



# Saint John the Baptist Orthodox Church

A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople



Father Dave Urban, Pastor  
Very Reverend Father John Brancho, Pastor Emeritus  
Timothy Martin, Reader  
Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, Cantors  
Matthew Peifer, Church Council President  
www.facebook.com/pg/St-John-the-Baptist-Orthodox-Church-of-Northside-Pittsburgh-169297619784149

2688 California Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15212  
412-748-0148, Talk or Text  
OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com  
www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com

November 25, 2018

Volume IV

## 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 8<sup>th</sup> Lukan Sunday / St. John the Merciful (620)

9:15am – 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour; 9:30 – Divine Liturgy Tone 1 Liturgical Color: **Gold**

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19; Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

God Parent/Child(ren) Sunday / Additional Collection for our Community Outreach (IOCC) / Panachida for deceased God Parents and Children



### SERVICES, SAINTS, AND READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Tuesday, November 27 – Giving Tuesday

Wednesday, November 28 – Nativity Fast Begins – 9:30am Moleben for the Nativity Fast

The opportunity for the Holy Mystery of Confession is available following every service.

Monday	St. John Chrysostom (407)	1 Timothy 5:1-10	Luke 14:12-15
Tuesday	Holy and All-praised Apostle Philip	1 Timothy 5:11-21	Luke 14:25-35
# Wednesday	Holy Martyr and Confessor Abibus of Edessa (322)	1 Timothy 5:22-6:11	Luke 15:1-10
# Thursday	Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew (60)	1 Timothy 6:17-21	Luke 16:1-9
# Friday	St. Gregory the Wonderworker (266)	2 Timothy 1:1-2, 8-18	Lk 10:38-42, 11:27-28
# Saturday	Martyr Platon of Ancyra (266)	Galatians 5:22-6:2	Luke 9:57-62

# During the Nativity (Philip's) Fast, let us Imitate Christ and the Saints and Fast as they did!

Sunday, December 2 – 27<sup>th</sup> Sun. after Pentecost / 9<sup>th</sup> Sun. of Luke / Prophet Obadiah (Abdias) (9th c. B.C.)

9:15am – 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour; 9:30 – Divine Liturgy Tone 2 Liturgical Color: **Purple**

Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17; Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

Panachida for +Michaelene Paulick (1 year anniversary)

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### A Warm Welcome To Our Visitors!

Glory Be To Jesus Christ! (Glory Be Forever!)  
Slava Isusu Christu! (Slava Na Viki!)

We are happy that you have joined us today! Please join us downstairs for coffee and a bite to eat. It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God's Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop in again soon!

If you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy, please see Father Dave and he will gladly answer any of your questions to the best of his ability. He looks forward to meeting you!

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This Bulletin Is Offered:  
For Birthday Prayers  
for Helen Sarraf.  
Many Years!



### LOOKING AHEAD LOCALLY



Tuesday, December 4 – 9:30am Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

Saturday, December 8 – 9a-12p Winter Clean-Up and Nativity Decorating / 11a-1p Confession offered

Sunday, December 9 – Add'l collection for our Capital Improvement Fund / Special Parish Meeting / 5pm St. Nicholas Charity Dinner (see details below)

Thursday, December 13 – 9:30am Moleben for the Nativity Fast

Sunday, December 16 – YOUTH Sunday / St Nicholas Breakfast following the Divine Liturgy

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### PARISH BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions for this section to Father by Wednesday.)



St Nicholas Charity Dinner for the Pittsburgh Deanery will be on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at Edgewood Country Club (100 Churchill Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15235). Doors open at 4pm with a Buffett Dinner at 5. This annual dinner benefits our Christ the Saviour Seminary. Adults - \$30; Children 6-12 - \$10; Under 5 Free. (Please make checks payable to "Pittsburgh Deanery".) Please see Fr Dave by December 2<sup>nd</sup> for your ticket(s). Auction Prize Donations (\*which may be combined with other donations\*) to be raffled off at the dinner can be given to Father.

