



***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 ~ July/August 2009*

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

**O Lord**

**Grant that I may meet  
All this coming day brings to me  
With spiritual tranquility**

**Grant that I may fully surrender myself  
To Thy Holy Will**

**At every hour of this day  
Direct and support me in all things**

**Whatsoever news  
May reach me in the course of the day  
Teach me to accept it with a calm soul  
And the firm conviction  
That all is subject  
To Thy Holy Will**

**Direct my thoughts and feelings  
In all my words and actions  
In all unexpected occurrences**

**Do not let me forget  
That all is sent down from Thee**

**Grant that I may deal straightforwardly and wisely  
With every member of my family,  
Those with whom I work,  
And those whom you have blessed me to serve  
Let me neither embarrass nor sadden anyone**

**O Lord**

**Grant me the strength to endure the fatigue of the coming day  
And all the events that take place during it**

**Direct my will and teach me to pray  
Pray Thou, Thyself in me**

**Teach me to believe  
To hope  
To be patient  
To forgive and to love.  
Amen.**

## **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](mailto: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 July

✦ <b>July 1</b>	- Unmercenary Wonderworkers Cosmas & Damian
✦ <b>July 4</b>	- St Andrew of Crete; Ven Andrew Rublev; Ven Martha
✦ <b>July 10</b>	- Ven Anthony of the Kiev Caves
✦ <b>July 11</b>	- Greatmartyr Euphemia; BI Princess Olga
✦ <b>July 15</b>	- Great Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles
✦ <b>July 16</b>	- Virginmartyr Julia
✦ <b>July 17</b>	- Greatmartyr Marina (Margaret)
✦ <b>July 18</b>	- Martyr Emilian
✦ <b>July 19</b>	- Ven Seraphim of Sarov; Ven Macrina; BI Stephen of Serbia
✦ <b>July 20</b>	- Holy Prophet Elijah
✦ <b>July 21</b>	- Prophet Ezekiel
✦ <b>July 22</b>	- Myrrbearer Mary Magdalene, Equal-to-the-Apostles; Martyr Marcella
✦ <b>July 24</b>	- Martyr Christina; Martyrs Boris & Gleb, Passionbearers
✦ <b>July 25</b>	- Dormition of Righteous Anna, Mother of the Theotokos
✦ <b>July 26</b>	- St Jacob, Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska; Martyr Parasceva
✦ <b>July 27</b>	- Greatmartyr & Healer Panteleimon

### **Holy, Glorious Prophet Elijah** (*Commemorated on July 20*)

The Holy Prophet Elijah is one of the greatest of the prophets and the first dedicated to virginity in the Old Testament. He was born in Tishba of Gilead into the Levite tribe 900 years before the Incarnation of the Word of God.

St Epiphanius of Cyprus gives the following account about the birth of the Prophet Elijah: "When Elijah was born, his father Sobach saw in a vision angels of God around him. They swaddled him with fire and fed him with flames." The name Elijah (the Lord's strength) given to the infant defined his whole life. From the years of his youth he dedicated himself to the One God, settled in the wilderness and spent his whole life in strict fasting, meditation and prayer. He became a fiery zealot of true faith and piety.

During this time the Israelite nation had fallen away from the faith of their Fathers, they abandoned the One God and worshipped pagan idols. Jezebel, the wife of king Ahab, persuaded her husband to build a temple to the pagan god Baal, which led many Israelites away from the worship of the true God. Beholding the ruin of his nation, the Prophet Elijah began to denounce King Ahab for impiety, and exhorted him to repent and turn to the God of Israel. The king would not listen to him. The Prophet Elijah then declared to him, that as punishment there would be neither rain nor dew upon the ground, and the drought would cease only by his prayer. Indeed, the word of Elijah was a torch (*Eccles. 48: 1*)

The heavens were closed for three and a half years, and there was drought and famine throughout all the land.



