

"THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER" *Our Parish Weekly Bulletin*
O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor* +++ 2688 California Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa 15212
 www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com +++ 412-748-0148 (Talk or Text) +++ OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory 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 and we wish God's Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27

36th Sunday after Pentecost
 St. Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles, teacher of the Slavs (869)
 Pre-Lenten Breakfast

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

9:30am Moleben to the Theotokos with anointing

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

37th Sunday after Pentecost
 St. Eustathius (Eustace) (337)
 9:30 am Divine Liturgy
 Tone 4; Liturgical Color: **Gold → Purple**
 The Rite of Forgiveness

#THE GREAT FAST BEGINS

MONDAY, MARCH 7 #CLEAN WEEK

(*a day of strict-fasting*)
 6:00 pm The Great Canon of Repentance

TUESDAY, MARCH 8 #CLEAN WEEK

9:30 am The Great Canon of Repentance

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9 #CLEAN WEEK

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
 with community meal following

THURSDAY, MARCH 10 #CLEAN WEEK

9:30am The Great Canon of Repentance

FRIDAY, MARCH 11 #CLEAN WEEK

9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

SATURDAY, MARCH 12 #CLEAN WEEK

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

+++

Calendar - Future Services are updated online at:

www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar

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

+++

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

www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/

+++

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

+++

*** **Food Drive** – Thank you to everyone who brought in items for our annual February Food Drive for St. Cyril of the White Lake Food Pantry on Pittsburgh's South Side. If anyone would like to deliver them, please let Fr. Dave know.

+++

*** **Gertrude Hawk Candy Sale** - The booklets are in the church hall. Orders are due by **NEXT Week, March 7th**. Please see Tim Martin with any questions.

+++

Meatfare
FEBRUARY 27th
 FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY



The Last Judgement
 Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8: 8-9:2
 Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46

Pray facing East this week.
 Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him!
 Use up/freeze dairy this week.

Cheesefare
MARCH 6th
 FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY



Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!
 FORGIVENESS SUNDAY
 Epistle: Romans 13: 11-14:4
 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.

Great Lent 2022 - Our Journey To Pascha has begun. We are preparing for the Great Fast, which prepares us for Holy Week, which prepares us for Pascha! Please reach out to Fr. Dave if you have questions about this important fasting period that is around the corner.

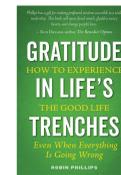
+++

* **Candles** - Our minimum candle offering has been requested at \$3 for a long time (decades?). Starting **March 1, 2022**, we are going to change to the following: * a minimum \$4 donation for the weekly vigil candles and * a minimum \$1 donation for the smaller votive candles will be requested. Also, in the same manner as the free-will offering requested for the Eternal Lamp each week, * a free-will offering can now be given for the "Christ Cross Candles" and "Theotokos Cross Candles" (on the candle stands) with special intentions *In Honor of* (namesday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or *In Memory of someone*.

+++

Moleben to the Theotokos – On **Thursday** at 9:30am, we will have the same Moleben (*devotional service of supplication*) to the Theotokos that is offered in Taylor, PA with the weeping Icon of the Tender Heart. There will also be an anointing with the myrrh from the icon. All are welcome to come and pray with us! (*please enter through the side door by the alley.*)

+++



Book Suggestion for the Great Fast - "Above all, Robin has offered a book of comfort and hope to those who are going through pain... What initially struck me was how practical the book is" [*pages ix; xi of the forward*]

Ancient Faith Publishing - 9781944967802
 paperback: \$ 18.95
 ebook versions: \$ 8.99 and \$ 9.99
 audio book: \$19.95
store.ancientfaith.com/gratitude-in-lifes-trenches/

THIS BULLETIN IS OFFERED

in memory of +Andrew Hudak
 May he be remembered in
 God's Memory forever! Eternal Memory!

