

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

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
 ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
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2nd Sunday of Lent  
**MARCH 8th**



**ST GREGORY PALAMAS**  
 Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3  
 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

Bring a prayer rope to be  
 blessed today!  
 Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer  
 each day this week.

3rd Sunday of Lent  
**MARCH 15th**



**VERENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**  
*HALF WAY TO PASCHA!*  
 Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6  
 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

Wear your cross to church and  
 kiss the cross  
 each morning with a bow!

**SUNDAY, MARCH 15 #TheGreatFast**

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS  
 9:15 am Third Hour  
 9:25 pm Enthronement of the Holy Cross  
 9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
 Youth Sunday  
 Liturgical Color: **Red**  
 Church School

\* 4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's in Allison Park  
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\* **A complete list of services for the Great Fast is in the Online Bulletin portion of the newsletter**  
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\* *The date for Palm Cross making will be different this year. It will happen right after we receive the palms*  
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**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!**

**Glory be to Jesus Christ!** (*responded with: Glory be 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. We wish God's Blessings to all who are with us today and pray that you come again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

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**UPCOMING SERVICES**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2026 #TheGreatFast VOL. XI**

Blessing of Prayer Ropes  
*(Bring yours with you or ask Fr. Dave for one)*  
 Monthly Memorial (Panachida) for +Anna Pitto (3/5), +Michael Matolyak Jr (2-yr), Most Reverend Met. Nicholas Smisko (15-yr), +Gary Fall (1-yr), +Katherine Crispen (3/15), +Michael Dzadoovsky (48-yr), +Margaret (Gaydos) Dzadoovsky (67-yr), +Olga (Gaydos) Tongel (10-yr), +Mary Carroll (10-yr), +John Ferraz (2-yr), +Lawrence H. Martin (28-yr), +Gary Bowser (15-yr), +Pauline Gaydos (8-yr), +Robert Bicker (28-yr)

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's  
*(450 Glenwood Ave., Ambridge)*

**MONDAY, MARCH 9 #TheGreatFast**

1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> FINDINGS OF THE HEAD OF ST. JOHN  
 9:30 am Akathist to St. John the Baptist

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 #TheGreatFast**

\*\*\* **6:30 pm** NORTH HILLS PAN-ORTHODOX  
 Presanctified Liturgy AT HOLY TRINITY GOA Church  
 with community meal *(985 Providence Blvd., Pgh)*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 13 #TheGreatFast**

3<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN ALLISON PARK  
 6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Passion of our Lord  
 followed by Orthodoxy 101 / movie night  
 and Koliva Workshop Part 1

**ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 14 #TheGreatFast**

9:00 am Koliva Workshop Part 2  
 9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (*3<sup>rd</sup> of 5*)  
 11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service or by appointment.

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**BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)*

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\*\*\* **Great Lent 2026** – Take advantage of the spiritual opportunity that is before us! Come to church – confess – receive the Eucharist – Let's journey to Pascha together! To assist the faithful in making the most of this holy season, additional resources have been added to our Diocesan Website at: [www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/](http://www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/)

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\* **Presanctified Liturgies** – Our schedule will be a bit different this year compared to the past couple. There will be one single *North Hills Pan-Orthodox Worship Service* at Holy Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh) on **March 11 at 6:30 pm** with a meal following. This does not change our desire to nurture a greater fellowship among our parishes and communities as we will be adding other combine activities later in the year! **If you wish to attend the other churches for Lenten services, please check their websites for service times.**

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\*\* **Koliva Workshop** – Коливо (kolivo), Κολλίβα (kólliva), colivă, Кутя (Kutia) is an offering of boiled wheat that is blessed liturgically in connection with the Memorial (Panachida) Service. \*\*\* The Saints Spyridon and Nicodemus Bakers Ministry will host a 2-part Koliva Workshop on **Friday evening, March 13** after the Akathist and **Saturday morning, March 14** at 9:00 am (prior to All-Soul Saturday Liturgy). Please let Fr. Dave know if you are interested in participating.

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\*\* **Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil** – The Pittsburgh Concert Chorale will present Rachmaninoff All-Night Vigil

• **Sunday, March 8;** 4:00 pm concert; Ingomar United Methodist Church, 1501 W. Ingomar Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237

*The music was composed in 1915 and is regarded as one of the greatest a cappella choral works of all time. Rachmaninoff draws heavily on traditional chants and transforms them into a complex work of lush harmonies, intricate textures, and deep resonance. In the words of scholar Vladimir Morosan, Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil... stands as the crowning achievement of the "Golden Age" of Russian Orthodox sacred choral music.*

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\* **Candy Sale LAST CALL** – We are selling Anderson's Candy and the catalogs are in the church hall. Order due date is **March 15.** \* *We need to sell \$500 worth of candy to get the 30% profit from this fundraiser.* Please see Tim Martin with any questions.