The Lord sent him to a cave beyond the Jordan where he was miraculously fed by ravens. When the stream dried up, the Lord sent the Prophet Elijah to Sarephta to a poor widow, a Sidonian Gentile who suffered together with her children, awaiting death by starvation. At the request of the prophet, she prepared him a bread with the last measure of flour and oil. Through the prayer of the Prophet Elijah, flour and oil were not depleted in the home of the widow for the duration of the famine. The prophet also performed another miracle: he raised the dead son of the widow.

After the end of 3 years of drought the Lord sent the prophet to appear before King Ahab, and promised to send rain upon the earth. The Prophet Elijah told the king to order all of Israel to gather upon Mount Carmel, and also the priests of Baal. When the nation had gathered, the Prophet Elijah proposed that 2 sacrificial altars be built: one for the priests of Baal, and the other for the Prophet Elijah who served the True God.

The Prophet Elijah told them to call on their gods to consume the sacrificial animals with fire, and he would call on his. Whichever was first to send fire on the sacrifice would be acknowledged as the true God. The prophets of Baal called out to their idol, but the heavens

were silent. Towards evening the holy Prophet Elijah built his sacrificial altar from 12 stones, the number of the tribes of Israel. He placed the sacrifice upon the wood, a ditch was dug around the altar and the sacrifice and the wood soaked with water. When the ditch had filled with water, the prophet turned to God in prayer and fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, and even the water. The people fell down to the ground, crying out: "Truly, the Lord is God!" Then the Prophet Elijah had all the pagan-priests of Baal put to death, and he began to pray for rain. The heavens opened and an abundant rain fell, soaking the parched earth.

King Ahab acknowledged his error and repented of his sins, but his wife Jezebel threatened to kill the prophet of God. The Prophet Elijah fled into the Kingdom of Judea and, grieving over his failure to eradicate idol worship, he asked God to let him die. An angel of the Lord came before him, strengthened him with food and commanded him to go upon a long journey. The Prophet Elijah traveled for forty days and nights and he settled in a cave at Mount Horeb.

The Lord told him that the next day Elijah would stand in His presence. There was a strong wind that crushed the rocks of the mountain, then an earthquake, and a fire, but the Lord was not in them. The Lord was in "a gentle breeze" (3 Kings 19: 12). He revealed to the prophet that He would preserve seven thousand faithful servants who had not worshipped Baal.

Later, the Lord commanded Elijah to anoint Elisha into prophetic service. Because of his fiery zeal for the Glory of God the Prophet Elijah was taken up alive into Heaven in a fiery chariot. The Prophet Elisha received Elijah's mantle, and a double portion of his prophetic spirit.

According to the Tradition of Holy Church, the Prophet Elijah will be the Forerunner of the Dread Second Coming of Christ. He will proclaim the truth of Christ, urge all to repentance, and will be slain by the Antichrist. This will be a sign of the end of the world.

Orthodox Christians of all times, and in all places, have venerated the Prophet Elijah for centuries. The first church in Russia, built at Kiev under Prince Igor, was named for the Prophet Elijah. After her Baptism St Olga (July 14) built a temple of the holy Prophet Elijah in his native region, at the village of Vibuta.

In iconography the Prophet Elijah is depicted ascending to Heaven in a fiery chariot, surrounded with flames, and harnessed to four winged horses. We pray to him for deliverance from drought, and to ask for seasonable weather.

#### ✠✠✠ Holy Days and Name Days in August ✠✠✠

✠ <b>August 1</b>	- Procession of the Life-Giving Cross; Beginning of Dormition Fast
✠ <b>August 6</b>	- Transfiguration of Our Lord
✠ <b>August 9</b>	- Ven Herman of Alaska; Apostle Matthias
✠ <b>August 12</b>	- Martyrs Anicletus and Photius
✠ <b>August 13</b>	- St Tikhon of Zadonsk; St Maximus, Confessor; Ven Maximus of Moscow
✠ <b>August 15</b>	- Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos
✠ <b>August 16</b>	- Image of Christ "Not Made by Hands"
✠ <b>August 18</b>	- Martyrs Florus & Laurus; Ven John of Rila
✠ <b>August 20</b>	- Prophet Samuel
✠ <b>August 21</b>	- Apostle Thaddeus of the 70
✠ <b>August 24</b>	- St Kozma of Berat; St Cosmas of Aetolia
✠ <b>August 25</b>	- Relics of Apostle Bartholomew; Apostle Titus of the 70
✠ <b>August 27</b>	- Ven Poemen the Great
✠ <b>August 28</b>	- Ven Job of Pochaev; Ven Moses the Black; Righteous Prophetess Anna
✠ <b>August 29</b>	- Beheading of St John the Baptist
✠ <b>August 30</b>	- St Alexander Nevsky
✠ <b>August 31</b>	- Sash of the Theotokos; Hieromartyr Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage

#### ***Translation of the Image "Not-Made-By-Hands" of our Lord Jesus Christ from Edessa to Constantinople, the Third "Feast of the Savior in August" (Commemorated on August 16)***

Eusebius, in his HISTORY OF THE CHURCH (I:13), relates that when the Savior was preaching, Abgar ruled in Edessa. He was stricken all over his body with leprosy. Reports of the great miracles worked by the Lord reached even Abgar. Without having seen the Savior, Abgar believed in Him as the Son of God. He wrote a letter requesting Him to come and heal him. He sent with this letter to Palestine his own portrait-painter Ananias, and commissioned him to paint a likeness of the Divine Teacher.

Ananias arrived in Jerusalem and saw the Lord but was not able to get close to Him because of the large throng of people listening to the preaching of the Savior. He stood on a high rock and attempted to paint the portrait of the Lord. The Savior saw him, called to him by name and gave him a short letter for Abgar in which He praised the faith of this ruler and promised to send His disciple to heal him of his leprosy and guide him to salvation.

Then the Lord asked that water and a cloth be brought to Him. He washed His Face, drying it with the cloth, and His Divine Countenance was imprinted upon it. Ananias took the cloth and the letter of the Savior to Edessa. Reverently, Abgar pressed the holy object to his face and he received partial healing. A small trace of the terrible affliction remained until the arrival of the disciple promised by the Lord, St Thaddeus, Apostle of the Seventy (August 21), who preached the Gospel and baptized Abgar and all the people of Edessa. Abgar put the Holy Napkin in a gold frame adorned with pearls, and placed it in a niche over the city gates. On the gateway above the icon he inscribed the words, "O Christ God, let no one who hopes on Thee be put to shame."

For many years the inhabitants kept a pious custom to bow down before the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands, when they went forth from the gates. One of the great-grandsons of Abgar, who later ruled Edessa, fell into idolatry and decided to take down the icon from the city wall. In a vision the Lord ordered the Bishop of Edessa to hide His icon. The bishop, coming by night with his clergy, lit a lampada before it and walled it up with a board and with bricks.

Years passed, and the icon was forgotten. In the year 545 the Persian emperor Chozroes I besieged Edessa and the Most Holy Theotokos appeared to the Bishop and ordered him to remove the icon from the sealed niche to save the city. The bishop found the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands: in front of it was burning the lampada, and upon the board closing in the niche, a copy of the icon was reproduced. After a church procession with the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands had made the circuit of the city walls, the Persian army withdrew.

In the year 630 Arabs seized Edessa, but they did not hinder the veneration of the Holy Napkin, the fame of which had spread throughout all the East. In the year 944, the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos (912-959) wanted to transfer the icon to the Constantinople, and he paid a ransom for it to the emir of the city. The Icon of the Savior Not-Made-by-Hands and the letter which He had written to Abgar were brought to Constantinople by clergy.

On August 16, the icon of the Savior was placed in the Tharossa church of the Most Holy Theotokos. There are several traditions concerning what happened later to the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands. According to one, crusaders ran off with it during their rule at Constantinople (1204-1261), but the ship on which the sacred object was taken perished in the waters of the Sea of Marmora.

