



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 ~ March 2007

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

Declare a Fast

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fast- ing, with weeping, and with mourning;

rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

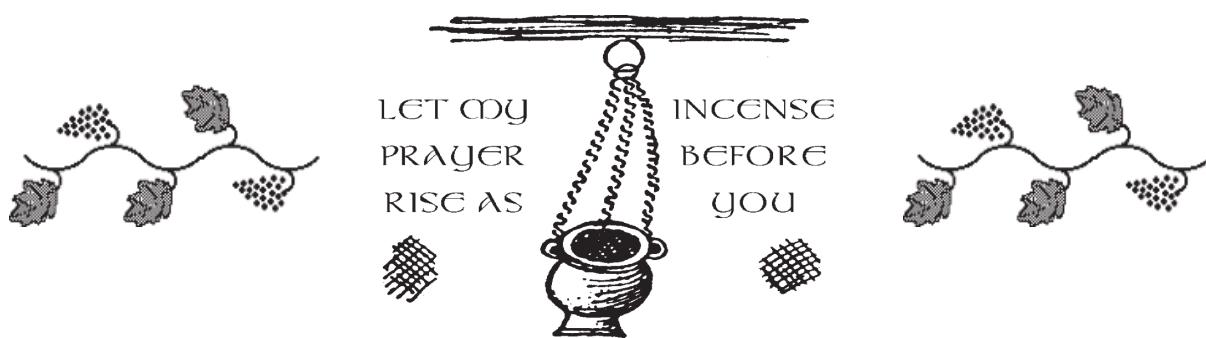
Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;

gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a by-word among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

-- Joel 2:12-17



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 - March/April 2007

PRE-SANCTIFIEDS - WEDNESDAYS, MARCH 7, 14, 21 - 7 PM

ANNUNCIATION - SUNDAY, MARCH 25 - Divine Liturgy, 10 AM

PRE-SANCTIFIED - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28 (*Last one*) - 7 PM

LAZARUS SATURDAY - MARCH 31 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM & BLESSING OF PALMS - APR 1 (SUN) - Divine Liturgy 10 AM

HOLY WEDNESDAY - APR 4 (HOLY UNCTION) - 7 PM

HOLY THURSDAY - APR 5 (TWELVE PASSION GOSPELS) - 7 PM

**HOLY FRIDAY - APR 6 (VESPERS, TAKING DOWN FROM CROSS) - 3 PM;
LAMENTATIONS AT TOMB - 7 PM**

HOLY SATURDAY - APR 7 (VESPERAL LITURGY OF ST. BASIL) - 9 AM

ORTHROS/PASHKAL CANON/LITURGY - APR 7 (SAT) - 11 PM

PASCHA SUNDAY - APR 8 (AGAPE VESPERS; GOSPEL IN MANY LANGUAGES) - Noon; EASTER EGG HUNT FOR CHILDREN AFTER VESPERS

Church News & Reminders

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2007 - Dues are \$115 per person and can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

ICON PLEDGES - Pledges can still be made by contacting the treasurer, James Schaeffer or Stephen Murianka with the Saint's name and the amount. **Please note:** when returning your Icons, please return them to the treasurer, James Schaeffer.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - To be announced (usually the 1st Mon of each month). 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.*

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 - In February: 16 casseroles, 7 bags of groceries, 1 bag of men's razors/toilet articles, 30 blankets were delivered. Many thanks to Pat Bergey for arranging and Joe Bacon for picking up the blankets from Deer Meadow. Disposable razors and individual/small tubes of hand lotion are still needed. 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!*

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 PRGRAM FOR RONALD McDONALD HOUSE - RJ (with the help of his parents, Debbie & Bob Krimetz) is collecting flip tabs from soda cans, soup and vegetable cans, dog food cans, and any aluminum cans with flip tabs to donate to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. The program began in 1997 and to date over 127 tons have been collected, which translates into more than \$94,150. **A container has been placed upstairs in the Church Hall for the tabs. Help RJ help the Ronald McDonald House! Thank you and remember to bring your tabs!**

Events at SS Peter and Paul



SS PETER & PAUL ANNUAL CLEAN UP/FIX UP DAY - Scheduled for **Saturday, March 10th, 9 AM**. Rain Date: Saturday, March 17th. *If you are at all able, please reserve this time to come and help beautify our Church for Pascha. Thank you!*

Sunday School News

LENTEN PROJECT - As a Lenten project for the Sunday school children, we are attempting to coordinate a project with the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Founded in Philadelphia in 1974, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House provides a "home-away-from-home" at an affordable price. Parents can have a place to stay while their seriously ill child is undergoing pediatric care at a local hospital.

