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Weekly Candle Intentions/Memorials were offered last week by Tim Martin; Melanie Shuster; Viola Peifer; Mary Jane Hudak; Olga Radick; Eleanor Sanger; Barbara Kirish; Joanne Nelson; Theresa Sharpless; Melanie Paieski; Pañi Brancho; Cindy Pavilonis; Patty Watson.

“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” - John 8:12

The Eternal Lamp was offered last week by Michael Spirnak, in Memory of Ann Sefscik; John Gaydos, Sr., in Memory of Wife, Catherine; Melanie Paieski, in Memory of Mother, Catherine Gaydos. May Their Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamjat! And by Tim Martin in honor of the Baptism of Cora Loren Dzadony. Many Years!

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Snow Removal Team – as temperatures have begun to drop, we are reminded that snow is on it’s way. Just a reminder that we will be looking for folks, as in the past, to offer some of their time prior to people getting to church on Sundays to help with snow removal. *Please let Father know if you will be able to come earlier to Church to assist with keeping the sidewalks clear.* Ideally we will have a rotation of people so that the same person is not doing it each snowfall.



Parish Stewardship Opportunities...

As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.
(Luke 6:31)

- Bring in a bag of CALCIUM CHLORIDE
 - Take a Coffee Social week
- Attend an additional service at Church
- Offer your time to help with possible snow

Our Stewardship Gift To God

Dues/Stewardship:	\$ 334
Candles/Small C./Eternal Lamp/C. box:	\$ 250
Envelopes: Sunday/Feast Day/Special:	\$ 486
Total Collections:	\$ 1070
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 74
<i>Collection for the Saints: “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper.” 1 Cor 16:2</i>	

Coffee Social Steward Schedule

December 24: **Open “Pot Luck”**

December 31: **Open “Pot Luck”**

January 7: **Cover-Dish Surprises**

Thank you to all those who support this critical ministry of our Church!

Coffee Social Stewards Needed – On weeks that no one signs up to host and organize our coffee social, we will have a ‘pot-luck’ meal. On these weeks, we ask that **every** household brings something **small** for a pot-luck surprise spread for the community to enjoy that week! (Don’t over think the menu - Plan to *keep it simple* ☺) Everyone is also encouraged to help clean up after. *The Divine Liturgy concludes at the final blessing, but the liturgy continues downstairs as we gather in love and fellowship with our parish family and visiting neighbors.* Lets keep this critical ministry alive in our parish!

Visit Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddiocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
You Tube: youtube.com/acroddiocese

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ORTHODOXY AROUND DA ‘BURGH



Orthodox Food Pantry – Volunteers are needed every Thursday from 5:15 to 6:45 to assist at **St Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry** based out of St. Mary’s Orthodox Church (105 S. 19th St, Pittsburgh, Pa). If interested, please contact Fr Patrick at 412-431-6428.

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Source: www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar/orthodox-calendar © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos

The Holy GreatMartyress Barbara

Commemorated on December 17/4

The Holy GreatMartyress Barbara lived and suffered during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-311). Her father, the pagan Dioskoros, was a rich and illustrious man in the city of Phoenician Heliopolis; early left a widower, he concentrated all his attention in tender devotion to his only daughter. Seeing the extraordinary beauty of Barbara, Dioskoros decided to raise her concealed from the eyes of strangers. For this he built a tower, where besides Barbara, there were present only her pagan teachers. From the tower heights there opened up a view of God's world of hills stretching into the distance. By day she was able to gaze upon the wooded hills, the swiftly flowing rivers, and on the meadows covered with a gayly mottled blanket of flowers; by night the harmonious and majestic vault of the heavens twinkled and provided a spectacle of inexpressible beauty. Soon the maiden began to



ask herself questions about the Primal Cause and Creator of so harmonious and splendid a world. Gradually she became convinced of the idea, that the soul-less idols – were but only the work of human hands, and though her father and teachers offered them worship, the idols were not sufficiently clever and august enough to have made the surrounding world. The desire to know the True God so consumed the soul of Barbara, that she decided to devote all her life to this and to spend her life in virginity. But the fame of her beauty spread throughout the city, and many sought for her hand in marriage. But despite the endearing entreaties of her father, she refused. Barbara cautioned her father, that his persistence might end tragically and separate them forever. Dioskoros decided, that the temperament of his daughter had been affected by her life of seclusion. He therefore permitted her to leave the tower and gave her full freedom in her choice of friends and acquaintances. The maiden thus