According to another tradition, the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was transported around 1362 to Genoa, where it is preserved in a monastery in honor of the Apostle Bartholomew. It is known that the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands repeatedly gave from itself exact imprints. One of these, named "On Ceramic," was imprinted when Ananias hid the icon in a wall on his way to Edessa; another, imprinted on a cloak, wound up in Georgia. Possibly, the variance of traditions about the original Icon Not-Made-by-Hands derives from the existence of several exact imprints.

During the time of the Iconoclast heresy, those who defended the veneration of icons, having their blood spilt for holy icons, sang the Troparion to the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands. In proof of the validity of Icon-Veneration, Pope Gregory II (715-731) sent a letter to the Byzantine emperor, in which he pointed out the healing of King Abgar and the sojourn of the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands at Edessa as a commonly known fact. The Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was put on the standards of the Russian army, defending them from the enemy. In the Russian Orthodox Church it is a pious custom for a believer, before entering the temple, to read the Troparion of the Not-Made-by-Hand icon of the Savior, together with other prayers.

There are four known Icons of the Savior Not-Made-by-Hands:

- at Edessa, of King Abgar (August 16)

- the Kamulian, — St Gregory of Nyssa (January 10) wrote of its discovery, while according to St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (July 14), the Kamulian icon appeared in the year 392, but it had in appearance an icon of the Mother of God (August 9)

- in the time of Emperor Tiberius (578-582), St Mary Syncletike (August 11) received healing from this on ceramic tiles (16 August)

The Feast of the Transfer of the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands, made together with the Afterfeast of the Dormition, they call the third-above Savior Icon, the "Savior on Linen Cloth." The particular reverence of this Feast in the Russian Orthodox Church is also expressed in iconography, and the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was one of the most widely distributed.

## ✦✦✦ Events & Announcements ✦✦✦

### Liturgical Schedule - August/September 2009

- ✦ HOLY TRANSFIGURATION - THURSDAY, AUGUST 6 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM
- ✦ DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS - SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM
- ✦ EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

### 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

◇ **MEMBERSHIP DUES 2009** - **Please note:** THE CHURCH FISCAL YEAR ENDS SEPTEMBER 30TH; *if at all possible, please have your dues of \$125 per person paid by that time.* Dues can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

◇ **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.* **All Icons are to be returned by the end of September.**

◇ **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** - The 1st Monday of each month, 7 PM. All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

### The Joy of Giving

◇ **CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS** - 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!*

◇ **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.

◇ **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!*

◇ **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.

◇ **POP TAB COLLECTION PRGRAM 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 your tabs! Thank you!*

◇ **PASTORAL FUND BOX/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!*

## Ladies Society News

◇ **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!*

## Other Events at SS Peter & Paul



◇ **SS PETER & PAUL ANNUAL CLAM BAKE - September 19, 2009** *The date has been set for our most fun-filled & delicious event of the year. Make sure to keep Saturday, September 19, open for a super great time!*

◇ **FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION - Planned for the Fall of 2009** - A celebration of 30 years for the Consecration and Dedication of our current building and 90 years for the Dedication and choosing the name of SS Peter and Paul. *More information to follow shortly!*

## 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](http://www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186)**

## Miscellaneous

◇ **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

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL HAS A NEW WEBSITE - The new url is: [www.sspeterpaulalbanianorthodox.org](http://www.sspeterpaulalbanianorthodox.org)**. We will be gradually phasing out the current website. If you have any news or announcements that you would like to see up on the new website, please e-mail David Biando at **[davidbiando@verizon.net](mailto:davidbiando@verizon.net)** or call him at 215-725-3797 and he will post it ASAP. Suggestions are always welcomed.

