

# “THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER” *Our Parish Bulletin*

*O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!*

## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!

Glory be to Jesus Christ! (*responded with: Glory forever!*) Slava Isusu Christu! (*Slava na viki!*) We are happy that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning. We wish God’s Blessings to all who are with us today and hope you come again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

## UPCOMING SERVICES

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024** #NATIVITYFAST vol. X  
25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; +Prophet Habakkuk  
Youth Sunday

Parish St. Nicholas Breakfast following Liturgy

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18** #NATIVITYFAST  
7:00 pm Feast Day Vespers AT St. Nicholas  
(903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19** #NATIVITYFAST  
FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21** #NATIVITYFAST  
CANCELED: 11a-1p Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession  
offered (Call Father to schedule different time)

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024** #NATIVITYFAST vol. X  
26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

The Conception By Saint Anna Of The Theotokos

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Ephesian 5:8-19

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19 (*12<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke*)

Tone 1; Liturgical Color: **Red**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27** #NATIVITYFAST  
9:30 am Nativity Fast Paraklis to the Theotokos

## LENTEN COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

*Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave*

\* December 22: \_\_\_\_\_?

\* December 29: \_\_\_\_\_?

\* January 5: \_\_\_\_\_?

*\*meatless during the fast*

## BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)*

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\* **Nativity Fast** – The Nativity Fast has begun. This fasting period is also referred to as Philip’s Fast (Filipovka). We are *all* called to increase our prayer, fasting, and charity. The fasting periods in the church are prescribed as an opportunity to strengthen our faith. It is for all of us. (*When the church calendar is pink – it is a fasting day for everyone.*) Fasting is personal, but let’s embark on this discipline and journey together!

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\*\*\* **Akathist Canceled** – The Akathist previously scheduled for this week has been canceled. Wednesday night Vespers in Homestead will happen along with a service Thursday morning.

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\*\*\* **A Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas** – The new book, *Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas*, is a publication of the Diocesan Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage Working Group. It contains Rusyn and American Christmas Carols (Koljady) in English and Rusyn plus the text for the Holy Night Supper (Svjatyj Večer) prayer service (Velija). Cost is \$15 per book, or \$10 per book with an order of 10 or more. Please sign up at the curator desk in the vestibule if you are interested in getting a book for your house!

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\*\*\* **2025 Calendars and Envelopes** have arrived and are in the vestibule. If you previously did not get envelopes and are interested in getting them for next year, please see Larry Martin.

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\*\* **THANK YOU** to everyone who came out last week for our Winter Maintenance & Decorating Morning! It takes everyone’s stewardship of time, talent, and treasures to keep our parish alive and going strong! Many Years to all of our helpers!

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor* +++ 2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, Pa 15101  
www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com +++ 412-748-0148 (*Talk or Text*) +++ OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

## OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings: \$ 310

Candle Stewardship: \$ 80

Envelope Stewardship: \$ 175

**Total Collections: \$ 565**

**Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 5116**

*Participating Souls - Sunday Liturgy: 26*

*Wednesday Moleben Prayer Service: 10*

**Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials** were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Carol and Tom Lorenzi; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Cindy Pavilonis

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\* **Nativity Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used for Nativity as commemorations: *anonymously, in memory of departed loves ones, OR for the health of loved ones.* If you are interested in making any of these commemorations, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule (or email Fr. Dave) and give an *additional stewardship free-will offering* to the church.

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\* **End-of-Calendar-Year** - The end of the civil calendar year is here. (*Can you believe it’s December?*) Have you made a financial contribution to your parish yet? Please fulfill your stewardship responsibility of time, talent, *and treasure.*

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## A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION

*“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” (Lk. 5:12)*

Fr. Dave will be available for confessions after ALL services, from 11-1 on Saturdays December 7, 14, & 21, or by appointment.

As we prepare for the Feast of the Nativity, it is time to prepare the “Manger of our soul” for the coming of the Messiah.

*“There is more mercy in God than there are sins in us. Confess your sins at once, whatever they may be.” +St Tikhon of Zadonsk*

## THIS WEEK’S BULLETIN IS SPONSORED

For the health of the teacher Mrs. Maria Osio who is battling breast cancer.  
May God grant her many years!

\*\* **Retirement** - Fr. Frank Miloro, Chancellor of the Diocese, is retiring from his position as of the end of this year. We wish Fr. Frank and Pañi Connie God’s blessings and many years as they enjoy their retirement!