encountered in the city youthful confessors of faith in Christ, and they revealed to her teachings about the Creator of the world, about the Trinity, and about the Divine Logos. Through the Providence of God, after a certain while there arrived in Heliopolis from Alexandria a priest in the guide of a merchant. He performed the sacrament of Baptism over Barbara.

During this while at the house of Dioskoros a luxuriant bath was being built. By his orders the workers prepared to put into it two windows on the south side. But Barbara, availing herself of her father's absence, asked them to make a third window, in the form of a Trinity of Light. Over the entrance of the bath-house Barbara patterned a cross, which was durably set into stone. On the stone steps of the bath-house there later remained the imprint of her feet, while within the water-spring had dried up, appearing later on with great healing power, – all which Simeon Metaphrastes in writing about the sufferings of the holy martyress, compares with the life-creating power of the stream of Jordan and the Pool of Siloam. When Dioskoros returned and expressed dissatisfaction about the change of his plan of construction, his daughter told him about her knowledge of the Triune God, about the saving power of the Son of God, and about the futility of worshipping idols. Dioskoros went into a rage, grabbed a sword and was on the point of striking her. The maiden fled from her father, and he rushed after her in pursuit. His way became blocked by an hill, which opened and concealed the saint in a crevice. On the other side of the crevice was an entrance upwards. Saint Barbara managed then to conceal herself in a cave on the opposite slope of the hill. After a long and fruitless search for his daughter, Dioskoros saw two shepherds on the hill. One of them pointed out the cave to him, where

the saint had hidden. Dioskoros beat his daughter terribly, and then locked her under watch and tried to wear her down with hunger. Finally he handed her over to the governor of the city, named Martianus. They beat Saint Barbara fiercely: they struck at her with ox thongs, and ground into her wounds with an hair-shirt. By night the holy maiden prayed fervently to her Heavenly Bridegroom, and the Saviour Himself appeared and healed her wounds. Then they subjected the saint to new, and even more cruel torments.

Amidst the crowd standing near the place of torture of the martyress was the Christian Juliania, an inhabitant of Heliopolis. Her heart was filled with sympathy for the voluntary martyrdom of the beautiful and illustrious maiden. Juliania likewise wanted to suffer for Christ. She began loudly to denounce the torturers, and they seized hold of her. For a long while they tortured both holy martyresses: they lacerated and tore at their bodies with hooks and then led them stripped through the city amidst derision and jeers. Through the prayers of Saint Barbara the Lord sent an Angel, which covered the bareness of the holy martyresses with splendid garb. The steadfast confessors of faith in Christ, Saints Barbara and Juliania, were then beheaded. Dioskoros himself executed Saint Barbara. The wrath of God was not slow to punish both torturers, Martianus and Dioskoros: they were struck down by bolts of lightning.

In the VI Century the relics of the holy GreatMartyress Barbara were transferred to Constantinople. In the XII Century the daughter of the Byzantine emperor Alexis Comnenes, the princess Barbara, having entered into marriage with the Russian prince Mikhail Izyaslavich, transferred them to Kiev. They rest even now at the Kiev Vladimir cathedral.

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LIVING ORTHODOXY IN REFLECTIVE PREPARATION:

meditating on the awesome miracle of the Son of God taking on flesh and becoming one of us

Celebrate St. Nicholas At Home

*** From an awesome website:
www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/home/

A simple St. Nicholas Day celebration adds a bit of welcome festivity in the middle of the Nativity Fast (Advent). It provides an opportunity to tell the story of St. Nicholas, a man of faith whose goodness and generosity grew out of his love for God. It enriches our understanding of Santa Claus by showing the real historical person who inspired the familiar legend and traditions.