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\*\* **Yum-Raising** – A different church candy fundraiser has been started online. Various options are out there for purchase. Spring orders are due by **Friday, March 20.** Click this link from the online bulletin: <https://www.yumraising.com/store/spring-2026-st-johns-orthodox-church-allison-park-pa-321f/TimMar14872> (contact Tim or Fr. Dave if the link does not work)

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\*\* **Lenten Spring Jr. Encounter** will be for those aged 8-18 at Camp Nazareth (339 Pew Rd., Mercer, PA 16137) from **March 13-15.** Register today

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\* **Soups Needed** – The Parish Council decided that we will have a variety of soups when we host the Deanery Lenten Mission on **Sunday, March 15.** If you would be interested in making a soup, please sign up in the kitchen or contact Fr. Dave. *(PS – A regular Soup Maker will be out of town – who else can contribute??)*

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\* **REVISED Deanery Lenten Mission Schedule:**

**March 8:** St John's (450 Glenwood Ave., Ambridge)

\*\*\* **March 15:** St John's (2201 Duncan Ave, Allison Park)

**March 22:** St Michael's (146 Third Ave., Rankin)

**March 29:** St John's (211 Cable Ave., East Pgh)

3:30 Confessions, 4:00 Vespers, and Fellowship Meal following  
All are encouraged to attend services at our sister parishes this spring. Not only is it beautiful fellowship with other Orthodox, but each church is unique and you get to see the differences firsthand.

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\*\* **Sponsoring the Wreath for the Holy Cross** – Who would like to sponsor the decoration of the Holy Cross for the upcoming Sunday of the Cross (**March 15**). Requested donation is \$40. Please see Larry or Fr. Dave if you are interested.

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\*\* **31 Books of March Sale**<sup>XL</sup> – The Ancient Faith Store will be offering different books for 50% off each day of the month of March! Visit the site daily (or sign up for their emails) and keep an eye out for a book that will help you along your Spiritual Journey! (Contact Fr Dave with any questions.) Visit: [store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/](https://store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/) Another option to consider is to borrow books from our Lending Library in the Multi-Purpose Room

*If you would like to buy something for the church library or if you are looking to add a couple dollars to your order to get free shipping, please call or text Fr Dave before ordering as he has a couple small suggestions that would be helpful to our church.*

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\*\* **LENTEN RETREATS IN THE AREA:**

**Sat., March 14** - 10 am -12 pm - "The Holy Proskomide: History, Theology, and Mystery" by Fr. Stelyios Muksuris at Presentation of Christ Church (1672 Electric Ave., East Pittsburgh, PA 15112)

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**Sat., March 21** - 10 am - 2 pm - "A Day of Reflection and Spiritual Growth" by Fr. Paul Abernathy at Kimisis Church (Aliquippa). Register by March 7 at [www.theotokou.org](http://www.theotokou.org)

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**Sat., March 28** - 10 am - 5 pm - the ACROD Central Region Lenten Retreat led by Fr. Marc Wisnosky (adults) and Fr. Dave Urban (youth) at St. Nicholas Church (903 Ann St., Homestead, PA 15120). Sign up in the church hall or contact Fr. Dave

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\*\* **Suggested Guidelines For The Great Fast (Great Lent):**

We are called to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* during this time... A general guideline for the Great Fast is this: Try to do more than last year. Please reach out to Fr. Dave if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one!

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\*\* **Read the Psalter this Lent** - Our diocese has shared a calendar for reading the Book of Psalms throughout the Great Fast. This is a wonderful way to increase our prayer during this time! The Book of Psalms in our Orthodox Study Bible is perfect to use for this occasion. If you wish, you can search *Psalter* or *Psalms* at <https://store.ancientfaith.com/> for other wonderful translations to use. See Fr Dave for a copy of the schedule.

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\*\* **Palms & Pussywillows** – Make your home ready for Palm Sunday! In the vestibule we are collecting our Palms and Pussywillows from prior years. These will not be simply thrown away but respectfully disposed of. [*\*For those with trees at home – are they ready to be harvested?*]

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\* **All-Soul Saturday (Zadušna Subota)** services for 2026 during Lent are on **March 7, 14, and 21.** On these days, we especially pray for the departed loved ones of our families. If you are not working on a Saturday, come to church, pray with us, and light two candles for your living and departed loved ones. Please inform Fr Dave if there are any additions to be made to your Departed Commemoration Diptychs (*Hramoty*). Envelopes and cards are available in the vestibule. [*\*\*\* This is different from the "Monthly Memorial" that we have on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month which is specific to each month.*]

\* The **Commemoration Diptychs** are the lists of the names of the dead that we pray for during the Divine Liturgy on the 5 All-Soul Saturdays. *Historically, a diptych was two pieces of wood joined together at the center upon which were icons or other symbols or writing. Since ancient times, churches have kept lists of living and dead to pray for throughout the year, with the names of the living written on one tablet, and those of the dead on the other. In modern usage, we keep the names of the dead on a list, but we still call that list a "diptych"; another name for this list is hramota.*

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\*\*\* **Purple Paper** – For those who get the printed bulletin... Is the purple paper okay to read from? Please let Fr Dave know.