Once established, details about the project will be going home with each child. In addition to our project we are coordinating a visit to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House for a tour. The children will be able to see the good work that is done there for other children and how their work and contributions will help and support other children and

their parents. **Thank you for your help and support. If you have any questions please see Greg or Rose Shaloka.**

Ladies' Society News

A MOST SINCERE THANK YOU to all who volunteered their time, efforts and services and to those who participated in the Lenten Luncheon

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

General Interest

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>

Miscellaneous

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

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 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: aliciaj17@mac.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS ABOUT PARISHIONERS - If you have any items to include in next month's Bulletin, please leave the information in my wicker basket in the office. Or, call Alicia at **215-742-0492** or e-mail: aliciaj17@mac.com. The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, **March 18**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday **3/25/07**. 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 **March** Birthdays: **Edna Bachelor, Joe Bacon, Janet Caparros (Bachelor), Margot Craig, Virginia Daka, Theodore Dementri, Ralph John, Maria Pavucek, Andrew Quirias, Lilly Shallapi, Andi Steffa, Gregory Vreto, Sr.**

May God grant them all many, many years!

MARY DIMITRI is celebrating her 85th birthday on March 29th! *May God grant Mary many, many years!*

OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION to our Church Choir under the leadership of Chirstina Murianka for all their hard work. The choir has truly sounded beautiful in recent months.

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, Spiro Costas, Harry Cappo, Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, Martha Murianka, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Helen Arndt, Al Rifkin**

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

Prayer for the Sick

O Christ, Who alone art our Defender: Visit and heal Thy suffering servant _____, delivering him (her) from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him (her) up that he (she) may sing to Thee and praise Thee without ceasing, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

Orthodox Churches Attracting Converts

by Tom Breen (ASSOCIATED PRESS) - January 13, 2007

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. -- Greg Mencotti worried he would never find a spiritual home. The Sunday school teacher grew up Roman Catholic, lost his faith and became an atheist. Eventually, he returned to Christianity, this time as a born-again Christian, spending years worshipping in a Methodist congregation. Still, he felt his search wasn't over.

That led him to the Holy Spirit Antiochian Orthodox Church in Huntington, a denomination with Mideast roots that, like all Orthodox groups, traces its origins to the earliest days of Christianity.

Today, Mr. Mencotti is one of nearly 250 million Orthodox believers worldwide -- and among a significant number of newcomers attracted to this ancient way of worship. The trend is especially notable since so few in the United States know about the Orthodox churches here.

"I was like most Americans," said Mr. Mencotti, who was urged by his wife to explore Orthodox worship. "I didn't understand anything about Orthodoxy."

Orthodoxy was born from the Great Schism of 1054, when feuds over papal authority and differences in the liturgy split Christianity into Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox halves.

In the United States, Orthodox Christians are a fraction of religious believers, numbering about 1.2 million, according to estimates by Orthodox researchers.

In the past, their growth had been largely aided by immigration, with churches forming mainly along ethnic lines. Some converts came to Orthodoxy through marriage to a church member.

But now about one-third of all U.S. Orthodox priests are converts -- and that number is likely to grow, said Alexei D. Krindatch, research director at the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, Calif. A 2006 survey of the four Orthodox seminaries in the country found that about 43 percent of seminarians are converts, Mr. Krindatch said.

There are no exact figures on the rate of conversion across the 22 separate U.S. Orthodox jurisdictions. But when Mr. Mencotti began attending Orthodox worship, the church was packed with converts, including the church's pastor, the Rev. John Dixon.

The Rev. John Matusiak, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Wheaton, Ill., part of the Orthodox Church in America, said his parish has grown from 20 persons in the early 1990s to more than 600 today, with the overwhelming majority of new members younger than 40.

Mr. Krindatch's research found that one-third of the more than 200 U.S. parishes in the Antiochian Orthodox Church were founded after 1990.

Mr. Matusiak said growth is especially apparent in suburbs and commuter towns. "People in Wheaton weren't flocking to Orthodoxy, because there was never a church here," Mr. Matusiak said.

Many converts credit the beauty of the liturgy and the durability of the theology, which can be a comfort to those seeking shelter from divisive battles over biblical interpretation in other Christian traditions.