So tell a story of St. Nicholas' generous example of giving in secret to those in need. Then encourage children to identify a kindly "Nicholas deed" to do for someone else. Have children fill their shoes with pieces of carrot

or bits of hay for his white horse or donkey. Place shoes outside bedroom doors or on the hearth. See that a candy treat (a candy cane represents Bishop Nicholas' crozier) and simple gift appears by morning on December 19th.

Have a party. The Dutch give simple gifts accompanied with elaborate thyming texts that may be riddles or satirical poems commenting on the recipient's behavior and/or wrapped in fantastically deceiving ways, such as a pen inside a hollowed out carrot or something small nested inside multiple boxes and wrappings.

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PLEASE Visit The Website for how St Nicholas is celebrated around the world and other great information to share with the children!

A Reflection on the True St. Nicholas

source: <http://sspx.org/en/news-events/news/reflection-true-st-nicholas>

In a time where fiction is stronger than truth, it is important to note the true history of this great saint.

St. Nicholas Day, which is celebrated in the West on December 6 and December 19 by Eastern Christians following the Julian Calendar, has

been long kept as both a holy day and a day of gift giving due to tales of the Saint's uncommon generosity. Over the centuries, he has become a popular symbol of the Christmas season and inspired largely fictional depictions in the form of such characters as Sinterklass, Zinniklos, and Santa Claus.

Those knowledgeable of ecclesiastical history, however, will likely best remember St. Nicholas

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as the holy bishop of Mira in Lycia (the modern day Antalya Province in Turkey) who, at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, became so angry at the arch-heretic Arius that he struck him on the face. Further details on Nicholas's life comprise the third reading at Matins according to the 1962 *Breviarium Romanum*.

Nicolas was born in the famous city of Patar in Lycia. From his childhood he fasted every Wednesday and Friday, and maintained this custom throughout his life. Deprived of his parents in early youth, he distributed his possessions to the poor. One example of his marvelous charity is this: he came to the aid of three girls whose virtue was endangered by providing a sum of money sufficient for their dowries. While on a pilgrimage to Palestine, he went on God's command to Mira, the metropolitan see of Lycia, where the bishop had died. Here, contrary to all expectation he was elected to the see by a marvelous consensus of all the assembled bishops of the province. In the work of his episcopate he stood out as an example of all virtues. But when he defied the edict of Diocletian and Maximian by continuing to preach the truth of the Christian faith, he was



thrown into prison, where he remained until Constantine became Emperor. He took part in the Council of Nicea, at which the Arian heresy was condemned. Returning to his own country, he died a holy death in Mira. His body was later transferred to Bari in Apulia and is there venerated as a most famous relic."

For Eastern Christians following the Byzantine Rite, St. Nicholas Day is kept as a Vigil-ranked feast, meaning that on the eve of the feast Vespers, Matins, and First Hour are celebrated as a single service with special hymns, readings, and blessings assigned. Although the feast is not, strictly speaking, a holy day of obligation, many Greek Catholics and Eastern Orthodox make a special effort to attend church services for the Saint due to his historic importance in the Christian East. In fact, he is so honored in the East that the *Octoechos* ("Book of Eight Tones"), which is one of the central liturgical texts for the Byzantine Rite, contains hymns to St. Nicholas which are to be recited at the canonical hours every Thursday of the year. Moreover, St. Nicholas remains one of the most popular patrons for Eastern churches, particularly in Greece and among the Christians of the Middle East.

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Colossians 1:12-18

¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

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SPIRITUAL VITAMINS FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY

"Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers are ranks of angels. Christ is not only the source (through Him) of creation— of all things, on earth and in heaven— but also its goal (for Him; see Eph 1: 10)." – *Orthodox Study Bible, Colossians 1:16*

MONDAY

"Thy memory, O holy hierarch, hath shone forth like the sun, poetically illumining the hearts of the faithful; and celebrating it today with splendor, we cry out to thee in supplication: Rejoice, O might of chastity who, armed with the shield of abstinence, didst preserve the estate of thy soul intact! Rejoice, O pastor and teacher of thy Christian people! Rejoice, adornment of the Church, beauty of hierarchs, boast of monastics! O most blessed and all-sacred father Nicholas, unceasingly entreat Christ God, that He grant peace to the whole world and save our souls." - *Hymn from the Vespers for St. Nicholas*

TUESDAY

Hymn to St. Nicholas

(Sing to our children and live our faith!)