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**OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD**

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 285
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 105
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 495
Community Outreach:	\$ 30

**Total Collections: \$ 915**

**Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 62**

Participating Souls at: *Sunday's Liturgy: 54*  
*Wednesday PM Presanctified Liturgy: 20 (27)*  
*Friday PM Paraklis Service: 2(4)*  
*Saturday All-Soul's Liturgy: 7*



**SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3*

<sup>10</sup> And, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; <sup>11</sup> they will perish, but you remain; they will all grow old like a garment, <sup>12</sup> like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." <sup>13</sup> But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"? <sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Warning to Pay Attention

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,

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*Gospel: Mark 2:1-12*

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

<sup>2</sup> And when he returned to Caper'na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. <sup>2</sup> And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. <sup>3</sup> And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." <sup>6</sup> Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup> And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'?" <sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he said to the paralytic- <sup>11</sup> "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." <sup>12</sup> And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

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**PRAYER CORNER**

*For the Health of...* Janet, Frank, Matthew, Bonnie, Maxwell, Trona, Mioara, Tatiana, John, Anthony, Edward, Valerie, Angelo, Craig, Timothy, Carrie, Jason, Barbara, Paul, Juliana, and Michael ...*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...* +Irene (Labas) Dzubak (3/6), +Karen Davis, +Milutin Lazich (2/9), +Jane Benedetti (2/7), +Jeffrey Leake (2/7), +Thomas Figura (40-day) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory!*

**Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials** were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Mary Jane Hudak; Rich & Renee Mirilovich; Kathy Schmack; Cindy Pavlonis; Melanie Paieski

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Financial Reports	February	Fiscal Year
General Stewardship	\$ 4870.64	\$ 47,931
* Expenses	\$ 7163.91	\$ 41,128
Yield +/-	- \$ 2293.27	\$ 6,803
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 1288.00	\$ 19,830
Sunday Participation Average	35	39

\* detailed report is on the bulletin board in the hall

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\* **Spring Maintenance Morning/Afternoon** – Due to a conflict with the Diocesan Lenten Retreat (held in Homestead), our Spring Maintenance "Morning" is moved later in the day after Liturgy on Lazarus **Saturday, April 4** from 11 am to 2 pm (ish).

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\* **Lenten Coin Boxes** – Coin boxes are available in the vestibule to collect your spare change throughout the Great Fast for our upcoming Community Outreach (OCMC). More information is available at [www.ocmc.org](http://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)

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\*\* **Paschal Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used during Holy Week and Pascha as Special Intentions: *anonymously, for the health of OR in memory of departed loves ones*. Please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule by **Palm Sunday (April 5)** and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church.

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**SUGGESTED LENTEN READINGS**

The following suggested readings for the Great Fast are available in our *Gift Shop* for a reasonable donation

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\* **Adults: Arise, O God: The Gospel of Christ's Defeat of Demons, Sin, and Death** by Fr Andrew Damick (\$7)

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\* **Youth: The Good Samaritan: A Children's Catechism** by Fr. Michael Shanbour (\$12)

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For several reasons, our "Gift Shop" is not meant to be a "Bookstore". With that in mind – there are several leftover books from previous years' suggestions that can be considered for your Lenten Reading. In addition to the above books, another option is to use our **Lending Library** located in the Multi-Purpose Room. This is a great option **for our youth** as there are many books for them to take advantage of! If you have questions about any book – please do not hesitate to ask Fr. Dave!

### The Jesus Prayer

(Inhale) O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
(Exhale) have mercy on me, a sinner!

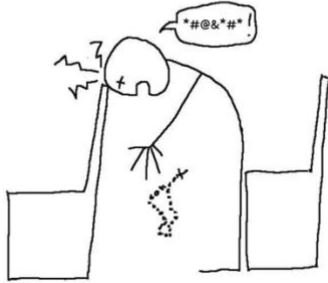
(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

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### Orthodox Lenten Tutorial #2: Prostration With Pews Warning!

WARNING!

ATTEMPTED PROSTRATION MAY RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD AND EGO INJURY



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\*\*\* A tip for keeping track of doing the triplet four times:  
With your left hand, place your thumb on your pointer finger for  
the 1<sup>st</sup> triplet, middle finger for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, ring finger for the 3<sup>rd</sup>,  
then pinky for the 4<sup>th</sup>

### PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

*in the Ruthenian tradition as found in St. Peter  
Mogila's 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik)*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the  
spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain  
talking. + [Prostration]

But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity,  
humility, patience, and love. + [Prostration]

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins,  
and not judge my brother, for blessed are You  
forever and ever. Amen. + [Prostration]

*The following triplet is recited 4 times  
(making a total of 12 bows):*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. [bow]

O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy  
on me. [bow]

O Lord, forgive me, for my sins are many. [bow]

*Then the prayer again with only one prostration:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the  
spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain  
talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of  
purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and  
King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge  
my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever.  
Amen. + [Prostration]

### 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.

## ONLINE BONUSES

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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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**Online Community** - Please email Fr. Dave at [OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com](mailto:OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com) to receive the weekly bulletin (along with other announcements) via email each week.

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## ORTHODOX ETIQUETTE

### Postures In Worship: PROSTRATION

**Full prostration**, also simply called **prostration**, is an act of distributing one's weight on the knees, feet, and hands, touching the forehead to the floor, staying in the position as long as desired or necessary, then standing up. One usually makes the Sign of the Cross before or after the movement. This physical motion is similar to the Chinese kowtow ("bump head"). Interestingly, the use of the word prostration in this way is different than common English usage, where prostration means to pronate oneself or lay completely flat. The full prostration is sometimes called kneeling. Again, this word usage is different than the English usage of kneel, which means to distribute one's weight on the knees and feet only.