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\*\* **New Chancellor** - Fr. Stephen Loposky has been appointed the new Chancellor of the Diocese. He and Pañi Daria will remain at Camp Nazareth for the time being until further arrangements are made. We pray that God will strengthen them and keep them as they undertake this new task in His Name! Many Years!

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\* **Styrofoam Free** – We greatly appreciate when people, in their stewardship, bring in supplies to use at the parish. A few years ago, in an effort to be more “green” towards God’s Creation, the Parish Council agreed for us to go *Styrofoam Free*. When bringing in supplies, please *do not* purchase Styrofoam. Thank you for your understanding and being a good steward to God’s Creation!

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## DEC. COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

During the Nativity Fast, we are called to increase our Prayer, Fasting, *and* Almsgiving. This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be having a monetary collection for the **Sr. ACRY Stewardship Campaign** (our community outreach collection for the month). The Stewardship Campaign helps support the ACRY Scholarship Fund, Camp Nazareth, Youth Workers’ Conference Fund, Ambassador Fund, and Lenten Retreat Fund,  
*Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

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## CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

*Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:*

- ✂ \*\*\* Kitchen Update: Some little changes have been happening in the kitchen from moving outlets and adding more outlets. Soon we will be installing a new stainless steel backsplash behind the stove (and moving that one to behind the sink). Changing the lights and ceiling tiles will also happen soon.
- ✂ \*\* The building committee and Parish Council continue to discuss our plan of action going forward with work in the church proper. Please be patient with us! Also, remember that for a project like the one that we are undertaking, work goes top down so the ceiling and walls will be done before the floor. As mentioned, please be patient with us!
- ✂ \* At the yearly meeting, a vote passed to go with Kodiak Excavating to install a French Drain in the front of the church and for the ground on the side and back to be re-graded (*to keep water away from the building*). Due to supply chain and other issues, this work will be done in the spring. A contract has been signed. The cost will be over \$30,000. Donations to the Capital Improvement Fund are requested.

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### Glory to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, all of this is coming together – one thing at a time!  
**Thank you!** Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

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### SPIRITUAL VITAMIN:

“Whoever wants to achieve true peace on earth must approach it not through world peace conferences, where everything is based on lies and dishonesty, but through the peace of Christ, through implanting Christ's Gospel love in human hearts.”

- Archbishop Averky (Taushev)

*The Struggle for Virtue: Asceticism in a Modern Secular Society* p.60

## ORTHODOX WORDS OF THE WEEK

A Few Types of Para-Liturgical Services

**AKATHIST** – a hymn (*a song of praise or adoration*) dedicated to a saint, holy event, icon, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity. The word Akathist itself means, "not sitting".

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**MOLEBEN** - a supplication prayer service in honor of either our Lord Jesus Christ, the Theotokos, or a particular saint or martyr. It is a Slavic service, but closely related to the Paraklis service.

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**PARAKLIS (Paraklesis)** – a service of supplication specifically for the living (*as opposed to a Panachida (Memorial Service), which is a supplication for the departed*). This service is most often addressed to the Theotokos (*the Virgin Mary*), but may be used to seek the intercessions of any saint. It is appropriate to be served at any time of need.

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**PARASTAS (or GREAT PANACHIDA)** – a memorial service for the dead in the Byzantine-Slavic tradition. The common brief memorial service, the *Small Panachida* (or just *Panachida*) forms the conclusion of the Parastas. The full title in the Euchologion or Trebnyk Prayer Books is *The Great Panachida or Parastas, for all our brethren who have fallen asleep, and for all Orthodox Christians who have departed* (i.e. from this life). The word Parastas itself means, "standing service".

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## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

*Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6*

### Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, <sup>3</sup>eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

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*Gospel: Luke 18:18-27 (11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke)*

### The Rich Ruler

<sup>18</sup> And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>19</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. <sup>20</sup> You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" <sup>21</sup> And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." <sup>22</sup> And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." <sup>23</sup> But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. <sup>24</sup> Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup> Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>27</sup> But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

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## LIVES OF THE SAINTS

### The Holy Prophet Avvakum (Habbakuk)

*Commemorated on December 15/2*

The Holy Prophet Avvakum (Habbakuk), one of the 12 Minor Prophets, was descended from the Tribe of Simeon, and he prophesied in about the year 650 B.C. The Prophet Avvakum foresaw the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the Babylonian Captivity and the later return of the captives to their native-land. During the time of the war with the Babylonians the prophet withdrew to Arabia, where with him there occurred the following miracle. When he was bringing dinner to the reapers, he met with an Angel of the Lord, and instantly by the strength of his spirit he was transported to Babylon, where at the time the Prophet Daniel was languishing in prison. Thus, the food, intended for the reapers, assuaged the hunger of the exhausted Prophet Daniel. After the end of the war with the Babylonians, the Prophet Avvakum returned to his fatherland and died in extreme old age. His relics were found at the time of the holy Constantinople Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450).

## VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddioocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddioocese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioocese](https://youtube.com/acroddioocese)

## PRAYER CORNER

*For the Health of...* Reed, Maria O., Cheryl, Christina, Carol, Daniel, Allen, Elizabeth, Robert, Matthew, David, Stephanie, Suzanne, William, Boyd, Millicent, Barbara, Paul, Robert, Kelly, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, and Michael ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer*

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*For the souls of the newly departed...*

+Norman Teklinsky, Jr. (12/2), +Ralph Parks (12/2)  
...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory!*

## NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2024

*Met. Gregory asks each member of our Diocese, either as a family or individually, to pray this every evening of the Nativity Fast.*

All-Merciful Savior, You are the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29) When You were born in a cave and placed in a manger, an angel announced this good news to the shepherds. (Luke 2:8) They came to adore You, the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11) As we journey through these holy days of preparation to celebrate Your Nativity, we humbly implore You: Look with compassion upon our families, our churches, our country, and the whole world. When we stray from Your presence, lead us back to You. Gather us into one flock. (John 10:16) Guide us to springs of living water and wipe away every tear from our eyes. (Rev. 7:17) Number us among the sheep at Your right hand who continually cry out: "To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13) Amen!

## ONLINE BONUSES

### THE CANON OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

*Ode 1:* Christ is born, glorify him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him! Christ is an earth, be exalted! O all the earth, sing to the Lord, and sing praises in gladness, all people, for He has been glorified.

*Ode 3:* To the Son Who was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, and in the last times was without seed made flesh of the Virgin, to Christ our God, let us cry aloud: You have raised up our horn, holy are You, O Lord!

*Ode 4:* Rod of the root of Jesse, and flower that blossomed from his stem, O Christ, You have sprung forth from the Virgin. From the mountain overshadowed by the forest You came, made flesh for her that knew not wedlock, O God not formed from matter. Glory to Your power O Lord!

*Ode 5:* As You are God of Peace and Father of mercies, You have sent to us Your Angel of Great Counsel, granting unto us peace. So are we guided towards the light of the knowledge of God. And watching by night, we glorify You, O Lover of mankind.

*Ode 6:* The sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, like a babe from the womb: while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh: came forth from her yet kept her undefiled. For being Himself not subject to decay. He preserved His Mother free from harm.

*Ode 7:* Scorning the impious decree, the three children brought up together in godliness feared not the threat of fire: but standing in the midst of the flame they sang: "O God of our fathers, blessed are You!"

*Ode 8:* The furnace moist with dew was the image of a wonder past nature. For it burned not the children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb into which It had descended. Therefore in praise, let us sing: let the whole creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all forever.

*Ode 9:* I behold a strange and wonderful mystery. The cave has become heaven, the throne of the Cherubim, the Virgin. The manger a noble place where lies Christ our God Who cannot be contained. Let us praise Him in song and magnify You!

## ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*\*\* **2024 Yearbook, A.C.R.Y. Annual** - If you would like to include a patron, booster, or memorial listing in this Year Book of the activities of our God-saved Diocese, a sign-up sheet has been placed in the vestibule on the black cabinet. Patron & Memorial listings are \$6; Booster listings are \$3. Please see Father with any questions. Deadline is Dec 31.

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\*\* **Random Tidbits...** Father Dave is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm OR by appointment... **Online Community:** Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email...

**Parish Phone Tree:** Please call Fr. Dave to be added... **Emergency Sick Calls:** Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery (Sacrament) of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service *or* by appointment.