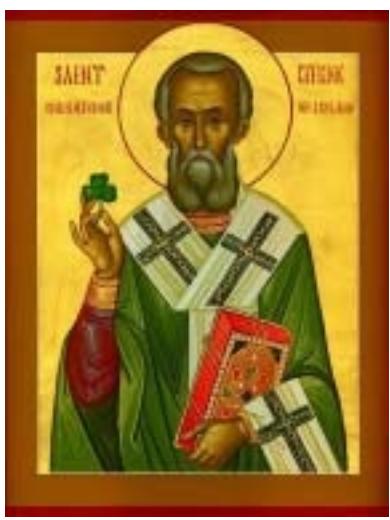
Mr. Dixon, who was raised an Old Regular Baptist, an austere faith of the Southern Appalachians, said his conversion grew from his studies about the origins of Christianity as an undergraduate at Marshall University. The turning point came when he first attended services at an Orthodox church.

"As soon as I came in that day," he said, "I knew I was home."

Holy Days and Name Days in March

- March 4 - St Gregory Palamas
- March 9 - Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste
- March 11 - Veneration of the Precious Cross; St Sophronius, Patr of Jerusalem
- March 14 - St Benedict of Nursia
- March 17 - Ven Aleksy, Man of God; St Patrick, Bishop of Armagh
- March 18 - St John Climacus; Repose St Nikolai of Zhicha
- March 19 - Martyrs Chrysanthus & Daria & Those with Them at Rome
- March 20 - Holy Martyr Photina (Svetlana)
- March 21 - St James the Confessor, Bishop of Catania
- March 22 - Hieromartyr Basil of Ancyra
- March 23 - Martyr Nikon & 199 Disciples
- March 25 - Annunciation Most Holy Theotokos; St Mary of Egypt
- March 26 - Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel
- March 30 - St John Climacus
- March 31 - Repose St Innocent, Metr of Moscow & Apostle to the Americas

St Patrick the Bishop of Armagh and Enlightener of Ireland



Saint Patrick, the Enlightener of Ireland was born around 385, the son of a tax collector. He lived in the village which may have been located at the mouth of the Severn River in Wales. The district was raided by pirates when Patrick was 16, and he was one of those taken captive. He was brought to Ireland and sold as a slave, and was put to work as a herder of swine on a mountain.

He prayed during his solitude on the mountain, and lived this way for six years. He had two visions: the first told him he would return to his home; the second told him his ship was ready. Setting off on foot, Patrick walked two hundred miles to the coast where he succeeded in boarding a ship, and returned to his parents in Britain.

Some time later, he went to Gaul and studied for the priesthood at Auxerre. Eventually, he was consecrated as a bishop, and was entrusted with the mission to Ireland.

Patrick had a dream in which an angel came to him bearing many letters. Selecting one inscribed "The Voice of the Irish," he heard the Irish entreating him to come back to them.

There were other missionaries who were active in Ireland, but it was St Patrick who had the greatest influence and success in preaching the Gospel of Christ; hence he is known as "The Enlightener of Ireland."

St Patrick founded many churches and monasteries across Ireland, but the conversion of the Irish people was no easy task. There was much hostility, and he was assaulted several times. He

faced danger, and insults, and he was reproached for being a foreigner and a former slave. There was also a very real possibility that the pagans would try to kill him. Despite many obstacles, he remained faithful to his calling, and he baptized many people into Christ.

In his writings, we can see St Patrick's awareness that he had been called by God, as well as his determination and modesty in undertaking his missionary work. He refers to himself as "a sinner," "the most ignorant and of least account," and as someone who was "despised by many." He ascribes his success to God, rather than to his own talents: "I owe it to God's grace that through me so many people should be born again to Him."

By the time he established his episcopal See in Armagh in 444, St Patrick had other bishops to assist him, many native priests and deacons, and he encouraged the growth of monasticism.

St Patrick is often depicted holding a shamrock, or with snakes fleeing from him. He used the shamrock to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Its three leaves growing out of a single stem helped him to explain the concept of one God in three Persons. Many people now regard the story of St Patrick driving all the snakes out of Ireland as having no historical basis.

St Patrick died on March 17, 461 (some say 492). There are various accounts of his last days, but they are mostly legendary. No one knows the place where St Patrick is buried. St Columba of Iona said that the Holy Spirit revealed to him that Patrick was buried at Saul, the site of his first church. A granite slab was placed at his traditional grave site in Downpatrick in 1899.

~ Reading and Icon Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~