


"THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER" *Our Parish Weekly Bulletin*

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

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, JUNE 26, 2022 #APOSTLESFAST 
2nd Sunday after Pentecost
Synaxis of Regional Saints (Carpatho-Rusyn and North American Saints)
Blessing of Graduates
Panachida for +Sister Nymphodora (+Eleanor Dussling) and the newly departed
Additional offering requested for our Community Outreach, Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City

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SUNDAY, JULY 3 #APOSTLESFAST
3rd Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Nobleborn Prince Gleb Of Vladimir
9:30 am Reader's Service
Epistle: Rom. 5:1-10; Gospel: Matthew 6:22-33
Tone 2; Liturgical Color: **Green**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6 #APOSTLESFAST
7:00 pm Feast Day Vespers

THURSDAY, JULY 7 #APOSTLESFAST
FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

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Calendar - Future Services are updated online at:
www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar
(Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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Live-Broadcast – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online:
www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/

GRADUATE SUNDAY

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SJB 2022 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE!!!



Randall 'Randy' Paieski graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School. During his time there, Randy had been an active volunteer firefighter at the Highland Fire Department. He is exploring his options for in the fall which include the military and going to a trade school.



*May God Grant You Many & Blessed Years of
Success! Mnohaya L'ita! Many Years!*

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RELOCATION UPDATE

* **Financing** – We have been approved by Wesbanco for a \$105,000 loan. Since May 15, we have received a \$5,000, \$10,000, and two \$50,000 donations (Glory to God!). **Everyone's stewardship is so much appreciated!** The diocese has been re-approached to borrow from them.

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*As updates are available, they will be shared here.
Please contact Larry or Fr. Dave with any questions*

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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The Holy Apostles' Fast (Peter and Paul Fast) has begun. This is one of the 4 fasting seasons of the Christian year, along with Great Lent (the Great Fast), Nativity Fast (Advent), & the Dormition Fast. This one culminates with our celebration of Sts. Peter & Paul on July 12th. *Take the time to grow spiritually by fasting from something over the next few weeks.* Please talk with Fr. Dave about your fasting questions.

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

**** Holy Mystery of Confession** – Fr Dave is available for Confession after every service or contact him to set up another time if you need to do so.

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* **Annual Garden Blessing** – The time of year has come for getting your garden blessed. (*The format of the blessing is similar to our annual home blessing.*) Please contact Fr. Dave if you are interested.

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* **Return to Kneeling in Prayer** – At the Vespers service in the evening on Pentecost, the Kneeling Prayers were prayed. The Orthodox community has now returned to kneeling in prayer, but not on Sundays. Sunday is "the day of the Resurrection" and we celebrate a "little Pascha" each week. *The custom in Orthodoxy of not kneeling because of the Resurrectional theme of the day dates back to the 1st Ecumenical Council.*

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ACRY NEWS

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**** Internal Basket Raffle** – There will be a twist on the recently postponed Dinner and Basket Raffle... an Internal Basket Raffle! Baskets will be placed in the hall and tickets can be purchased thru July 31. Baskets will be raffled off at our **Summer Parish Picnic** at "The Cabin" in North Park on **July 31st**.

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* **100th Anniversary** - St. John the Baptist in Ambridge's 100th Anniversary celebration will be on **Sunday, July 10**. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in placing an ad in the 100th Anniversary program book or attending the July 10 banquet, please contact John Righetti as soon as possible (email: rusynone@gmail.com or call / text: 412-518-7149). **Deadline for ads if June 15**

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Kennywood – Here are a couple Nationality Days that you might be interested in:

Serbian Day: Saturday, July 16

Slovak Day: Thursday, July 21

This Bulletin Is Sponsored

In Memory of

+John Kailyar (34-yr) and +Clifford Enslen (BD)
May Their Memory Be Eternal!