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**Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online:

[www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/)

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**Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at:

[www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar)

(Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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**"Code" for reading the bulletin:**

\*\*\* = new news    \*\* = 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the bulletin

\* = at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in the bulletin

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Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)

YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioocese](https://youtube.com/acroddioocese)

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**Speaking With Your Priest** - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

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## MONTHLY SCHEDULE

? 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1** #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3** #NATIVITYFAST

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers and Orthodoxy 101

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4** #NATIVITYFAST

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5** #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Akathist Hymn to St. Nicholas

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7** #NATIVITYFAST

9:00 am Winter Maintenance & Decorating Morning

11a-1p Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8** #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Monthly Memorial (Panachida)

**5:00 pm** Deanery St. Nicholas Charity Dinner

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11** #NATIVITYFAST

6:30 pm Moleben for the Nativity Fast

7:00 pm Exploring Orthodox 101

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13** #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Nativity Fast Paraklis to the Theotokos

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14** #NATIVITYFAST

11a-1p Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15** #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Youth Sunday

St. Nicholas Breakfast

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16** #NATIVITYFAST

CANCELED: 9:30 am Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18** #NATIVITYFAST

7:00 pm Feast Day Vespers AT St. Nicholas  
(903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19** #NATIVITYFAST

FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21** #NATIVITYFAST

CANCELED: 11a-1p Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22** #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27** #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Nativity Fast Paraklis to the Theotokos

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29** #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

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## FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

**The Entry Into The Temple Of The Most Holy Mother Of God**

*Commemorated on December 4 / November 21*

The Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God happened, according to the preserved accounts of Holy Tradition, in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Righteous Joakim and Anna, in praying for a solution to their childlessness, gave a vow that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached three years of age, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. Having gathered together their kinsfolk and acquaintances, and having dressed the All-Pure Mary in Her finest clothes, and with the singing of sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands they carried Her to the Jerusalem Temple. There the high-priest with a throng of priests met the maiden of God. In the Temple, the stairway led up fifteen high steps. The Child Mary, so it seemed, could not Herself make

it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly made it up over the remaining steps and ascended to the highest. Then the high-priest, through an inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, and herein of all people it was only the high-priest that entered one time a year with a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

Righteous Joakim and Anna, having entrusted their Child to the will of the Heavenly Father, returned home. The MostBlessed Mary remained in the domicile for girls, situated near the Temple. Round about the Temple, through the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Lk. 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters, in which dwelt those dedicated to the service of God.

In remembrance of the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Jerusalem Temple, Holy Church from ancient times established a solemn feastday. The decretals for the making of the feast in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, where mention is made that the holy Empress Helen built a church in honour of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God.

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### **Sainted Nicholas, Archbishop Of Myra In Lycia, And Wonderworker**

*Commemorated on December 19 / 6*

Sainted Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, and Wonderworker is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the Lycian region (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had given a vow to dedicate him to God. As the fruition of longtime prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. Saint Nicholas from his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he accepted milk from his mother only but

once, after the evening prayers of his parents.

From the time of his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books – fashioning in himself a worthy dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. His uncle, Bishop Nicholas of Patara, rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his kinsman. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the dignity of presbyter, making him his assistant and entrusting him to speak instructing the flock. Constantly at work and vivacious, being in unceasing prayer, presbyter Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards those afflicted coming to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor. Having learned about the bitter need and poverty of a certain formerly rich inhabitant of his city, Saint Nicholas saved him from great sin. Having three grown daughters, the despairing father considered to give them over to profligacy so as to save them from hunger. The saint, grieving lest the man perish a sinner, by night secretly brought him through the window three sacks with gold and by this saved the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, Saint Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and conceal his good deeds.

In setting off on pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem, the bishop of Patara entrusted the guidance of the flock to Saint Nicholas, who fulfilled this obedience carefully and with love. When the bishop returned, he in turn asked blessing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Along the way the saint predicted the onset of a storm threatening the ship with inundation, since he saw the devil itself having got on ship. At the entreaty of the despairing pilgrims, he calmed by his prayers the waves of the sea. Through his prayer also was restored to health a certain sailor of the ship, who had fallen from the mast and was mortally injured.

Having reached the ancient city of Jerusalem and having come to Golgotha, Saint Nicholas offered up thanksgiving to the Saviour of the race of mankind and he made the rounds of all the holy places, doing poklons and making prayers. By night on Mount Sion the closed doors of the church opened by themselves in front of the arriving great pilgrim.

Upon the death of archbishop John, he was chosen

bishop of Lycian Myra – after one of the bishops of the Council gave a decisive reply on the question of choice of a new archbishop – the choice of God as directed him in a vision – Saint Nicholas. Summoned to the flock of the Church in the dignity of archbishop, Sainted Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love towards people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the time of persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians, sustained them and exhorted them to bravely endure the fetters, punishment and torture. He himself the lord preserved unharmed. Upon the accession to rule of the holy equal-to-the-apostles Constantine, Saint Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received back their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, Saint Nicholas was a zealous and ardent warrior of the Church of Christ. Fighting evil spirits, the saint made the rounds of the pagan temples and shrines in the city of Myra and its surroundings, shattering the idols and turning the temples to dust.