O who loves Nicholas the Saintly,
O who serves Nicholas the Saintly.
Him will Nicholas receive,
and give help in time of need.
Nicholas, Nicholas.

O kto kto Nikolaja l'ubit,
O kto kto Nikolaja sluzit,
Tomu svjatyj Nikolaj,
Na vsjakj cas pomahaj:
Nikolaj, Nikolaj!

O who dwells in God's holy mansions;
Is our help on the land and oceans.
He will guard us from all ills,
keep us pure and free from sins,
Nicholas, Nicholas.
Nicholas, tearfully we sinners
beseech you fervently in our prayers.

Help us in our tribulations,
comfort every Christian nation.
Nicholas, Nicholas.
Holy Saint, listen to our prayers.
Let not life lead us to despair;
All our efforts aren't in vain,
singing praises to your name.
Nicholas, Nicholas.

WEDNESDAY

"The ungrateful person cannot be pleased with anything. He grumbles and complains all the time, finding fault in everything and everyone." +St. Paisios of Mount Athos

THURSDAY

"He has shown you, O mortal what is good; and what does the LORD require of you? but to do justice, to live kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." The Book of Micah 6:8

FRIDAY

"For the Christian, the cross gradually becomes lighter and more joyful, while for the nonbeliever it becomes heavier and more burdensome. Why is this so? Because where the one carries their cross with faith and devotion to God, the other carries it with grumbling and anger." +St. Innocent of Alaska

SATURDAY

"From this day forth from this very hour and this very minute, let us love God above all and seek to accomplish His Holy Will." +St. Herman of Alaska

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PRAYER CORNER

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions and Other Needs *

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

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For the Health of... Mildred, Anna Mae, Julie, Jane, Eleanor D., Mark, Viola, Juliana, Katie, Kenneth, Michael, Roberta, Fredrick, Helen B., Wendy, Gary, Barbara, Matthew, Patricia, Lino, John, Fr. Jonathan Tobias, Pañi Marsha Tobias, Mary ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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For the Special Intentions of... Bishop Gregory, Stephen, David, Joshua, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Amee, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Olga, John, Sarah, John S., and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee: Matthew, John, Timothy, Patricia, Theresa, Lawrence, Donald, Jane, Cynthia, Katherine, Eleanor, Kenneth, Gina, Robert, Jillian, Wendy, Olga, John, Melanie, Michael, John, Richard, John, Margaret, Sarah, Patricia, and for those working towards our Community Outreach, ZOE For Life ...*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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Birthday Prayers for... Madelyn Spirnak (12/17), Donald Gavulich (12/19), John Woloshyn (12/19), Patricia Deluca (12/20), Patricia Donley (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21), Jaydon Maruscak (12/23) ...*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! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!*

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For Expectant Mothers... Pañi Ileana, Amee, Ashley, Katie, Meredith, Harmonie ...*through the prayers of St Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, & St Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY FAST:

2017 NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE

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

Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Word of God, You became flesh and dwelt among us. You made the womb of Your most-pure Mother more spacious than the heavens. Yet You, the true light, were born in the darkness of a cave, thereby enlightening the world that was darkened by sin. To redeem us, You shared Your whole life. You submitted to death on the Cross and rose from the dead, bestowing life. We share in Your death and resurrection, that we may indeed be dead to sin and alive in You. As we fast and prepare to celebrate Your life-giving manifestation, we pray especially that our respect for life will prevail in the world. Directed by Your command to care for "the least of these," may we and all people heed Your call to show care and concern for life in the womb; for the lives of the poor, oppressed, and suffering; and for the lives of the sick, the elderly, and the dying. May Your peace reign in our hearts and throughout the world, especially in places of unrest, so that the shedding of blood in warfare, violence, terrorism, tyranny, and all manner of strife may come to an end. May aggression between neighbors and nations fade away. May love reign in the lives of families. O Savior, You have said "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." May we become partakers of Your abundant life, together with all the saints whose lives have pleased You from the beginning. For You are the way, the truth and the life, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your most-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. AMEN.