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***** Sunday School Teachers Wanted** – It seems early to think about our fall Sunday School program (as schools have just left out), but we are in the planning season! Also, "Effective Christian Ministry" is offering a program for teachers – but the deadline is **July 15**. Please let Fr. Dave know if you would be willing to teach Sunday School this coming fall.

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**** 20 days till camp – are your kids registered? Pittsburgh Deanery Week at Camp Nazareth** is **July 17-23**. Registration for all campers, ages 8-18, is online at: campnazareth.org.

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MAN OF GOD, the award-winning box office hit based on the life of our beloved Saint Nektarios of Aegina, releases on VOD, DVD & BLURAY in the U.S. & Canada on **July 26!** Pre-order your digital copy now on iTunes/Apple TV using this link: <https://apple.co/3zZ1mUn>

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The Bob Perevuznik Sr. Memorial Golf Outing will be hosted by St. John's East Pittsburgh will be on **August 6** at Meadowlink Golf Course. For more information, please email rpvuznik@gmail.com

Spiritual Vitamin ON FASTING

"If you greedily eat and drink much, then you will be flesh; while if you fast and pray, then you will be spirit. «*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.*» Fast and pray, and you shall accomplish great things. The satiated man is incapable of great works. Have simplicity of faith, and you shall accomplish great things; «*for all things are possible to him that believes.*» Be watchful and zealous, and you shall do great things."

+St John of Kronstadt

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 45
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 205
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 464
Community Outreach:	\$ 50
Total Collections:	\$ 764
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 50
Relocation Fund:	\$ 100

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Melanie Shuster; Mary Jane Hudak; Patty Watson (for Father); Cindy Pavilonis

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The Eternal Lamp was offered last week by John Gaydos, Jr. In Memory Of his mother, +Catherine; by Tim Martin IMO his father, +Lawrence; and by Cindy Pavilonis IMO her father, +Joseph. May Their Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

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On-Line Giving is available from our parish website to donate to the: *General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund*. The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (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.

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

VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

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

MONTHLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LAST CALL FOR DONATIONS

Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City is our Community Outreach this month. Along with a monetary donation that we will collect throughout the month, they can use the following items:

LED Light bulbs	Match Books
AA and AAA Batteries	Zip lock bags
Bottles of Water	Canned fuzzy water
Toilet paper	Facial Tissues
Paper towels	Napkins
Tall kitchen trash bags	Black trash bags
White plastic knives	White plastic spoons
10 or 12 oz. paper cups for cold drinks	
Chlorox bathroom cleaner	409 type cleaner
Chlorox bleach cleaner	Simple green (gallon size)
Windex	Dawn dish soap
Tuna in water	Salted mixed nuts
Raisins	Canola oil
Honey	Cooking spray
Coffee mate non dairy creamer powder (small sizes)	
HE Laundry detergent	Fabric softener

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Romans 2:10-16

¹⁰but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹¹For God shows no partiality.

¹²All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them ¹⁶on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

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Gospel: Matthew 4:18-23

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zeb’edee and John his brother, in the boat with Zeb’edee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People

²³And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE HOLY MARTYRESS ACELINA

Commemorated on June 2613

The Holy Martyress Acelina, a native of the Phoenician city of Byblos, suffered under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Her parents raised her in Christian piety. When the girl was but 12 years of age, she persuaded a pagan friend to convert to Christ. One of the servants of the imperial governor Volusian made a denunciation, that she was teaching her peers not to honour the religion of their fathers. The girl firmly confessed her faith in Christ in front of the governor and said, that she would not renounce Him. Volusian tried by persuasion and by flattery to sway the young confessor, but seeing her assuredness, he then gave orders to hand her over for torture. They struck her upon the face, and then, having been stripped they whipped her. The torturer mockingly asked: "Where then is thy God? Let Him come and take thee out of my hands". The saint answered: "The Lord is invisibly here together with me, and the more I suffer, all the more shalt He give me strength and endurance".

