



**Weekly Candle Intentions/Memorials** were offered last week by Tim Martin; Viola Peifer; Melanie Shuster; Lawrence Martin; Olga Radick; Eleanor Sanger; Theresa Sharpless; Mary Jane Hudak; Barbara Kirish; Joanne Nelson; Rich Mirilovich; 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

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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 on Saturdays Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, & Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, by appointment, or after ALL services. 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)

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**Stewardship/Dues are due** - The end of the civil calendar year is here. Have you made a contribution to your parish yet? Please fulfill your financial responsibility to your community Church.

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**2019 Calendars** have arrived and are in the Church Vestibule to be picked up.

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**Great Compline** - This year, with Christmas Eve being on a Sunday, we will have the Vigil Service at approximately 11:45am. After the Divine Liturgy, we will have our regular coffee social and then head back upstairs. Please plan to stay.

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**Nativity Coffee Social** - will be a cover-dish surprise supplied by everyone in the parish. Bring in your favorite dish and let's celebrate the Feast with a feast!

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**Christmas Raffle** - Items are requested and being collected on the bar top in the church hall for our Christmas Raffle. Typically people will bring in a nice bottle of wine, but feel free to be creative!

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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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BEGIN SHOPPING

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**Our Stewardship Gift To God**

Stewardship/Dues: \$ 446  
Candles/Small C./Eternal Lamp/C. box: \$ 161  
Envelopes: Sunday/Feast Day/Special: \$ 695  
Parish House Rental Offering: \$ 100

**Total Collections: \$ 1402**  
**Relocation Fund: \$ 350**

*Give Generously: "For they gave according to their means... and beyond their means, of their own free will." 2 Cor 8:3*

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**Parish Stewardship Opportunities...**

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

- Bring in a bag of CALCIUM CHLORIDE
- Pray for our parish and it's future
- Sponsor a Coffee Social
- Offer your time to help with possible snow

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**Coffee Social Steward Schedule**

December 30: Available to you  
January 6: Available to you  
January 13: 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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**Snowed In? Physically unable to make it to church?** - Our diocese is blessed with the opportunity to watch our Cathedral's Divine Liturgy every Sunday at 9am. Of course, the best scenario is to attend the Divine Liturgy and receive the Eucharist. When limitations occur, please consider taking the time Sunday morning to pray with our brothers and sisters via the web. Go to [www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/) to watch the *live broadcast*.

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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.

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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)

**ORTHODOXY AROUND DA 'BURGH**



**Orthodoxy on Tap** - We are starting the new year off trying a couple different things - The Pittsburgh Orthodox Young Adults (POYA) will have the "Orthodoxy on Tap" on a weeknight and in a different location. Plan to be there **Thursday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 7pm at The Clubhouse Gibsonia (5301 Ranalli Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044 / 724-449-9090 / [www.theclubhousegibsonia.com](http://www.theclubhousegibsonia.com)). Guest speaker will be Fr Stevo Rocknage who will have an interactive discussion on *"The Great Commission Of Our Lord: What Does It Mean For Your Life?"*. All young adults 21-39 are welcome! Come for fellowship and to learn more about your faith!

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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

### The Holy Martyrs Minos, Hermogenes and EUGRAPHOS

Commemorated on December 23/10

The Holy Martyrs Minos, Hermogenes and EUGRAPHOS suffered for their faith in Christ under the emperor Maximian (305-313).

Saint Minos was sent by the emperor from Athens to Alexandria to suppress the riots that had arisen between the Christians and the pagans. Distinguished for his gift of eloquence, Minos instead openly began to preach the Christian faith and he converted many pagans to Christ. Learning of this, Maximian dispatched Hermogenes to the Alexandria district to conduct a trial over the saints, and moreover was given orders to purge the city of Christians. Hermogenes, although he was a pagan, was distinguished however by his reverent bearing. And struck by the endurance of Saint Minos under torture and by his miraculous healing after the cruel torments, he also came to believe in Christ. Maximian himself then arrived in Alexandria. Neither the astonishing stoic



endurance under torture of Saints Minos and Hermogenes, nor even the miracles of these days manifest of God in this city, in any way mollified the emperor, but instead vexed him all the more. The emperor personally stabbed Saint EUGRAPHOS, the secretary of Saint Minos, and then gave orders to behead the holy Martyrs Minos and Hermogenes.