Nominations – Effective January 1, 2019, the Church Council position of Financial Secretary will be open. Nominations are now being accepted by Matt or Larry. A special meeting to vote on this will be on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> following the Divine Liturgy.

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Thank You! Thank You!



Last week we had another fun and successful Turkey Bingo! 95 tickets were sold and \$2,583 was deposited. Many folks enjoyed fellowship with one another in our community!

**Weekly Candle Intentions/Memorials** were offered last week by Viola Peifer; Tim Martin; Melanie Shuster; Lawrence Martin; Olga Radick; Eleanor Sanger; Barbara Kirish; Joanne Nelson; Theresa Sharpless; Patty Watson; Rich Milirovich; Cindy Pavilonis.

***"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 Viola Peifer, in Memory of Grandfather. May His Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamjat!

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**Give Hope by Giving Back – Giving Tuesday** is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration.

Celebrated **THIS Tuesday (11/27)** following Thanksgiving after the widely recognized shopping events *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday*, **#GivingTuesday** kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. Let's remember our Parish and our Orthodox neighbors (such as IOCC, OCMC, OCPM, *Ancient Faith Radio*, etc.) when you are donating.



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**The Nativity (Filipovka) Fast (Advent) Begins this Wednesday, November 28** - The Fast runs until the Eve of the Nativity on Sunday, January 6. As in Great Lent, you should establish for yourself a rule of fasting and stick to it. It is often said that the Nativity Fast is so much more difficult because of the nature of society around us (and being on the Old Calendar, the false thought of celebrating "two Christmases"). We can enjoy the season with our extended family & friends and still keep the spirit of the Fast. Everyone should try, at a minimum, to keep Monday, Wednesday & Friday as fast days, no matter is happening on the 'new calendar.' **Prepare the Manger of your Soul for the coming of the new borne Messiah!**

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**New Parish Community Directory** - Please check the copy in the Church Hall for mistakes.

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**Patron Saint Commemorations** – We began commemorating our Patron Saints during the Proskomedia (Preparation) prayers of the Divine Liturgy and during the Great Entrance. (THESE WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED IN OUR NEXT PARISH DIRECTORY). Please contact Fr. Dave with the date of your Name's Day. Here are websites to search if you are not sure when your Name Day is:

- [orthodoxwiki.org/Baptismal\\_names](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Baptismal_names)  
(can help with more unique names)
- [holyltrinityorthodox.com/calendar/](http://holyltrinityorthodox.com/calendar/)  
(an "Old" Calendar site)
- [christopherklitou.com/when\\_is\\_my\\_nameday\\_d.htm](http://christopherklitou.com/when_is_my_nameday_d.htm)  
(“New” calendar, but includes a lot of links to see the icons for the Saints)

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**Reader of the Third Hour:**  
December 2: Available to you  
This should begin by 9:15 and can be read or chanted. Please contact Fr Dave if you are interested in participating in this wonderful stewardship prayer opportunity!

**Our Stewardship Gift To God**

Stewardship/Dues:	\$ 36
Candles/Small C./Eternal Lamp/C. box:	\$ 160
Envelopes: Sunday/Feast Day/Special:	\$ 988
<b>Total Collections:</b>	<b>\$ 1184</b>
<b>Fundraising Acc't (Turkey Bingo):</b>	<b>\$ 2583</b>
<b>Relocation Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>
<i>Give Generously: "For they gave according to their means... and beyond their means, of their own free will." 2 Cor 8:3</i>	

**Relocation Update** – Our lease in Wexford is still being finalized. The main delay is settling on the floor plan of the space. (The original tenant adjacent to us backed out which has changed a lot.) Please continue to go to the Relocation Committee or Father with any thoughts or concerns about our next step in our journey together. (Committee includes: Sharon Peifer, Larry Martin, Carol Lorenzi, John Kirish, John Righetti, Lynn Mainolfi, Matt Peifer, Peggy Rusnak, Rich Mirilovich, Sharon Dzadony, Tim Martin, and Todd Tusick)

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**ACRY NEWS**



**ACRY Annual / Diocesan Yearbook** - This will be the 1<sup>st</sup> year that the Annual will be published in COLOR. It will also be provided for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in a digital format online for worldwide accessibility. Non-ACRY members can purchase an Annual for \$15. Please contact Theresa Sharpless if you are interested.