Prostration is known by other various names:

- Proskynesis (Greek προσκυνήσις)
- Great prostration, greater prostration, semi-prostration
- Full reverence, great reverence, earthly reverence, "reverence down to the ground" (Slavonic: zemnoy poklon)
- "Bow to the earth," full bow, large bow
- Great metania
- Greater penance (metanoia megale)

Prostration is associated with penance, submission, and obeisance. According to custom and tradition, prostration is assumed (or not assumed) at different times in the services and church calendar. The twentieth canon of the First Ecumenical Council forbids kneeling on every Sunday and the fifty days between Pascha and Pentecost.

Source: <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Worship#Prostration>

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## LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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### SUNDAY OF SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS A SECOND TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

Did you know Saint Gregory Palamas's defense of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer is a second "Triumph" of Orthodoxy? Saint Gregory's feast day is November 1/14, and he is also commemorated on the Second Sunday of Great Lent to celebrate his theological victory of hesychasm (prayer of the

heart) over rationalism in the 14th Century as a second "Triumph" of Orthodoxy. Hesychasm is the art of being still and knowing God (Psalm 45:11/46:10). The Jesus Prayer is the primary way we can use to grow in this stillness and knowledge in order to be in communion with Christ. It is not only a prayer but also a profession of faith and a way of life — praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

When we live the prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.") we confess that God is our Creator ("Lord") who became man ("Jesus") to save us ("Christ") and we are asking for His mercy ("have mercy") to be given to us ("on me"). The word "me" includes ourselves, others, and all of creation.

Saint Gregory defended the Orthodox Church's distinction between the "essence" of God (the way God relates to Himself) and the "energies" of God (the relational activities of God to man). His opponents taught that man seeks God through intellectual reasoning ("scholasticism") — thus making God personally unknowable — and not through prayer of the heart (hesychasm). They taught that grace was not God but a creation of God — thus making man spiritually incurable. But through the Jesus Prayer, we receive healing, peace, and joy.

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### THE JESUS PRAYER: "O LORD, JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER,"

Numerous Church Fathers tell us that the Jesus Prayer is "essential" to our spiritual growth. It proclaims our faith and humbles us by asking mercy for our sinfulness and is thought to be as old as the Church itself.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom says the Jesus Prayer, "more than any other," helps us to be able to "stand in God's presence." This means that it helps us to focus our mind exclusively on God with "no other thought" occupying our mind but the thought of God. At this moment when our mind is totally concentrated on God, we discover a very personal and direct relationship with Him.

Jesus Prayer is both a discipline and a prayer. As a prayer it proclaims our faith in God and seek his mercy for our recognized sinfulness. As a discipline, its practice helps us to control our mind and its many wandering thoughts so that we can focus our attention on God more and more frequently during our daily life. The aim is to become one with God and have our entire life become one continuous prayer dedicated to act with the will of God.

### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

The prayer begins with the name of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts we are told, "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The power in the prayer comes from our proclaiming the Lord's name. In its simple form we confess our faith in Jesus Christ as our God and Lord.

### PRACTICE OF THE JESUS PRAYER

The way our holy Fathers tell us to use the Jesus Prayer is to say it over and over hundreds of times as part of our daily prayer rule. It is best to add it to your morning prayers as this is when the mind is the quietest. Begin by saying it verbally focusing on each word. Repeat it continually for 3 minutes at first and then slowly expand to 10 minutes as you begin to see the challenge in dealing with your thoughts. (*Talk with your Spiritual Father before increasing the time.*) Attention is important. Be sincere in your prayer with contrition. It is that simple!

## TWO FUNCTIONS

The first is worship with repentance like all prayer. In this regard it must be repeated with total sincerity. It must be coupled with an attitude of repentance coupled with humility. We must also have a feeling of awe when calling on God's name, recognizing His perfect love and His awesome power. At the same time we must be fully aware of our limitations in being able to live the way He intended for us at our Creation. We know from the story of our creation in Genesis, He made us in His "image and likeness". So we have an incredible potential to live up to. If we honor this and recognize how far we miss the mark, we will approach Him with a contrite heart and along with a sincere desire to be helped and transformed so we can live up to this beautiful potential He gave to each of us. The second purpose of this prayer is to help us concentrate our inner life, calming it, so we can focus our attention totally on God and his teachings. We may refer to this as a form of spiritual purification. If we study human behavior we know that our brain is very active and easily distracts our mind as it continually reacts to various stimulus through our five senses based on hidden assumptions programmed in its inner workings. The repetition of this prayer is an ascetic discipline to help us focus the attention of our mind on God rather on the endless stimulation of our senses and our biased orientation to seek pleasure and avoid pain.

### 3 STAGES OF PRACTICING THE JESUS PRAYER

There are three stages of progress in the use of the Jesus Prayer. You begin with verbal prayer, then it becomes silent or mental and finally a continuous prayer in the heart. We begin with vocal prayer.

#### 1. Humility is Essential When Using the Jesus Prayer

The practice of the Jesus Prayer assumes you are a regular participant in the worship services of the Church, in her Sacraments and aware of your sinfulness. Be sure to consult with and follow the advice of your spiritual Father. Humility is a prerequisite for all prayer.