In the year 325 Saint Nicholas was a participant in the I OEcumenical Council (Sobor). This Council proclaimed the Nicean Symbol of faith, and he stood up with the likes of saints Sylvester the pope of Rome, Alexander of Alexandria, Spyridon of Trimiphuntum and others of the 318 fathers of the Council against the heretic Arius.

Saint Nicholas, in the heat of denunciation and fired up with zeal for the Lord, even gave the false-teacher a good drubbing on the ears. He was indeed a light in the world and the salt of the earth, wherein his life did shine and his word was mixed with the salt of wisdom.

Having reached old age, Saint Nicholas expired peacefully to the Lord (+ 345-351). His venerable relics were preserved undecayed in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrh, from which many received healing. In the year 1087 his relics were transferred to the Italian city of Bari, where they rest even now.

Part of all the churches devoted to the saint were those established at market-squares by Russian

merchants, sea-farers and land-goers, venerating the wonderworker Nicholas as a protector of all those journeying on dry land and sea. They sometimes received the name among the people of "Nicholas soaked". Many village churches in Russia were dedicated to the wonderworker Nicholas, reverently venerated by peasants as a merciful intercessor before the Lord for all the people in their work. Ancient Kiev preserves the memory about the miraculous rescue of a drowning infant by the saint. The great wonderworker, hearing the grief-filled prayers of the parents in the loss of their only child, by night snatched up the infant from the waters, revived him and placed him in the choir-loft of Saint Sophia church in front of his wonderworking image. And here in the morning the infant was found safe by his thrilled parents, praising with a multitude of the people Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

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### **2024-25 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS**

President: Lawrence Martin  
Vice-President: Elizabeth Radomsky  
Treasurer: Timothy Martin, Reader  
Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich  
Recording Secretary: Gina Fall  
Chief Auditor: Robert Fall  
Auditors: Subdeacon Ryan Ferko,  
John Kirish, Kimberly Opsitos,  
Matthew Opsitos, and Kathy Schrmack

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### **STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET**



**TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES**

**PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:**

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**Joining the ACRY** – If you would like to become a part of our philanthropic organization of the ACRY (American Carpatho-Russian Youth), which is open to all ages, please contact Subdeacon Ryan Ferko at 484-744-2771 or rferko85@yahoo.com.

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**Why Should I Join the Local ACRY?**

The ACRY is an Orthodox Christian family fellowship dedicated to the purpose of encouraging spiritual growth through charitable and apostolic missionary works, prayer and fellowship for the Glory of God and the building up of the Church and our Diocese. The local ACRY focuses on outreach to the community in various forms and fellowship within. This could be a fundraiser or family event at the church grounds to introduce people to our parish, or the volunteering of our time to help support a community event. In addition to these, the ACRY has the opportunity to branch out and meet other members of our diocesan ACRY community through deanery and nation events and partake in outreach at a broader level.

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\* **Lots–O–Luck Calendars** – The National ACRY Lots-O-Luck Calendars are available. \$25 per ticket gets you a years worth of prizes totaling \$10,000! Please see Subdeacon Ryan Ferko for tickets.

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**Garbage and Recycling** – Did you ever notice that we do not have a dumpster at the church? Being non-residential without pick up in Allison Park, all of our garbage and recycling heads to stewards’ houses. If you would be willing to stick around at the end of coffee social and take a bag, please let Larry know. *(please grab the coffee grounds before taking the bag)*

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**Bulletin Sponsor** - If you wish to sponsor a bulletin *In Honor of* (nameday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or *In Memory of* someone, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested. *Remember, sponsoring a bulletin in memory of someone does not replace having a Panachida (Memorial Service) for them.*

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**Additional Church Curators Needed** – A synonym for *curator* is *steward*. Please see Larry Martin if you are interested in being a *steward of their time* and be “on-the-door”. Our curator list needs expanded!

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**Giving at the Church** – The “flow of traffic” is a little different in Allison Park, but the ways to give your stewardship treasures has not changed. One can:

- ✘ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
- ✘ there are multiple baskets around the church for you to drop your offering in, or
- ✘ when saying your prayers and lighting 2 candles, put your donation in the box in the candle stand.

We will continue to not “*pass the basket*” which interrupts our focus on our prayers.