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**Pill Bottle Collection** – Our ACRY is starting a new outreach. "Matthew 25: Ministries" accepts donations of clean empty plastic medicine pill bottles for inclusion in shipments of medical supplies and for shredding and recycling. Our pill bottle program fulfills the dual needs of improving medical care in developing countries and caring for our environment. *More information is on the bulletin board in the church hall.*

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A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION: DON'T WAIT  
*"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  
Fr. Dave will be available for confessions after ALL services, on Saturdays Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, & Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, and by appointment. Let us begin to shine in spirit once again, being made free of the weight and stain of our own faults!  
*"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."* (Luke 5:12)

**Winter Church Clean-Up & Nativity Decorating** – will be on **Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>** from 9am to noon(ish). More details to come...

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**Christmas at FOCUS** – We have again offered to donate 4 sheet cakes, 300 bottles of water, 300 napkins, and 300 plasticware sets to FOCUS Pittsburgh for their annual Christmas Dinner for those in need. In addition, they are asking for \$25 gift cards from Target. Please see **Kathy Schrmack** if you are able to make a physical or monetary donation towards this wonderful event which will be held on **Saturday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**. *Your prayers and stewardship are greatly appreciated!*

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**Coffee Social Steward Schedule**

December 2: Available to you  
December 9: Available to you

*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. (Everyone is also encouraged to help clean up after.) Thank you to all those who support and keep this critical ministry alive in our parish!*

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**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/acroddiocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese)  
 Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
 You Tube: [youtube.com/acroddiocese](https://youtube.com/acroddiocese)

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**ORTHODOXY AROUND DA 'BURGH**

**“Created to Thrive”** – The Holy Trinity Notable Speakers Series and Spiritual Life Ministry are hosting a Family Retreat on **Friday, November 30** (7:30-9pm) and **Saturday, December 1** (9am-3pm) at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237) featuring Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Don't miss this informative presentation of “Created to Thrive” and the opportunity to explore the topics of parenting, marriage, our home, and our community. Everyone is welcome - married, pre-marriage, parents, parents-to-be or anyone else interested in growing family and community relationships. Admission is FREE, but registration is required by **TODAY (11/25)**. Sign up online at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events). For additional information contact [SpiritualLife@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:SpiritualLife@HolyTrinityPgh.org) or **412-292-4206**.

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**IN THE COMMUNITY**

**Christmas Around the World** – The National Slovak Society presents Christmas Around the World **TODAY, Sunday, November 25<sup>th</sup>** from 1p-5p at the NSS Heritage Museum (351 Valley Brook Road, McMurray, PA 15317). There will be ethnic trees on display, photos with St. Nicholas (bring your own camera), old world bake sale, kid's arts & crafts, food, and a hand carved animated Nativity display. FREE admission & Family Fun. Call 1-800-488-1890 for more information.

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**LIVES OF THE SAINTS**

Source: [www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar/orthodox-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar/orthodox-calendar) © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos

**Sainted John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria**  
*Commemorated on November 25/12*

St. John the Compassionate was the Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt. In his youth he married and had children but when they had all died in his lifetime, he went on to become a monk. The exploits of his life & his asceticism reached the attention of the Emperor and all the clergy when the Patriarchal throne became empty. He was asked to take on the duty, which he worthily assumed for the welfare of the people. His chief task, which he did more



than anything else, was charity work and giving help to all of those in need. He ordered a list be made of all the poor & downtrodden in the city, which turned out to be over seven thousand. Out of the Church's treasury, all seven thousand were provided for each day. He would emerge from the Church doors twice a week and received everyone on those days, settling quarrels, distributing alms. He was never known to refuse to anyone under any circumstances. He surrendered his soul to the Lord in 620 AD on his native island of Cyprus.