The remains of the holy martyrs, cast into the sea in an iron chest, were afterwards found (about this see under 17 February) and transferred to Constantinople. The emperor Justinian built a church in the name of the holy Martyr Minos of Alexandria. Saint Joseph the Melodist (Comm. 4 April) composed a canon in honour of the holy martyrs.

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The Monastery of Saint Minos in Romania is where our new Chalice and Discos came from. We pray that Saint Minos continue to guide that monastery and our community!

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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:** Colossians 3:12-16

<sup>12</sup>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup>forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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**Gospel:** Luke 17:12-19

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

## LIVING ORTHODOXY

### To Fast or Not To Fast?

#### Fasting in a Western World

Source: [www.pravmir.com/to-fast-or-not-to-fast-fasting/](http://www.pravmir.com/to-fast-or-not-to-fast-fasting/)

As you all know, the Nativity Fast has begun. Fasting is a time of deep contemplation of one's sins and a spiritual battlefield against temptations of the world. Fasting is one of the main foundations of Orthodox Christianity and has been a staple component of Orthodox life. It is preached by all Christian priests and is a way for all Orthodox Christians to be closer to God.

As an Orthodox Christian, fasting was indoctrinated into me at a young age. My parents

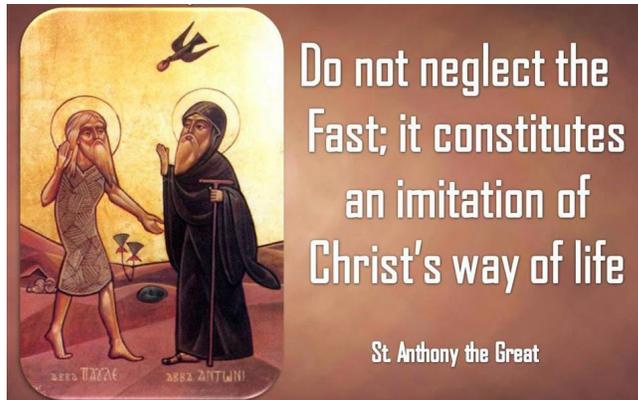
would always tell me the importance of fasting, and how it strengthens our soul and as Christians, it is essential to give up foods such as chocolate or meat for a few weeks, in order not to be tempted by worldly possessions. However, my parents went the extra mile. During fasting, we would stop watching television and listening to music. It might sound strange, but not watching television and listening to music brings a peace and calm to the household. I don't feel as hyperactive as I do when being surrounded by the loud noises of music and TV. And I accepted it, just like that. It became part of my everyday routine, that I never questioned why we fast, or

why I can't have chocolate for seven weeks. It became a part of me and of who I am.

However, living in today's society, fasting has become more of a challenge. Throughout my high school years, friends have invited me to parties during the fasting period and I've declined, telling them I was fasting. Then, they asked me why I fast and what's so special about it. Even though I told them it was part of my religion and it helps me be closer to God, their reaction makes me somewhat ashamed of fasting. I feel as if I'm being judged by society for choosing to not eat meat or dairy. Moreover, I have succumbed to peer pressure and have broken the fast. I was at a friend's birthday party at a restaurant, and I wasn't tempted to break the fast. But then, when the birthday cake came out, my friends were pressuring me to have a slice, even though I had politely said no to the offer. They kept insisting I had a slice, and I gave in. I was ashamed that I broke down so easily and wasn't able to hold fast to my beliefs.

Though I do have friends that are understanding of my beliefs and respect my

decisions, it's still disheartening to be pressured into doing something that is against your character and who you are, more so when your friends are the ones pressuring you. It's also a shame that nowadays, people – more specifically, young children – of Orthodox faith don't partake in the fasting period. Some people make excuses in order not to fast, and they don't feel ashamed that they are twisting one of the foundations of Christianity to suit their needs. Fasting is a strict commandment of the Orthodox Church and it must be obeyed. St Philaret of New York tells in one of his sermons that fasting is a 'Church law' and every Christian must adhere to it. He goes further to say that one who does not fast and disobeys the Church stops being a Christian. It is important that we, as Christians, should maintain one of the commandments of the Orthodox Church.