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**On-Line Giving** is available from our parish website to donate to the: General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund. The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2<sup>nd</sup> best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue it’s ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

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**Stewardship of Treasure Guide**

**Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?**

Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe 15%	Tithe 12%	Upper Range Giving 10%	Middle Range Giving 9%	Middle Range Giving 8%	Middle Range Giving 7%	Middle Range Giving 6%	Middle Range Giving 5%	Middle Range Giving 4%	Lower Range Giving 3%	Lower Range Giving 2%	Lower Range Giving 1%
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).  
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be.

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**A Prayer of Stewardship**

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

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**SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

*Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm OR by appointment.*

**Online Community:** Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

**Parish Phone Tree** - Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

**Emergency Sick Calls** – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

**Mystery of Confession** – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

**Holy Communion/Eucharist** – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not prepared or not of the Orthodox Faith may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

**How to receive** - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (*you should not hold it*), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until They are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

**Lapsed Members** – You are always welcome home and we want you to come back! Generally speaking, sincere and regular participation in the Sunday Divine Liturgy and in the Mysteries of Confession and Communion are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

**Parishioners in “good standing”** are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish

through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

**Baptisms** – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Fr. Dave for more details.

**Adult Chrismation** – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

**Marriages** – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays in the church. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.

**Church Funerals** – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual responsibilities and their stewardship. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

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*“The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act. It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned. God did not create our bodies for burning.”* - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

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### The Jesus Prayer

*(Inhale)* O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
*(Exhale)* have mercy on me, a sinner!

*(Repeat until your heart is calm...)*

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## ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions & other needs\*

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**A Prayer For The Sick:** O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant(s) *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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**For the Special Intentions of...** His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin, David, Donna, George, *our diocesan seminarians:* Dcn Peter S, Nicolas W., Seamus M., Samuel L., Nicholas L., Alexander H., *and our Parish Council and Curators:* Lawrence, Subdeacon Ryan, Timothy, Rich, Elizabeth, Robert, Gina, John, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches *...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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**\*\*\* NAMEDAY, BIRTHDAY, and ANNIVERSARY PRAYER LIST IS BEING RESET** – Our parish prayer list of key dates and special occasions in our lives will be reset going forward (starting 3/1/24). If one of your special days is missing – please let Fr. Dave know ASAP. See Fr. Dave with any questions.

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### December NAMEDAYS:

Nicholas Sarandou - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (NC 12/6)

Carol Lorenzi, Katherine Schrmack - Great-martyr Catherine of Alexandria (12/7)

Andrew Mirilovich, Fr. Dave Andrew Urban - Holy & All-praised Apostle Andrew the First-called (12/13)

Barbara Kirish; Barbara Leone - Great martyr Barbara

(12/17)

Nicholas Ditmore; Nicholas Kubis - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (12/19)

Patrick Wertz - St. Sturm of Fulda Monastery (12/30)  
*...May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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### December Birthdays:

Stacy (Martin) Dzambo (12/1), *Father's Godson*, Joseph Sekerak (12/2), Lucy Jo Blobner (12/4), Brynn Jozwiakowski (12/6), His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory (12/7), Pañi Eleanor Herbert (12/8), Deborah Brancho (12/9), Jim Potoski (12/10), *Father's God-sister*, Lauren Babbie (12/12), Thomas Figura (12/15), Brian Gogal (12/15), Madelyn Spirnak (12/17), Donald Gavulich (12/19), Carter Andrekovich (12/20), Fr. Nik Ferencz (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21), Molly Blobner (12/27/21)

*...May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!*

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**For our Catechumens & Inquirers...** Maxwell, Barbara, Tyler *...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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**For those preparing for Marriage...** Allison & Michael, Francis & Alexandra *...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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### December Anniversaries:

*...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas*

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### For Pregnant Mothers...

Mallory (*due in March*), Lindsay (*April*)  
*...through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...** Thomas R. Dzadovsky  
*...through the prayers of St. George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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\* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave

know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (*in the case of answered prayers*) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. *This prayer list is NOT limited to only Orthodox Christians.*

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**Special Intentions** – Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person's name go under “For the Special Intentions of...” on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.

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**Prayer requests** – During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the “Prayer Corner” are prayed for during the Proskomedia (*Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion*). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (*in the case of answered prayers*) to our prayer list.

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### A Prayer for Peace

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise.  
Amen.



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### **A prayer for our Neighborhoods**

*by Archbishop Demetrios of America*

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

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### **A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop (*name*), and our spiritual father (*name*), and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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