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**SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*“Of all the afflictions that burden the human race, there is not one, whether spiritual or bodily, that cannot be healed by the Holy Scriptures.” +Saint John Chrysostom*

**Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19**

<sup>8</sup>for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup>and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup>For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; <sup>13</sup>but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. <sup>14</sup>Therefore it is said, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” <sup>15</sup>Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of

the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,

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**Gospel: Luke 10:25-37**

**The Parable of the Good Samaritan**  
<sup>25</sup>And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup>He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” <sup>27</sup>And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup>And he said to him, “You have answered right; do this, and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup>But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had

compassion, <sup>34</sup>and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' <sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" <sup>37</sup>He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

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## LIVING ORTHODOXY

### The Need to Mourn

#### God is with us in the intimacy of grief

The recent massive deaths that have taken place in the horrible fires that have engulfed California has brought together whole communities in need of mourning. During times like this, we need to mourn.

One of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of the priesthood is comforting people in their darkest moments of sorrow. Do not be mistaken, and think that priests are exempt from the pain of those whom they try to comfort, or that we have magical words that somehow ease the pain or bring order to the chaos of grief. Platitudes are useless in dark days of mourning. The one who has lost his life may very well be "in a better place," but it is oddly of little comfort to say those words. In a powerful witness of human behavior, Christ "does not say, 'Well, now he is in heaven, everything is well; he is separated from this difficult and tormented life.' Christ does not say all those things we do in our pathetic and uncomfoting attempts to console. In fact he says nothing—he weeps."

In like fashion, we need to embrace the grief we feel following at the senseless loss of lives. We need to honor the bereavement process, because just as God gave life to people whom we grew to love, so too God has blessed those left behind with the grief that they feel at their loss. Grief is confirmation that these persons were of value, that they were a beloved son, a cherished brother, a treasured friend. Grief is how we honor a well-lived life. Their deaths were grief-worthy. In grieving, we do their memory justice, and follow in the example of Jesus, who wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus. Like martyrs of the ancient church, like Lazarus in the New Testament, their departure from this world before their time was up makes their deaths particularly galling for those left behind to wonder how they are going to the fill the space that their loved ones once occupied. The mystery of a future without them is a daunting, as is the mystery of death itself.

As a priest and monk of the Russian Orthodox Church, I am comfortable with this mystery, as all Christians should be. Death can be a mystery precisely because the triumph over death is not a mystery. As the Russian Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann wrote, "in essence, Christianity is not concerned with coming to terms with death, but rather with the victory over it." In the light of everlasting life, in the name of

Jesus Christ, the dreadful threat and dark mystery that is death is transformed into a happy and victorious event for the believer, and "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:54)

So mourning is an ancient ritual, one in which Jesus participated, and those before him. For all of us, all people, death is a common element of humanity, the common trait that we share, and the common enemy of our loved ones. And like grief, victory over death binds people together in a larger, more powerful community, the community that is found in the Christian faith. People accuse Christians of being members of a "death cult," obsessed with a dying savior and focused on the afterlife to the exclusion of the present; but they are wrong.

Christianity does not deny life, Christianity affirms life. Christianity affirms life even in death, because for Christians, death does not remove the relationship that exists. In death, as in life, our parent, our son, our brother, our friend, is honored and loved. In death, as in life, we love and honor them, and death cannot take them from us. Death may have taken them, but it has also provided those left behind with the opportunity to live with the hope of one day joining them. And a life with hope is a good life.

So for us, the death of our loved ones is the beginning of the true life that also awaits us beyond the grave, if indeed we have begun to live it here. Christ, "the resurrection and the life," (John 11:25) transformed death. Christ assumed human flesh, Christ was crucified, resurrected, ascended to heaven and waits for us there, and Christ ushers us into new life both now and after our death. Therefore, even as death exposes our frailty and our grief, death does not reveal our finiteness; instead it reveals our infiniteness, our eternity. To this end, the Christian does not ponder the mystery of death in a way that is paralyzing, negative and apathetic, but in a way that is productive, positive and dynamic.