◇ **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](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: [aliciaj17@mac.com](mailto:aliciaj17@mac.com). *The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, August 23*. Thank you! *Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday 8/30/09*. 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 **July** Birthdays: Helen Banushi, Andrew Cappel, Charles Daka, John Douris, Matushka Linda Dudash, Michelle Murianka, Marie Muzekari, Ted Muzekari, Sr., John Rubis, Viktor Skuratovskiy, Jennie Speero, Lester Speero, Silvia Yankova Yovtcheva

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



◇ **A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY** is wished to the following parishioners and friends who are celebrating **August** Birthdays: Al Antony, Sophie Bacon, Imogene Costas, Rdr. Daniel Drobish, Denise Gormley, Catherine Hondros, Anna Jeka, Evanthia Jeka, Valentina Maskuti, Marion Merkle, Eteri Okropiridze, Oleg Petrenko, Christina Reeves, Christina Schaeffer, Rdr. Gregory Shaloka, Jayne Siniari, Sandy Speero, John Vesho, Connie Vrato

*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!*

### Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers

Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of: **Gregory Vreto, Sr., Nina Horowitz, Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Al Rifkin, Sophie Bacon, Angie Kozlowski, James Vesho, Margot Craig, Eteri Okropiridze, Katherine Halkedis, Martha Murianka, Christina Murianka, Mary Ann Clark, Paulette Steffa, Alexandra Pana, Nicholas Desloges**

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

### **Father's footsteps: Where they lead can surprise you - Two generations rescue troubled teens**

*By Monica Yant Kinney - Inquirer Columnist; Printed Sunday, June 21, 2009*

**When other sons follow their fathers into the family business, they wind up in nice offices having lunch with clients.**

**After Alex Siniari took his dad's lead, he found himself in the middle of a homeless-shelter cafeteria fight, getting stabbed in the arm with a serrated knife.**

**Together, Alex and Steve Siniari dodge bullets, prowl abandoned buildings, and crawl under the Atlantic City Boardwalk - all in a day's work trying to reach troubled teens.**

**Alex calls his dad *Padre*, but everyone else refers to him as Father Steve, since he's an Albanian Orthodox priest. He has moonlighted for years at Covenant House, which describes itself as the largest privately funded agency in the Americas dedicated to runaway and throwaway youths.**

**Last year, more than 70,000 kids were helped at 20 Covenant Houses from Anchorage to Managua. This year, the New Jersey operation celebrates its 20th anniversary.**

**Father Steve's cell phone rings, conservatively, every three minutes. Every lost soul in Atlantic City must have him on speed dial.**

**Troy is about to be evicted. Eric wanders the Monopoly streets sick with the flu. Danielle has three kids and nothing to feed them.**

**"It's one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread," says Father Steve, 59, describing how he serves the needy on the fringes of America's playground.**



**"I try not to take credit when kids succeed or blame when they fail," adds Alex, 29 and ponytailed, with his employer's dove logo tattooed on his right wrist. "It's not about how the work makes us feel. It's about being there for these kids."**

#### ***House Calls***

**Eric needs lunch and medicine, lacking both after being kicked out of Covenant House for breaking shelter rules.**

**"You made some mistakes," Alex tells him when they meet in the street. "So did we."**

**While Father Steve fetches food, Eric, a 21-year-old New Yorker who's been homeless since 16, praises his friendship with Father Steve.**

**"If I didn't have him, I'd be locked up or dead."**

**Alex is pleased to hear Eric say he has applied for several retail jobs. "I'm amazed," Alex replies, "since your focus is on where you're going to stay, what you're going to eat, how you're going to survive."**

**Jenn Elms and Jared Drogos, also 21, are a step up that shaky ladder. After a stay in a shelter and transitional housing, the couple found a subsidized apartment.**

**Father Steve and Alex drop by offering support as the young lovers cope with health woes (Elms, from Burlington County, has diabetes; Drogos, from Hammonton, Atlantic County, suffers from mental illness) and meager finances (she's on medical leave from Wawa; both applied for Social Security disability).**

**The apartment is decorated with smiley-face pillows and Smurf figurines. Tropical-fruit-scented candles warm the tiny living room. Visitors must remove their shoes at the door, the better to keep the place clean. The Siniaris happily oblige.**

**"When nobody took us in, they did," Elms says, beaming. "Now look. This is home."**

#### ***Like father, like son***

**For years, Father Steve, who lives in Haddonfield, took his kids to work with him. "I told my wife I was in the chapel," he says. "She never knew I was taking them into housing projects and hanging around prostitutes."**