+++

Rite of Forgiveness – After the Divine Liturgy next Sunday, **March 6**, we will have prayers from the Rite of Forgiveness as a community immediately following the Liturgy. **Let's pray that we begin the Great Fast on the right foot: taking the step of forgiveness together.**

+++

"Clean Week" Services – The first week of the Great Fast is known as "Clean Week". We will have services in the evenings and mornings. All are encouraged to come to ask many services as your schedule allows. **The Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete** was "*written in the 7th century, The Great Canon still maintains relevance for the modern age. It is the backbone of Orthodox services for the first week of Great Lent and sets the tone for a Christian's self reflection and repentance appropriate to the season.*"

+++

Fellowship Meals - Got Soup? A 't'radition in many Orthodox parishes is to have soup (or other light meal) following the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast. We will bring this meal back after our Wednesday evening services. A sign up sheet is in the church hall for those interested in bringing in food. Let's gather together! Let's pray together! Let's eat together!

+++

*** **90th Anniversary Update** – Planning continues for our 90th Anniversary celebration on **October 9, 2022**. The luncheon will be held at Pittsburgh's Grand Hall at the Priory on the North Side.

+++ +++ +++

*** **Masks** are optional at all church events.

+++ +++ +++

Lenten Coin Boxes – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Mt 28:19) Coin boxes are available in the Church Hall to collect your spare change throughout the Great Fast for our Community Outreach next month (OCMC). More information is available at www.ocmc.org. “Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (1 Tim 6:18)

+++ +++ +++

*** **Sunday of Orthodoxy Service** - The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy Service and Celebration on **Sunday, March 13** at 4:00 pm at All Saints Orthodox Church (601 W. McMurray Rd., Canonsburg, PA 15317)

+++ +++ +++

* **Pan-Orthodox Choir** - The band is getting back together again! Rehearsals will be on Saturdays from Noon to 2pm at St. Nicholas (320 Munson Ave., McKees Rocks, PA 15136)

+++ +++ +++

** **Diocesan Lenten Retreat** will be held on **Saturday, March 19th** from 9a to 5p at St. Nicholas (903 Ann St., Homestead, PA 15120). Please note the date change and sign up in the hall if you will be attending.

+++ +++ +++

***MAN OF GOD** - Exiled unjustly, convicted without trial, slandered without cause. MAN OF GOD depicts the trials and tribulations of Saint Nektarios of Aegina, as he bears the unjust hatred of his enemies while preaching the Word of God. View the trailer at: www.imdb.com/title/tt6060964/ **There will be a one-day showing of this movie in Pittsburgh Cinemark Theatres on Monday, March 21 at 7:00 pm.** Contact Fr. Dave for more information.

+++ +++ +++

** **Camp Nazareth** The Pittsburgh camping week will be from **July 17 to 23**. Registration will begin on March 15. Staff applications are also being accepted. Visit www.campnazareth.org for more info.

+++ +++ +++

* **On Lighting Candles in the Church** – In lighting our two candles, the first thing we should do is make an offering for them. Everything that we have is from God and the first step is to give back to Him for all of His many blessings. The next step is to venerate the icons that guard the candles and lift our prayers to God on high. Next, we light a candle, remembering all of our loved ones who are sick (or who we just want to pray for) and then a candle for our loved ones who have passed into the next life. We beseech God to have mercy on their souls. Lastly, as we light the candles, we quietly say “Lord have mercy,” repenting for our own sinfulness while at the same time “re-igniting” our own flame and recommitting our whole life to God. Thus we begin again to live as light, helping others see the Way in a world of darkness. The importance of lighting our own candles is that you are able to say a prayer for your loved ones. “We light candles for the forgiveness of sins of **both** those who light the candles and of those for whom the candles are lit.” (holy father Nicodemus of Mount Athos) “Let light shine out of darkness, [and] Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (1 Cor. 4:6)

+++ +++ +++

Bulletin Sponsor – If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (namesday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please do so by signing up on the sheet in the church hall or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 505
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 83
Envelope Stewardship	\$ 195
Total Collections:	\$ 783
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 50
Relocation Fund:	\$ 100

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Nelson Family; Tim Martin; Lawrence Martin; Melanie Shuster; Cindy Pavilonis

+++

The Eternal Lamp was offered last week by Melanie Paieski in memory of +Catherine Gaydos; and by Cindy Pavilonis in memory of +John Neimer. May Their Memory Be Eternal!