With red-hot rods they drilled at the head of the martyress at the ears. The holy martyress fell down as though dead. The torturer decided that the girl had

actually died, and he gave orders to throw out her body outside the city for devouring by dogs. By night an holy Angel appeared to Saint Acelina, roused her and said: "Arise and be well. Go and denounce Volusian, that he himself and his intent are thus come to naught before God". The martyress, offering up praise to God, and having been restored unharmed, went to the court of the governor and stood before Volusian. Seeing Saint Acelina, Volusian in fright called for his servants and ordered them to keep watch over her until morning. In the morning he delivered a death sentence against Saint Acelina on the grounds of being a sorceress and not obeying the imperial decrees. When they led the saint to execution, she prayed and gave thanks to God, for having granted her to suffer for His Holy Name. A voice was heard in answer to her prayer, summoning her to the Heavenly Kingdom, after which the martyress gave up her spirit to God (+ 293). The executioner feared to disobey the orders of the governor, and although already dead, he cut off her head. Christians piously buried the body of the martyress. Later on, her relics were taken to Constantinople and placed within a church named for her.

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PRAYER CORNER

For Our Graduates... Randall ‘Randy’ Paieski

...may he be guided in God’s Light and His Will all the days of his life

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For the Health of... Donald, John, Emily, Beverly, Steven, Joseph, Kelly, Michelle, Paul, Kathleen, 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.

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For the souls of the newly departed... +Cecil Lewis (6/9), +Evelyn Perloff (6/1), +David Dutko (5/21)

...May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God’s Memory.

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Return to Kneeling in Prayer – At the Vespers service last Sunday evening on Pentecost, the kneeling prayers are recited. The Orthodox community has returned to kneeling in prayer (except on Sundays) and reciting O Heavenly King.

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O Heavenly King (*Carju Nebesnyj*)

O heavenly King, the Comforter; the Spirit of Truth, Who are in all places and fill all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and dwell within us and cleanse us from every blemish and save our souls, O blessed One. Amen.

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A Prayer for Peace

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

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A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy

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

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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.

Parishioners in “good standing” are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

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

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

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

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

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

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SECOND PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for
Special Intentions and Other Needs**

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A Prayer For The Sick:

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

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For the Special Intentions of... His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. David S., Fr. Myron, Dcn. Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Thomas, Samuel, Timothy, Nicholas, Aydin, Subdeacon Seamus, Nicholas, *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth, John, Wendy, Margaret, John, Patricia, John, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches ...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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June Namedays:

Tristan Bowser - St. Dunstan (6/1)
Dustin Brozell – St. Dunstan (6/1)
Eleanor Sanger – St. Helen (6/3)
...May God grant them many and blessed years!

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June Birthdays:

Anthony Jesko (Sr) (6/1), June Sefscik (6/1), Penelope Maruscak (6/5), Pañi Eleni Stagon (6/5), Lindsay (Winkler) Sikora (6/6), Maverick Torchia (6/6), Justin Winkler (6/7), Gina Fall (6/8), Christina (Branch) Chow (6/12), Makaela Kirish (6/12), Fr. Nicholas Mihaly (6/13), Kylee Winkler (6/14),

Rebecca Zak (6/15), Julia Lanick (6/16/27), Aaron Zak (6/16), Anthony Horbal (6/17), Katherine Chow (6/20), Donna (Lanick) Staub (6/20), Pañi Melissa Chendorain (6/20), Mary Jane Hudak (6/23), Margaret Spirnak (6/24), Pañi Marianna Bannon (6/25), Nicole (Mushinsky) Maruscak (6/27), Ryan Dzadony (6/28), *Father's niece*, Aislinn Verbanick (6/28), Fr. Paul Abernathy (6/29), John Radick (6/29), Elizabeth Radomsky (6/29), Fr Miles Zdinak (6/29) ...*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!*

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

For those preparing for Marriage... Justin & Erica, Francis & Alexandra, Nicole & Dustin ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