#### 2. Attention of the Mind

You can expect to be bombarded with thoughts like a swarm of gnats. When your mind is distracted from the prayer by thoughts, and its will, be polite and gentle but firmly nudge your mind back to the concentration on the prayer and seeking God. When you recognize your mind is wandering do not let it continue on this path. Don't accept even good thoughts. Let your soul take charge and move your focus back to the words of the prayer.

Saint John of the Ladder puts it this way: *Try to restore, or more exactly, to enclose your thought in the words of the prayer. If on account of its infancy, it wearies and wanders, lead it again. The mind is naturally unstable. But He Who orders all things can control it. If you acquire this practice and constantly retain it, He who sets the bounds of the sea of your mind will say to it during your prayer: Hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt go no further (Job 38:11). It is impossible to bind a spirit. But where the Creator of that spirit is present, there everything obeys Him.* (Ladder 28:17)

#### 3. Patience

Remember, this is a process and you will go through stages. Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov reminds us that our simple attentive beginnings lead us to the temple of the heart.

*It is one thing to pray with attention with the participation of the heart; it is another thing to descend with the mind into the temple of the heart and from there to offer mystical prayer filled*

*with divine grace and power. The second is a result of the first. The attention of the mind during prayer draws the heart into sympathy. With the strengthening of the attention, sympathy of heart and mind is turned into union of heart and mind. Finally, when the attention makes the prayer its own, the mind descends into the heart for the most profound and sacred service of prayer.*

*All this is accomplished under the guidance of the grace of God. It is harmful to strive for the second before acquiring the first.*

*(On the Prayer of Jesus, p 48)*

### HOW LONG TO PRAY

Be sure to consult your spiritual Father on the amount of time you should devote to the Jesus prayer. As a general rule you should repeat it for a minimum of 3 minutes at any one prayer session. Any less will not help you develop the attention needed for prayer of the heart. You should then fairly quickly work up to a period of 10 minutes. You will need to measure your time to make sure you fulfill your desired time. One way is with a clock. Another way is to use a prayer rope. A prayer rope has 33, 50, or 100 knots typically. Holding it between your thumb and index finger you can index one knot at a time each time you complete one complete recitation of the Jesus prayer.

### PRACTICE OF THE JESUS PRAYER IS A LONG AND DIFFICULT PATH

A struggle is required in the practice of the Jesus Prayer. Saint Maximos said, "Spiritual knowledge without ascetic practices is the theology of the demons." (A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain, p 61) To transform our being and free our mind from domination by passions, and to bring it into the heart to be aligned with God as its focus is not a simple task. Reflect on difficulty you encountered in developing other disciplines you have learned in your life, whether it relates to your work life, home life, or a sport. You will find that the same is even more true for your spiritual life. The practice of the Jesus Prayer requires a firm commitment, much effort and time. The practice of the Jesus Prayer must become a daily practice and engrained in your daily life. It is not something that you can allow yourself to ever say, "I am too busy today", or "I feel too tired for prayer." It must become just like other things you do without fail, like the simple act of brushing your teeth, taking a shower, and other such activities that are not treated as options in your life. If you skip it you should have the same unclean feeling as if you skipped your shower or brushing your teeth. This is how daily prayer needs to find its place in your life. It needs to become an integral part of your life.

### JESUS PRAYER IS NOT A FORM OF EASTERN MEDITATION

The practice of this Prayer should not be confused with methods used in Eastern Yoga or meditation. In all Orthodox Prayer we are seeking a relationship with a personal God based on faith and love. The difference from "New Age" practices or Eastern yoga meditation has been described by using the analogy of a framed masterpiece. We can admire the beautiful frame of a masterpiece, but the frame is not the masterpiece. The similarities between the Jesus Prayer and various meditation practices can be considered to be like the frame of a masterpiece. The masterpiece in the practice of the Jesus Prayer is union with Jesus Christ. The frame is only the methods used. There may be similarities with postures, techniques and other acts of the outer form of this prayer, but the content and aim is totally different and uniquely Christian.

*(source: St. George Orthodox Cathedral, Greenville, SC)*

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**GREAT LENT**

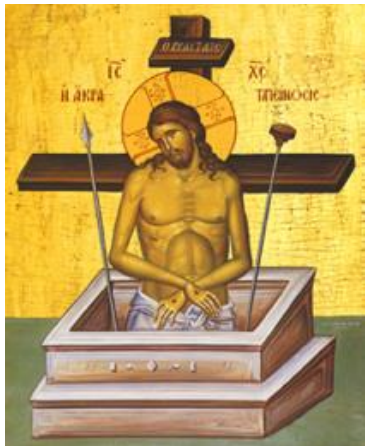


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**A Note About The Mystery Of Confession**

Confessions will be heard *following every service*, on most Saturdays during Great Lent from 11am – 1pm, and at other times by appointment. It is much appreciated when you let Fr Dave know when you plan to come. Do not wait to plan for your confession! If you have a regular Spiritual Father or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but let Fr. Dave know. Confessions before Pascha will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

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Icon of Christ's Extreme Humility

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**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):**

The Church calls us to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, & Almsgiving* during this time (it's good for our souls)

**PRAYER:**

- ✘ Attend as many of the services as possible and be strengthened in community prayer.
- ✘ Come to the Mystery of Confession (*offered after every service, on most Saturdays during the Great Fast, or by appointment*).
- ✘ Approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible.
- ✘ Also, add additional prayers to your personal *Prayer Rule* at home. (See the attached about reading the Book of Psalms during Great Lent.)

