

## “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, JULY 3** #APOSTLESFAST

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Nobleborn Prince Gleb Of Vladimir

**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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**SUNDAY, JULY 10** #APOSTLESFAST

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

St. Joanna the Myrrh-bearer (1<sup>st</sup> C.)

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Romans 6:18-23; Gospel: Matthew 8:5-13

Tone 3; Liturgical Color: **Green**

**MONDAY, JULY 11** #APOSTLESFAST

7:00 pm Feast Day Vespers

**TUESDAY, JULY 12**

FEAST OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

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**Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at:

[www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://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/](http://www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/)

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### RELOCATION UPDATE

\*\*\* **Financing** – Since May 15, we have received a \$5,000, \$10,000, and two \$50,000 donations (Glory to God!). **Everyone’s stewardship is not only appreciated, but needed at this time!** As we wait to hear from the diocese after re-approaching them to borrow from them, **please consider making any sizeable donation that you are able to the relocation fund!**

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### SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

*Epistle: Romans 5:1-10*

#### Results of Justification

**5** Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2** Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. **3** More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

**6** While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man—though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. **8** But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. **9** Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

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### ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor* +++ 2688 California Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa 15212

[www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com](http://www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com) +++ 412-748-0148 (*Talk or Text*) +++ [OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com](mailto:OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com)

*Gospel: Matthew 6:22-33*

#### The Sound Eye

**22** “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; **23** but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

#### Serving Two Masters

**24** “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

#### Do Not Worry

**25** “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? **28** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? **31** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ **32** For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

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### LIVES OF THE SAINTS

**Holy Nobleborn Prince Gleb Of Vladimir**

*Commemorated on July 3 / June 20*

Holy Nobleborn Prince Gleb of Vladimir, named Georgii in holy Baptism, was a younger son of nobleborn prince Saint Andrei Bogoliubsky (Comm. 4 July). Under the influence of his pious parents he grew up deeply believing and from twelve years of age he led a solitary spiritual life. The parents did not hinder their son and even assisted him in spiritual growth. The prince especially loved the reading of holy books, he esteemed the clergy and he was charitable to all. Despite his young age, he chose for himself the exploit of strict fasting and prayerful vigilance. Nobleborn prince Gleb died in the year 1174, at age nineteen.

His undecayed relics were preserved and glorified by miracles. In the year 1238, during the time of the incursion of Batu upon the Russian Land, the Tatars burned the cathedral at Vladimir. In this conflagration perished Bishop Mitrophan, Great-princess Agathia – spouse of Great-prince Georgii Vsevolodovich (+ 1238), and many an inhabitant of the city of Vladimir, locked in the cathedral church. The fire however did not even touch the tomb of Saint Gleb. Years later in July 1410, Tatars again descended upon Vladimir. In their plundering of the city, they began to sack the cathedral church treasury, having murdered the door-keeper Patrikii. And supposing that within the saint's tomb was hidden away treasure, they set about to break it open. But just as the Tatars touched the stone crypt of Saint Gleb, flames shot forth from it, and the Tatars in terror quit the city.

Through the prayers of the holy prince the city was saved from an incursion of Polish-Lithuanian plunderers in 1613.

The celebration of Saint Gleb was established in the year 1702, and then also a service was written to him, and somewhat later – a vita (life). His relics rest in the Uspensky cathedral in Vladimir. In the year 1774 the south chapel of the cathedral was dedicated in honour of his name. Nobleborn prince Gleb is revered as an especial patron and defender of the city of Vladimir.

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## BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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\*\*\* **Theft from the hall** – Last Sunday during the Divine Liturgy, it was noticed in the mirror on the landing between the stairs (on the men's bathroom side) that four people had come into the hall and walked out with some of our donations that were collected for the Transfiguration Monastery. \*\*\* If you leave Liturgy early, please double check the doors behind you to make sure that they are closed and locked. Also, please continue to pray for the neighborhood. Lord, have mercy!

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**The Holy Apostles' Fast (Peter and Paul Fast)** - *Take the time to grow spiritually by fasting from something over the next few weeks.* Please talk with Fr. Dave about your fasting questions.

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\* **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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\*\* **Internal Basket Raffle** – At our **Summer Parish Picnic** at “The Cabin” in North Park on **July 31<sup>st</sup>**, our ACRY will host an Internal Basket Raffle. Tickets can already be purchased. Please see an ACRY officer for more details.

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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

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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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\*\* **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 Pervuznik 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](mailto:rpvuznik@gmail.com)

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### OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 655
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 123
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 219
Community Outreach:	\$ 115
<b>Total Collections:</b>	<b>\$ 1112</b>
<b>Relocation Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 10,050</b>

**Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials** were offered last week by Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; John Radick; Mirilovich Family; Eleanor Sanger; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavilonis

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**The Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Matthew Peifer In Memory Of his mother, +Viola Peifer; and by Melanie Paieski IMO her mother, +Catherine Gaydos. 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 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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our **Monthly Newsletter** will be next week

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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/acroddioocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddioocese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioocese](https://youtube.com/acroddioocese)

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## 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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## PRAYER CORNER

**For the Health of...** Donald, John, Emily, Beverly, Steven, 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) ...*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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### Spiritual Vitamin:

“How simple spiritual life is!

If one comes to love God, if one comes to recognize His great sacrifice and His good works, and if one exerts himself, with discernment, in imitation of the saints, he will be quickly sanctified.

It is enough that he be humbled, that he be conscious of his own wretchedness and his tremendous ingratitude towards God.”

Saint Paisios of Mount Athos

*Spiritual Councils IV: Family Life p.166*

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## DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

**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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### July Namedays:

Rich Mirilovich - St. John the Baptist (7/7)  
Craig Bowser - Holy and All-glorious Apostle Peter (7/12)

Killian Brozell - Hieromartyr Killian (7/22)  
Margaret (Peggy) Rusnak - Great Martyr Marina of Antioch (7/30)

Mareena Shuster - Great Martyr Marina of Antioch (7/30)

*...May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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### July Birthdays:

Joanna Delaney (7/2)  
Pañi Stacey Mihaly (7/5)  
Felix Matolyak-Ferraz (7/6)  
Allyssa Yakemawiz (7/7)  
Charles Deluca (7/8)  
Jessica Winkler (7/8)

*Father’s Godfather,* Richard Babbie (7/9)

*Pañi’s Grandmother,* Maria Alexa (7/11)

Emilia Zak (7/11)

Jean Zak (7/12)

Ben Scherer, Sr. (7/14)

Pañi Joanna Ferencz (7/17)

Rebecca Horbal (7/17)

Katie Jesko (7/17)

Mark Tongel (07/17)

Alaina Anton (7/18)

Fr Michael Chendorain (7/18)

Fr Luke Mihaly (7/18)

Dustin Brozell (7/20)

*Father’s Godson,* Nathaniel Salio (7/21)

Jennifer Brancho (7/22)

Robert Fall (7/22)

Lynn Mainolfi (7/23)

Glenn Labas (7/25)

Barbara Gedid (7/27)

Ryan Gogal (7/27)

Demetrie Ernest Pido (7/27)

Samuel Schrmack (7/27)

Doug Delaney (7/28)

Fr Stephen Loposky (7/28)

Luke Tongel (7/30)

Pañi’s brother, Florin Popescu (7/30)

Fr. George Ellis (7/31)

...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.

July Anniversaries: Fred & Juliana Anton (7/20/63) Alexei & Patrick Wertz (7/24/21) ...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%	9%	8%	7%	Middle Range Giving 6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$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