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 (2nd 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.

+++ +++ +++

Additional Material can be found in “The Voice” monthly newsletter on the first Sunday of each month.

+++ +++ +++

VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddioocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddioocese

+++ +++ +++

SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

⁸Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol’s temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. ¹²Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

The Rights of an Apostle

9 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? ²If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Spiritual Vitamin:

“Guard your heart against all that you will see in the world. Whatever you touch with your hand, do not allow to touch your heart. Whatever you eat with your mouth, let not your heart take delight in it. When you use your feet to walk, let there be peace within you. And whatever you do outwardly, let not your mind be disturbed by it.”

St. John fellow ascetic
of Venerable Symeon the fool for Christ,
The Prologue of Ohrid: Volume 2 p.82

+++ +++ +++



Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹“When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? ³⁸And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? ³⁹And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?’ ⁴⁰And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³I

was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’⁴⁶ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

+++ +++ +++

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES CYRIL, TEACHER OF THE SLAVS

Commemorated on February 14

The Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril, Teacher of the Slavs (named Constantine – upon his assuming of the Schema), and his older brother Methodios (Comm. 6 April), were by descent Slavs, born in Macedonia in the city of Soluneia (Thessalonika). Saint Cyril received the finest of educations, and from age 14 he was raised together with the son of the emperor. He early accepted the dignity of presbyter. Upon his return to Constantinople, he worked as a librarian of the cathedral church, and as a professor of philosophy. Saint Cyril successfully held debates with iconoclast heretics and with Mahometans. Yearning for solitude, he set off to Mount Olympos to his older brother Methodios, but his solitude lasted only a short while. Both brothers were dispatched by the emperor Michael in the year 857 on a missionary journey to preach Christianity to the Khozars. Along the way they stopped off at Cherson and discovered there the relics of the PriestMartyr Clement, Pope of Rome (Comm. 25 November). Arriving at the Khozars, the holy brothers spoke with them about the Christian faith. Persuaded by the preaching of Saint Cyril, the Khozar prince together with all his people accepted Christianity. The grateful prince wanted to reward the preachers with rich presents, but they refused this and instead asked the prince to free and send home with them all the Greek captives. Saint Cyril returned to Constantinople together with 200 such captives set free.

In the year 862 began the chief exploit of the holy brothers. At the request of prince Rostislav, the emperor sent them to Moravia for preaching

Christianity in the Slavic language. Saints Cyril and Methodios by a revelation from God compiled a Slavonic alphabet and translated into the Slavonic language – the Gospel, Epistles, the Psalter and many Divine-service books. They introduced Divine-services in the Slavonic tongue. The holy brothers were then summoned to Rome at the invitation of the Roman pope. Pope Adrian received them with great honour, since they brought with them the relics of the PriestMartyr Clement, Pope of Rome. By nature sickly and of weak health, Saint Cyril from his many labours soon fell ill, and having taken the schema, he died in the year 869 at age 42. Before his death, he expressed last-wishes for his brother to continue with the Christian enlightenment of the Slavs. Saint Cyril was buried in the Roman church of Saint Clement, whose own relics also rest there, brought to Italy from Cherson by the Enlighteners of the Slavs.

+++ +++ +++

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Mareena, David, Patricia, Lawrence, Michelle, Paul, Kathleen, John, Joanne, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, and Roberta ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

+++ +++ +++

For the souls of the newly departed... +Kimberly Bining (2/23), +John Neimer (2/18), +Marge Huron (2/6), Pani +Mary Panchisin (2/2) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

+++ +++ +++

Spiritual Vitamin:

“I wish you peace, God’s peace, which transcends all human understanding and unites man with God. To be blessed with such peace one must strive diligently to acquire a peaceful disposition of soul, to be patient with one another’s weaknesses, and to be all forgiving toward all who have offended you.”

