. Në këtë, ne gjejmë një farë shprese, ku mund të vemë besimin tonë në Dritën dhe Dashurinë e botës, të gjejmë prehje sikundër Virgjëresha e Shenjtë prehu djalin e saj të porsalindur në grazhd, ashtu edhe në Kryq.

"Mos kini frikë", (Matei 14:27), Zoti ynë i thotë Shën Pjetrit dhe neve! **"Merrni kurajo!"**. Drita e të gjithëve vazhdon të çajë përmes kësaj bote të errët, duke përqaftuar dhe ngrohur ata që i afrohen Atij dhe pranojnë atë që Ai ofron me mëshirë dhe aq lirshëm. Dhe qoftë që, me besnikëri kundrejt Dritës, të bëhemi drita në botë, duke sjellë Lajmin e Mirë që "Perëndia është me ne", tek secili dhe të gjithë që do ta pranonin atë!

Oftoj përshëndetjet e mia për klerin, gratë e klerikëve, të vejat e klerikëve dhe familjet e klerikëve, për monahët, besimtarët dhe veçanërisht të gjitha familjeve të Kishës tonë dhe u dërgoj bekimet e mia dhe lutjet për gjithë të mirat për një festim të Lindjes së Zotit të mbushur me gëzim, si dhe për një Vit të Ri të begatë në bekimet hyjnore. Qoftë që Zoti të vazhdojë t'ju bekojë të gjithëve me shëndet, lumturi dhe me të gjitha ç'janë të nevojshme për jetën e pasosur në Mbretërinë e Qiejve.

Me dashuri në Krishtin e porsalindur,

+ H E R M A N

Kryepeshkop i Washingtonit

Mitropolit i Gjithë Amerikës dhe Kanadasë

Holy Days and Name Days in January

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 I, 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 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 Three Hierarchs



This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Joannites. Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mauropus, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor, they revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (celebrated Oct. 5) is also the composer of the

Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. In his old age, he retired from his episcopal see and again took up the monastic life in a monastery in Constantinople. He reposed during the reign of the aforementioned Emperor Alexis Comnenus (1081-1118).

~ Reading courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA ~
From the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Webpage