**FASTING:**

- ✘ The Great Fast begins tomorrow, **February 23**. Our diocesan practice is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, we strict fast on Great & Holy Friday and Great & Holy Saturday
- ✘ The Orthodox Monastic Charter is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) for the entire 40 days of the Great Fast and for all of Holy Week.

- ✘ If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule and stick to it for the duration of the Great Fast (*see Father for some guidance*). Here are a few examples:
  - a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;
  - b) fast only from meat;
  - c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or
  - d) fast from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and all of Holy Week.
- ✘ The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be!
- ✘ A minimum three (3) hour fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (*the regular "midnight Fast" is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great*)
- ✘ The sick or infirm are not bound by the fast
- ✘ Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician's instructions.
- ✘ Lastly, the Great Fast is not a "40 day diet program" or simply a "dietary adjustment" (or "label Lent") – we should also fast from actions that are harmful for our souls.

**ALMSGIVING:**

- ✘ Find ways to be a better steward of your time, talent, and treasures
- ✘ *Give more of yourself to others.*

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**A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:**

- ✘ **Do more in each of the areas above than last year.**

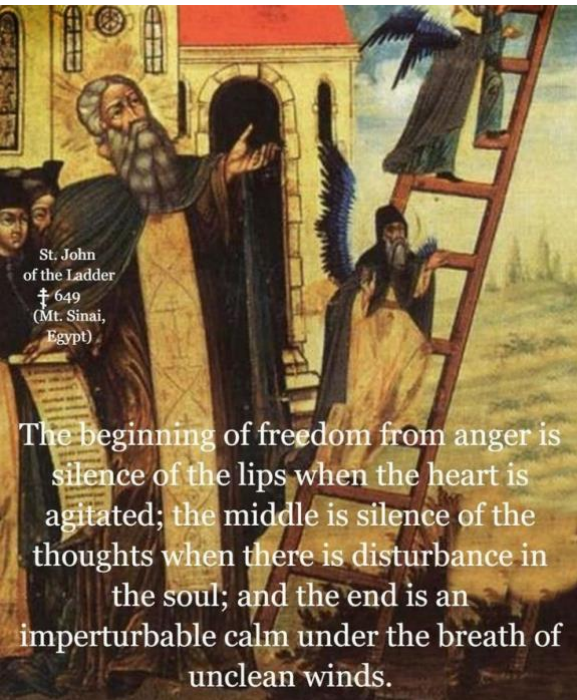
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Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one! – Fr. Dave

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**SPIRITUAL VITAMINS**

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**REMAINING SCHEDULE OF  
SERVICES FOR THE GREAT FAST**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8 #TheGreatFast**

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
Blessing of Prayer Ropes  
*(Bring yours with you or ask Fr. Dave for one)*  
Panachida - *Monthly Memorial*  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's  
*(450 Glenwood Ave., Ambridge)*

**MONDAY, MARCH 9 #TheGreatFast**

1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> FINDINGS OF THE HEAD OF ST. JOHN  
9:30 am Akathist to St. John the Baptist

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 #TheGreatFast**

**6:30 pm** North Hills Pan-Orthodox Liturgy of the  
Presanctified Gifts at Holy Trinity GOA Church  
with community meal following  
*(985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh)*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 13 #TheGreatFast**

3<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN ALLISON PARK  
6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Passion of our Lord  
followed by Orthodoxy 101 *(or movie night)*  
and Koliva Workshop Part 1

**ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 14 #TheGreatFast**

9:00 am Koliva Workshop Part 2  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida *(3<sup>rd</sup> of 5)*  
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

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**SUNDAY, MARCH 15 #TheGreatFast**

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:25 pm Enthronement of the Holy Cross  
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
Youth Sunday  
Church School  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's  
*in Allison Park*

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 #TheGreatFast**

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

**FRIDAY, MARCH 20 #TheGreatFast**

9:30 am Moleben to the Holy Cross

**ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 21 #TheGreatFast**

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida *(4<sup>th</sup> of 5)*  
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

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**SUNDAY, MARCH 22 #TheGreatFast**

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission at St Michael's  
*(146 Third Ave., Rankin)*

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 #TheGreatFast**

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

**FRIDAY, MARCH 27 #TheGreatFast**

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew with  
reading of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt  
followed by Orthodoxy 101 *(or movie night)*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28 #TheGreatFast**

Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas  
*(903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)*  
**10:00 am** Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos  
11 am to 5 pm Retreat (see separate flyer)  
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**SUNDAY, MARCH 29 #TheGreatFast**

SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
Church School  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's  
*(211 Cable Ave., East Pittsburgh)*

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 #TheGreatFast**

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

**FRIDAY, APRIL 3 #TheGreatFast**

6:30 pm Vespers  
followed by Orthodoxy 101 *(or movie night)*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4 #LAZARUS SATURDAY**

9:30 am Divine Liturgy  
11 am – 2(ish) pm Spring Maintenance Morning  
11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard

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**COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY**

*Check back later...*

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**ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)*

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**\*\*\* Moving Help Wanted** – Would you be able to lend a helping hand with a parishioner who needs to move this month? Please let Fr. Dave know if you are available. No set time or date has been set yet...