**Mike, the oldest, became a history professor. Alex never finished college, drifting between bartending and selling cars. "Nothing I was doing had any meaning or value."**

**In 2005, Alex applied for a job at Covenant House secretly, not sure he wanted it or how his father would react. Since then, the younger Siniari married a coworker and landed a promotion. Today, as outreach coordinator, Alex is technically his dad's boss.**

**"Father Steve knows the streets, the kids, the issues," explains site director Brian Nelson. "I see him mentoring Alex to take over."**

**For now, showing scared kids someone cares is a shared mission.**

**"Instead of giving out of a sense of benevolence, I give out of thankfulness," explains Father Steve, gesturing to Alex. "I'm thankful he's here, doing this work."**

**Steve Siniari and his son Alex, now a Covenant House outreach coordinator, call on a client in Atlantic City. The younger Siniari joined his father in helping troubled teens after he felt a little lost himself. "Nothing I was doing had any meaning or value," he said.**



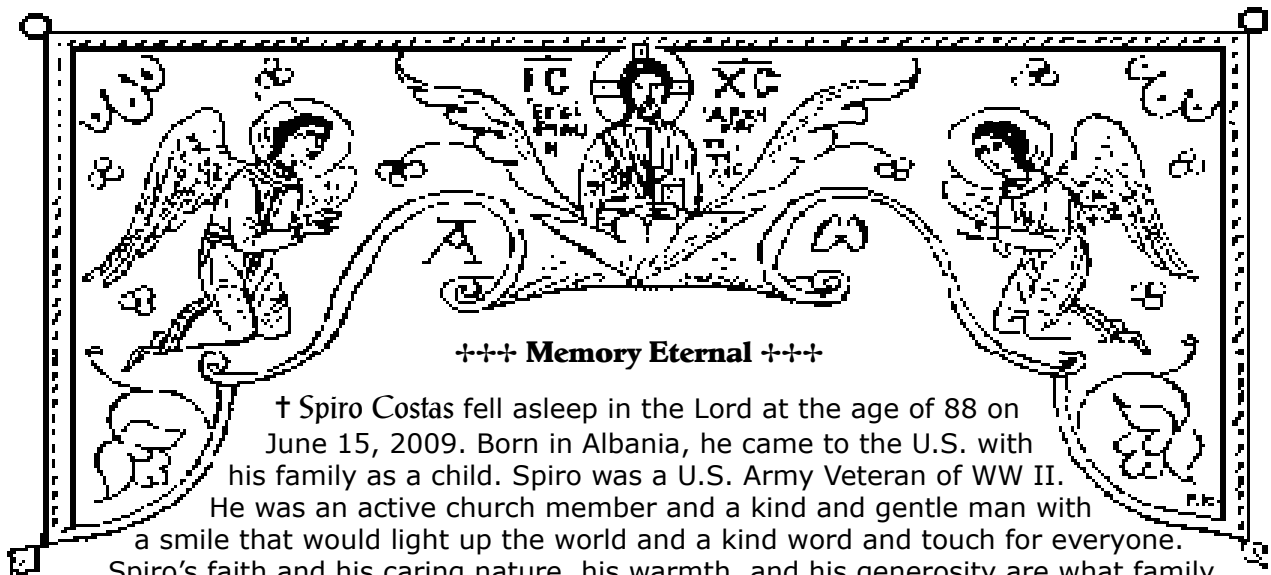
**Fr. Steve Siniari hugs son Alex as they visit a client in a subsidized apartment building in Atlantic City. The Siniaris work at Covenant House, reaching out to runaways. Father Steve, as he is known, has been at it for years.**



### ***Selling of the Lord***

It was called "No Excuses Sunday" at a church in Carlisle, PA, where the minister dealt with the excuses of persons who don't come to services. There were cots for persons who like to sleep late, hard hats for those who feared "the roof might fall in if I come to church," scorecards for those who claim the church is full of hypocrites, and poinsettias and lillies for those who come to services only on Christmas and Easter. Attendance was up.

--- Ralph Frattura



May his memory be eternal!