Abbot Nikon Vorobiev

Abbot Nikon Letters to Spiritual Children p.40

DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS OF THE WEEK

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++ +++ +++

A Prayer When Lighting A Candle

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen.

Set our hearts on fire with love for You, O Christ our God, so that in its flame we may love You with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Your commandments we may glorify You, the giver of all good gifts. Amen.

+++ +++ +++

from the Lenten Triodion

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-Giver; for my spirit hastens early towards Your holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled; but in Your compassion purify me by Your gracious mercy. Amen.

+++ +++ +++

[“By the Waters of Babylon” is the entire Psalm 137, sung to a plaintive melody, during Matins (the morning service). It is only sung in church the three Sundays that precede Great Lent: Sunday of the Prodigal Son, The Last Judgment (Meatfare), and Forgiveness (Cheesefare).]

+++

A Prayer in Exile (Psalm 137): Longing for Zion in a Foreign Land

By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept,
when we remembered Zion.

² On the willows there
we hung up our harps.

³ For there our captors
required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

⁴ How shall we sing the LORD’s song
in a foreign land?

⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!

⁶ Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,

if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!

⁷ Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom
the day of Jerusalem,
how they said, “Raze it, raze it!

Down to its foundations!”

⁸ O daughter of Babylon, you who are devastated!
Happy shall he be who requites you
with what you have done to us!

⁹ Happy shall he be who takes your little ones
and dashes them against the rock!

+++ +++ +++

The Jesus Prayer

(Inhale) O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
(Exhale) have mercy on me, a sinner!
(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

+++ +++ +++

A Prayer Of Repentance (Psalm 50/51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; And according to the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, And my sin is continually before me. Against You only have I sinned, And done this evil before You. That You might be justified in Your words, And prevail when You judge. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, And in sins did my mother bear me.

For behold, You have loved truth; The hidden and secret things of Your wisdom You have made clear to me. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. You shall make me to hear joy and gladness, The bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And with Your governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Your ways, And the ungodly shall turn back to You.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, who are the God of my salvation, My tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness. O Lord, You shall open my lips, And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; With whole burnt offerings You shall not be pleased. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, A heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion; And let the walls of Jerusalem be built Then shall You be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings; Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

A prayer for our Neighborhoods

by Archbishop Demetrios of America

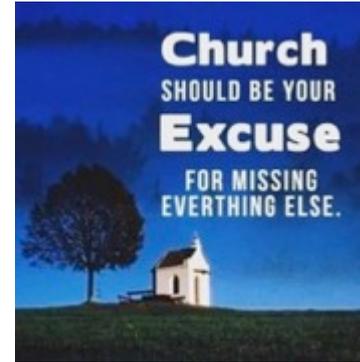
I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not 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.

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++ +++ +++



+++ +++ +++

SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:00pm 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 Orthodox may receive a blessing from the chalice.

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

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. 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).

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.

+++ +++ +++

MONTHLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Food Drive – This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting unexpired food and donations in order to make a delivery to **St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry** (at Holy Assumption of St. Mary Orthodox Church, 105 S. 19th St., Pgh, PA 15203). Volunteers are needed on Thursdays from 5:15 to 6:45 to assist in the distribution of these goods. (If interested, please contact Fr Patrick first at 412-431-6428) Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month! Here is a list of food items that they are looking for:

- ✓ Ready to eat canned fruit or vegetables
- ✓ Peanut Butter
- ✓ Jelly
- ✓ Canned Soups
- ✓ Canned Chili
- ✓ Macaroni & Cheese
- ✓ Spaghetti Sauce
- ✓ Pasta
- ✓ Noodle/Rice Mixes
- ✓ Small Package of Rice or Noodles
- ✓ Canned Stews
- ✓ Canned or Pouches of Tuna, Salmon or Chicken
- ✓ Boxed Meals ready to be prepared