God, to whom you have entrusted your soul, is a good and perfect God. This God will do what is right with your child, what is just with your brother, and what is honorable with your parent or friend. There is no saying, no claim, no scripture that will give us peace in our loss right now or even calm our troubled souls; but we can find comfort and peace in God who is present with us, and in us, and through us, in the intimacy of grief, as we mourn the death of our friends.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

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## SPIRITUAL VITAMINS FOR THE WEEK

Life-giving and merciful Trinity, receive my thanksgiving for all Your goodness. Make us worthy of Your blessings, so that, when we have brought to fruit the talents You have entrusted to us, we may enter into the joy of our Lord, forever exulting in the shout of victory: Alleluia!

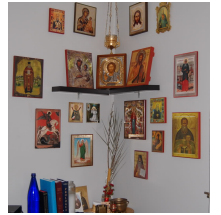
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"Love unites us to God. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love bears all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base, nothing arrogant in love. Love admits of no schisms: love gives rise to no seditions: love does all things in harmony. By love have all the elect of God been made perfect; without love nothing is well-pleasing to God." +St Clement of Rome

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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...** Julie, Jane, Mildred, Anna Mae, Eleanor D., Viola, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, Roberta, Gary, Lino, David, Louis, June, Helen, Steven, Doug, Joanne, Lynn, Mary, Kathy N., Danielle ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; & St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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**For the Special Intentions of...** Bishop Gregory, Marianne, Steve, Christopher, Nicholas, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, John S., Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose *our seminarians:* Michael and Daniel, *and our Church Council, Curators, & Relocation Committee:* Matthew, Lawrence, Timothy, Patricia, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Donald, Jane, Eleanor, Steven, Kenneth, Jillian, John, Wendy, John, Olga, John, Melanie, Michael, John, John, Margaret, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreach, IOCC ...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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**Patronal Feast Days (Name's Day):** Cindy Pavilonis - St. Cyntianus (11/28); Matthew Mirilovich – Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew (11/29) *(contact Fr Dave with your date)*

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**Birthday Prayers for...** *Father's sister,* Suzanne Verbanick (11/25), Stephen Brancho (11/26), Fr. Michael Ellis (11/26), John Gaydos Sr. (11/26/32), John Righetti (11/26), Pañi Peggy Teklinski (11/26), Pañi Ileana Bennett (11/28), Chi-Wing Chow (11/29), Liam Kovats (11/30), Matthew Hanchulak (12/1), Stacy (Martin) Dzambo (12/1), Joshua Winkler (12/1) ...*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 our Catechumens & Inquirers...** Ashley and Patrick ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. John Maximovitch.*

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**For Expectant Mothers...** Lindsay, Elyse, Lauren, Pañi Marianna, Faith, Pañi Eleni, Carley ...*through the prayers of St Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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



### His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory's NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2018

*To Be Prayed Every Evening of the Nativity Fast*

O Lord, You told us through the Psalmist David to be still and know that You are God. (Psalm 46:10) Yet, in our weakness, that stillness is far from our hearts and minds. We are restless in soul and body. The constant noise of the world drowns out Your still, small voice. (1 Kings 19:12) Even as we prepare during this season to remember Your Birth, we are diverted by many cares. We are anxious and troubled, neglecting the one thing needful. (Luke 10:41-42)

Holy Master, keep us away from those things which distract us from knowing Your Presence. Grant us the stillness, silence, peace, and calm that only comes from You. Help us to be diligent in prayer and attentive to the needs of others.

As Your Holy Mother beheld the great mystery of Your Incarnation, she silently pondered it in her most-pure heart. (Luke 2:19) Allow us to reach the celebration of Your coming in the flesh so that, silently contemplating it in our own hearts, we too may be filled with every grace and blessing and give glory to You forever. **Amen.**