People might say that fasting is a struggle and difficult to commit to. **Yes, it is a struggle, but a necessary one.** Though it weakens our physical nature, it strengthens our spiritual nature, so that we will be ready to accompany God in Paradise.

*By Sophia Desiatov*

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### What the Lord permits (or allows)

I do think there are challenges, if not trials, that the Lord permits us to experience. (I will never believe, though, that He is the author or dispenser of evil.)

Perhaps these contretemps are meant to strengthen our faith (and I hope, personally, that this will turn out to be the case).

But I wonder if, in addition to this, some walks through the valley of shadow give us the chance to taste impoverishment, and weakness, so that

we may better see, more clearly hear, the choral annunciation of the angels.

Who better to perceive, confirmed, the unthinkable idea that the meek will inherit the earth, and that God is the God Whose Highest Name is Love, and that the Logos is the Rescuer, Jesus Himself?

Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*By Fr. Jonathan Tobias*

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## SPIRITUAL VITAMINS FOR THE WEEK

### SUNDAY

"Without God's will or God's forbearance nothing takes place on earth." - Metropolitan Gregory (Postnikov) of St. Petersburg

### MONDAY

"In a home filled with prayer, God is "tasted", prayer is as natural as breathing, and Holy Tradition is passed to the next generation less by preaching than by life and example." - Sister Magdalen

### TUESDAY

"When God recedes in order to educate us, this brings great sadness, humility and even some measure of despair to the soul. The purpose of this is to humble the souls tendency to vanity and self-glory, for the heart at once is filled with fear of God, tears of thankfulness, and great longing for the beauty of silence." +St. Diadochus of Photiki

### WEDNESDAY

"A man who is growing cold towards God begins first of all to flee attending church. At first he tries to come to services later, and then he ceases altogether to visit God's temple... Here in the skete we even make the rounds of the cells on feast days, so that no one evades church services." - Elder Barsanuphius of Optina

### THURSDAY

The beggar stretches out his hand not to ask, but to give you the kingdom of heaven, and you do not notice!" +Elder Arsenie Papacioc

### FRIDAY

"The more days of fasting there are, the better the healing is; the longer the period of abstinence, the more abundant the gain of salvation is." +Blessed Augustine

SATURDAY

“Humble yourself before all; try to be a servant to others; do not accuse, judge or reproach anyone. Make peace with everybody, forgive them, all, or you yourself will not receive the Lord’s forgiveness.” - Abbot Nikon Vorobiev

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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... Anna Mae, Eleanor D., Viola, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, Jane, Roberta, Gary, Lino, David, Louis, June, Helen, Steven, Doug, Joanne, Lynn, Mary, Kathy N., Luca, Barbara, Francis ...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... Metropolitan Gregory, Marianne, Steve, Christopher, Nicholas, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles our seminarians: Michael and Daniel, and our Church Council, Curators, and 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, National ACRY ...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): your name here – Saint \_\_\_\_\_. (contact Fr Dave with your date)

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Birthday Prayers for... Jaydon Maruscak (12/23), Caitlin Brozell (12/28), Eleanor Dussling (12/28) ...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, Patrick, and Dustin ...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. John Maximovitch.

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For those preparing for Marriage... ...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.

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Anniversary Prayers for... ...May God fill them with His grace that they may continue to live in unity with Him!

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For Expectant Mothers... Lindsay, Elyse, Lauren, Pañi Marianna, Faith, Pañi Eleni, Hayley, 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.

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For the souls of the newly departed... +John Smoley, +Julia Potoski, +Charles Maresh, +Mildred Gavulich ...May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. Eternal Memory!

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\* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you would 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 Orthodox Christians.

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY FAST:



Praying For Peace



Prayer for Peace - 2018 NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE
Metropolitan Gregory asks each member of our Diocese, either as a family or individually, to pray this Prayer for Peace 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.