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**“Code” for reading the bulletin:**

\*\*\* = new news    \*\* = 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the bulletin

\* = at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in the bulletin

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

[www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/)

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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service or by appointment.

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

[www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar)

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\* **Calling All Scouts!** Our Scout Sunday is **being rescheduled**. For our youth in Scouting and to our Adult Leaders, please send Fr. Dave your →Unit Number, →location, →current rank, and →any office or position you hold in your organization As Soon As You Can.

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\* **Fellowship Meals** - Got Soup? A small 't' tradition 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 have this meal after our Wednesday evening services at our parish and when we travel for the North Hills Pan-Orthodox service. A sign up sheet is in the church hall for those interested in bringing in food.

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\*\*\* **Pittsburgh Marathon - Walk or Run with Team IOCC** - Help change lives around the world! Join us on **Saturday, May 3** at the Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend. Choose a Race as a Solo Participant or Form Your Own Team! (5K, 4-Mile Fitness Challenge, Kids Marathon, Pet Walk, Toddler Trot, Champions Mile) **SIGN UP NOW AT [ioc.org/pgh](http://ioc.org/pgh)**. Questions? Contact Dean Stambolis at [DeanStambolis@verizon.net](mailto:DeanStambolis@verizon.net) or 412.874.9572.

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\* **Outdoor Divine Liturgy and Annual Parish Picnic** – We will gather at *The Cabin* in North Park on **Sunday, August 30** for our end of summer outdoor Liturgy and picnic. Save The Date!

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\*\*\* **Online Bible Study Options** –  
*Check back later...*

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**COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS**

*Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave*

\* March 15: \_\_\_\_\_ Sr ACRY

\* March 22: \_\_\_\_\_ ?\_ ?\_ ?\_ ?\_

\* March 29: \_\_\_\_\_ ?\_ ?\_ ?\_ ?\_

*\*meatless during the fast*

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\* **A new approach to the Coffee Social:** 4 people bring 1 item each. A modified sign-up sheet is now available. (*If someone wants to host the entire event, that is still an option – just sign your name through all 4 boxes.*) Also, the Kitchen Crew, led by Liz, will be the “point person” for signing up or any questions. **Please consider hosting a coffee social in honor of someone’s Nameday, Birthday, Anniversary, or in memory of a departed loved one near their anniversary.**

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\* **Church School Participation** – Our Youth Ministry Leader, Kathy S., will be the main contact for parents to update the teachers on whether their kids will be at class. **Parents** – please update Kathy **PRIOR TO** each scheduled class (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays)

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\*\* **Church School Teachers** – It’s not too late to help with our Church School program! Please contact Kathy Schrmack (*Youth Ministry Leader*) or Fr. Dave if you are interested in being a teacher in our Church School Program. Ideally, we should have three different class levels made available to the children of the parish.

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\* **TO BE RESCHEDULED Caring for Others through Visitation Ministry** – A ministry of caring is an important part of parish life. Join us on **POSTPONED Sunday, January 25** during the coffee social in the MPR (Multi-Purpose Room) for a 20-minute presentation with our

guest presenter, Amy Armanious. She will lead us on ways to reach out in love to those in our church families who are homebound, coping with challenging health conditions, and/or experiencing other life difficulties. No need to sign up - just come and learn how God is opening your heart and mind to *Visitation Ministry*. We will discuss how we can make a difference through such activities as prayer, making phone calls to those who live alone, creating small gifts for the homebound, baking cookies, delivering soup, mailing cards to those who need an encouraging word, home visitation, and much more! This ministry is a way for individuals to live out the great commandment “Love one another.” Come and see where God is leading you in the giving of your time & talent. We need all - young and old - for this new outreach ministry!

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**Random Tidbits...** Father Dave is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm 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 (Sacrament) of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

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**Speaking With Your Priest** - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

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**2025-26 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS**

*President:* Larry Martin

*Vice-President:* Liz Radomsky

*Treasurer:* Tim Martin, Reader

*Financial Secretary:* Rich Mirilovich

*Recording Secretary:* Gina Fall

*Chief Auditor:* Bob Fall

*Auditors:* Mary Jane Hudak, Ray Kilmer, Kim Opsitos, Matt Opsitos, and Kathy Schrmack

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**STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET**



**TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES**

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**PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:**

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\* **Assembling A Few Items** – There is at least 7 items 3 items (benches, shelves, cabinet organizer, etc) at the church that need assembled. If this is up your alley, please let Fr Dave know. Your stewardship is needed at the church!

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**CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE**

*Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:*

- ✘ \* 4 new **benches** were assembled for along the back wall of the Sanctuary
- ✘ \* there is a new **shelf** for the library
- ✘ \* 4 **LED lights** were added (or replaced lights) in the hallway and classroom downstairs

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**Glory to God for All Things!**

Through your generosity and dedication, everything is coming together – one thing at a time. **Thank you!** Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

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**Giving at the Church** – The opportunities to give your stewardship treasures at SJB are to:

- ✘ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
- ✘ drop your offering in one of multiple baskets around the church, or
- ✘ place your offering in the box in the candle stand after saying your prayers when lighting 2 candles.