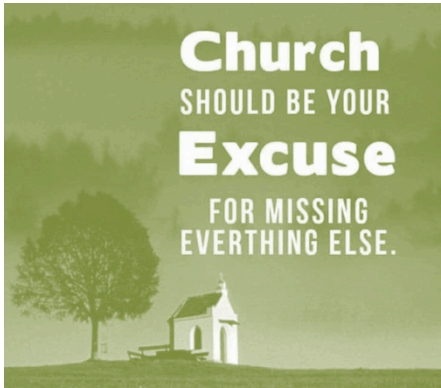
June Anniversaries:
Dustin & Caitlin Brozell (6/1), Adam & Jean Zak (6/2), Stephen & Jennifer Brancho (6/6), *Father's Parents*, Dave & Andrea Urban (6/16), Danielle & Shane Yakemawiz (6/26) ...*through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas*

For Pregnant Mothers... Marilynn (*due in June*), Sammy (*June*), Caitlin (*September*), Mallory (*September*) ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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

* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (*in the case of answered prayers*) to our Parish List. The words

of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. *This prayer list is **NOT** limited to only Orthodox Christians.*



STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

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

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

ONLINE BULLETIN BONUSES

The habit of wickedness
By Protopresbyter Themistoklis Mourtzanos
‘Never do something bad as a joke. It often happens that people do something bad as a joke in the beginning, but later, they unwittingly become slaves to it’.
These days, wickedness makes us laugh and we enjoy it. Thriller movies and series featuring blood, violence, death, paranormal phenomena, demonic beings and monsters make the image of evil

attractive. We’re used to it. It doesn’t bother us. The same is true of internet games. Because we have the feeling that the evil we see on the screen isn’t real, it doesn’t affect us. It’s virtual and we don’t actually live it, so it doesn’t matter if we enjoy it. And besides, whatever’s extreme stimulates our curiosity. And the entertainment industry increases the barbarity, the cruelty and the violence precisely in order to get our attention.
In the old days, what was illustrative of good always won out in the end. These days, even ‘good’ heroes have many dark sides to them. In the name of impartiality, everything’s permitted. There’s even the view that good doesn’t make any impression on people. It’s what we expect and want. But evil we can analyze, discuss and speculate about, because, fundamentally, we’re afraid of it. We have to find an excuse for why the world isn’t as we would like it to be. Therefore, the only way of making sense of this is that evil reigns. Only, it doesn’t affect us. We’re far removed from it. Wittingly or not, we ignore the fact that the architect of evil is a person. He’s the angel who used his freedom with a view to personal self-deification and the rejection of God. And he’ll exist until the end of the world, when he’ll be separated from angels and people, as weeds are sifted from the ears of corn.
In the ascetic tradition of our faith, there’s another dimension to evil which explains much. It’s the wickedness which starts out as a joke. It’s mockery of other people in order to belittle them for ‘fun’, for a laugh. It’s setting people up for a fall. It’s sick jokes. It’s the vulgarity which disparages the personality of others. It’s the feeling that you can flirt with evil because you’re in control; you can stop at any moment. It’s acting with others in order to make it seem that we have a common purpose. It’s imitation of actions that surpass all bounds, in order to demonstrate who we are, selfishly and controllingly. To show that we can. This most often happens in adolescence when young men and women don’t want to be less than their friends. They show off by trying to be clever just to be in with a particular group. And never mind if the group’s bad.
But evil gets the better of you. This is why we need to develop a moral conscience, which will mark the

truth. It’ll show us that we’re not here to be clever or to control, but to love and to share. To respect and to love. And if we don’t have the strength to overcome evil, we should at least avoid justifying it. We shouldn’t think it’s unimportant. We shouldn’t submit to its virtual dimension. We should be aware that addiction is easy. And that submission to the evil one is then inevitable.
‘Deliver us from the evil one’. Vigilance and the quest for joy in love. And we can join any group through kindness, just as easily. If we learn to want it.

www.themistoklismourtzanos.blogspot.com