- ✓ Baked Beans
- ✓ Canned and Boxed 100% Juice
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Tuna Helper Box
- ✓ Instant Cereal
- ✓ Boxed Cereal
- ✓ Canned Pastas (Chef Boyardee, Ravioli, etc.)
- ✓ Canned Meats

+++ +++ +++

VIRTUAL BULLETIN BONUSES

How to stay connected with the departed:

- ✘ Pray for them during the Divine Liturgy,
- ✘ Remember them in your daily prayers,
- ✘ Organize memorial services for their remembrance on their anniversary,
- ✘ Honor their memory by following their good deeds,
- ✘ Light a candle weekly for your departed loved ones,
- ✘ Give alms on their behalf, and
- ✘ Take care of their tombs [graves].

+++ +++ +++

2022 Sunday Schedule for the Great Fast

March 13 - Orthodoxy Sunday Vespers at All Saints (Canonsburg) at 4:30 pm

March 19 - Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas

(Homestead) from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (**rescheduled**)

March 20 - Lenten Mission at St Michael's Rankin **

March 27 - Lenten Mission at St John's Northside **

April 3 - Lenten Mission at St John's East Pgh. **

April 10 - Lenten Mission at St John's Ambridge **

** *Lenten Mission: Confessions starting at 3:30,*

Vespers at 4:00, and Fellowship Meal following

+++ +++ +++

COMING BACK TO CHURCH

by Sister Vassa

"And he said, 'There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself

to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself (εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐλθὼν) he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him..." (Lk 15: 11-20)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son makes me think of the journey many of us make, of taking "our share" from the Church of our childhood, having been baptized and nourished there, at least with the basics of light and darkness; then becoming dissatisfied with the whole Church-thing for this or that reason and wandering off to what turns out to be nowhere (some nameless "far country"); and finally, when we are broken enough and "in want" enough, we come back. Because we never found anything out there quite like it. And when we come back after that kind of experience, our hearts having been broken, we are no longer dissatisfied with this or that thing that is lacking or "wrong" with the whole Church-thing. Now we come with the kind of surrender that says, I'm Yours, make me as one of Your hired servants. Now we're glad just to be there, as one of the congregation with no special position or role, as one of the "servants" of a God Who liberates us from the bondage(s) and chaos of nowhere.

I think this is why, when I look around in church, I observe we have mostly middle-aged and older people in the crowd, along with some families with small children. The few young adults are mostly those with special roles like serving in the altar or singing in the choir. I think those many absent young adults who, some years ago, were here as small children with their families, are still out there on their journey through a "far country."

As we prepare for the liturgical "high season" of Lent, which may seem this daunting thing, with all its fasting, long church-services, etc., - especially if we've been wandering about in our "nowhere," - the Parable of the Prodigal Son invites us to consider just coming back, as we are. We don't have to be models of fasting and praying or of all sorts of virtue as was the older son in the parable quoted above; or as was the Pharisee in the Parable of the Publican and Pharisee. We see also the tax-collector who suited up and showed up at the temple, as he was. And the story of Zacchaeus, read in our churches a few weeks ago, showed us a similar case of a man who came out to see the Lord, as best he could. Let's also suit up and show up for Lent, is what I'm thinking, because there's nothing like it. God misses us, and accepts us as we are, regardless of where we've been this whole time and what we have or have not done, and regardless of what we can "do" as far as the "work" of Lent goes. God, have mercy on all of us. Let's all come home, as we are.

(For anyone interested in healthy meal-plans and reflections for every day of Lent, our "HealthyFast Lenten Guidebook," prepared with certified nutritionist Denise Canellos, is now on sale and available as a pdf-download here:

<https://www.coffeewithsistervassa.com/shop/?fbclid=IwAR23DBF2ZJjOS38msz8uKWljv55SDXleRSj3EKQw6dYk-1QGTQY7qRKY9rg>