*The ministries of the church cannot happen without your dedication and support.*

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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. *Remember, sponsoring a bulletin in memory of someone does not replace having a Panachida (Memorial Service) for them.*

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**Stewardship of Treasure Guide**

**Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?**

Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe			Upper Range Giving			Middle Range Giving			Lower Range Giving		
	15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	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.

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**A Prayer of Stewardship**

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

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ACRY NEWS

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\* **Pop Can Tab Collection** – Join the National Jr. ACRY in supporting the Ronald McDonald House. A collection bin for *Can Tabs* has been placed in the vestibule near the bin for repurposed Greeting Cards. During the next year, please help fill the container with your pop can tabs.

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**ORTHODOXY AROUND DA ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE**

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- \* **Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth events this year!**
- ✘ **March 13-15** - Young Adult Spring Retreat
- ✘ **March 20-22** – Lenten Spring Jr. Encounter (ages 8-18)
- ✘ **May 5-7** - Sts. Joachim & Anna Seniors Retreat (age 55 & over)
- ✘ **June 5-7** - Family Camp
- ✘ **June 7** - Family Day
- ✘ **July 26 - Aug 1** - Pgh Deanery Camping Week (ages 8-18)
- ✘ **August 9-12** - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)
- ✘ **October 9-11** - Camp Alumni Weekend
- ✘ **October 23-25** - Young Adult Fall Retreat
- ✘ **November 6-8** - Fall Jr. Encounter (ages 8-18)

**Save the Dates** and head to 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137

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**FEAST DAY FEATURE**

Check back later...

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**ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK**

Check back later...

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**SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

*Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm 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 prepared or not of the Orthodox Faith may receive a blessing from the chalice.

**How to receive** - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (*you should not hold it*), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until They are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

**Lapsed Members** – You are always welcome home and we want you to come back! Generally speaking, sincere and regular participation in the Sunday Divine Liturgy and in the Mysteries of Confession and Communion 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 in the church. 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 the 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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### The Jesus Prayer

*(Inhale)* O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
*(Exhale)* have mercy on me, a sinner!

*(Repeat until your heart is calm...)*

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### ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

#### Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions

*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.)*

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**A Prayer For The Sick:** O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant(s) *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. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Carolyn U., Stephanie B, Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin, David, Donna, George, *our diocesan seminarians:* Dcn Maximus C, Nicholas C, John B, John F, Bradley S, Clay R, Ignatios L., *and our Parish Council and Curators:* Lawrence, Elizabeth, Timothy, Rich, Robert, Gina, Mary Jane, Raymond, Kimberly, Matthew, Katherine, Kenneth 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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#### March Namedays:

Fr Dave Urban – St David of Wales (3/14)  
Steven (John) Zerby – St John of the Ladder (3/22)  
Bonnie Carlisle – St. Mary of Egypt (3/29)  
*...May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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#### March Birthdays:

Alisha Zak (3/1), Matthew Wensel (3/3), Lillian Fucsko (3/4), Christopher Kubis (3/6), Fr Daniel Mahler (3/6), Randall Paieski (3/09), *Father's nephew*, Michael Verbanick (3/9), *Father's God-mother*, Andrea Babbie (3/10), Allen Dzambo (3/11), Noella Gaydos (3/14), Fr David Cochran (3/18), Ameer Francken (3/18), Pañi Alison Archer (3/21), Charlotte Sikora (3/20), Avalise Marie Matolyak-Ferraz (3/26), Ken Dzdovsky (3/28), Marianne Kubis (3/29), Ben Anton (3/30)  
*...May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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**For our Catechumens & Inquirers...**

Hekuran, Tyler

*...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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**For those preparing for Marriage...**

Nicholas & Cassie, Nicholas & Camile

*...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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**March Anniversaries:**

Lindsay & AJ Matolyak-Ferraz (3/6/21)

*...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!*

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**For Pregnant Mothers...**

Kimberly (*due in March*)

*...through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...**

Thomas R. Dzdovsky

*...through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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**Special Intentions** – *Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person's name go under "For the Special Intentions of..." on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.*

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**Prayer requests** – *During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the "Prayer Corner" are prayed for during the Proskomedia (Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our prayer list.*

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**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.

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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 Neighborhoods**

*by Archbishop Demetrios of America*

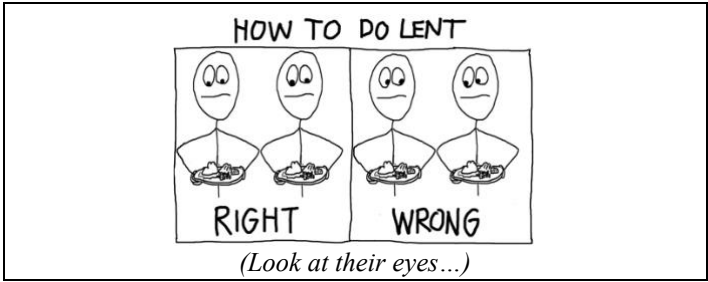
I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not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

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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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