

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple-- November 21st*



# November 15, 2015

## 25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – *TONE 8*

THE HOLY MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS GURIAS, SAMONAS AND ABIB

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 16 – NOVEMBER 22

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2 – PREFEAST OF THE ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

5:30 PM – GREAT VESPERS (SATISFIES OBLIGATION) **NOTE: TIME CHANGE**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21 – THE ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS (OBLIGATORY FEAST)

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22 – 26TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; POSTFEAST OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE; THE HOLY APOSTLE PHILEMON AND HIS COMPANIONS

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily), please **stop** and be attentive – будьмо уважні!*

**Mark Your Calendars**



On December 13 St. Nicholas will visit our parish. Please come and greet him and enjoy the Christmas bake sale and bazaar.

**HOLODOMOR COMMEMORATION**

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Today at 12:00 Noon there will be a joint Ecumenical Panakhyda at:

*True fasting lies in rejecting Evil, holding one's tongue, suppressing one's hatred, and banishing one's lust, evil words, lying, and betrayal of vows.*

– St. Basil the Great

*“Who will give us back this present time if we waste it?”*

– St. Dorotheos of Gaza

### **Last Sunday's Bulletin**

If you haven't yet picked up last Sunday's bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org).

Holy Protection Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 9558 Campo Road, Spring Valley, 91977.

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**Haven't Seen Someone in a While?**

*Give them a call. See how they are doing. Let them know that you not only miss them but also care enough to see if everything is okay. A kind word can go a long way.*

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**Cards for sale**

Various Greeting Cards are available for sale in the church hall following each Divine Liturgy. See Mary Kitt to purchase.

## LEADER OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH VISITS PASSAIC SCHOOL

*by The Record, northjersey.com*

The patriarch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church brought his message of hope to the children at St. Nicholas school in Passaic on Thursday, asking that they pray for him and for peace in his war-torn homeland, Ukraine.

The children welcomed Sviatoslav Shevchuck, major archbishop [sic] of Kiev-Galicia, with songs, flowers, and a box of chocolates, and got to know him during an hour-long question-and-answer session in the church.

The patriarch came to Passaic following a visit to the White House earlier this week, where he met with President Obama's staff in an attempt to gain support for an increase in humanitarian aid efforts in Ukraine.

The children sang songs in Ukrainian and English, including "Silent Night," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" offering their spiritual leader a bit of pre-holiday cheer. They were curious about the gold medallion he wore around his neck — called a panagia — and some wanted to touch it. Whose face was on it?

"That's Mary, the Blessed Virgin," he replied.

The kids, who addressed him as "Your Beatitude Sviatoslav," had lots of questions: how many languages did he speak? Answer: many. How many countries had he been to? Too many to count, but he'd been on five continents. Had he ever been to Japan? No.

What gave him the most joy?

"Prayer," he said, "is a unique moment when you are not only talking to God, but being touched by God."

The patriarch spoke briefly about the troubles in Ukraine, where war with Russia has killed 8,000 people and displaced more than 1 million people, while poverty is everywhere.

One boy asked how he could help.

The patriarch asked the children to pray and to "pray for me."

Afterward, he posed for photographs, and many parishioners came and whispered prayer requests. Some brought their children to be blessed; others brought statues and icons. The patriarch obliged them all, then ended the marathon photo session by posing for a school picture with all the children at St. Nicholas.

Passaic and Clifton is home to a large Ukrainian community, and St. Nicholas church, with its school across the street, is at its heart. The school has been open since 1949 and has about 100 students. Most are from Ukrainian families, but a few have Polish and Latino backgrounds, school officials said.

The school survives — and as was apparent on Wednesday, thrives — on a shoestring budget. Among the parishioners with whom the patriarch posed for pictures was a group of women that raises funds for the school by making and selling pierogis and cheese.

“Last Christmas we raised \$10,000 selling pierogies,” said Olga Converse, as she waited to greet the patriarch. “We make them every week. The men come in on Monday morning and peel the potatoes, and then we cook and sell them. Six dollars a dozen, and seven dollars for cheese.”

In an interview afterward, the patriarch said he was impressed with the pierogi operation, calling it a “source of financial survival” for the school and said he admired the diversity at St. Nicholas.

***“Today I spoke in Spanish. I spoke in English. And I spoke in Ukrainian,” he said. “The Ukrainian Catholic church is not just for Ukrainians. It is for everyone.”*** (my emphasis)

The church he leads is the largest of the

Eastern Catholic churches and *is part of* [sic] the Roman Catholic Church. (more properly: *is in communion with*).

The patriarch said he’s in America to spread the word about what is happening in Ukraine, which he called the “greatest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the end of World War II.” He, along with other Ukrainian leaders, delivered a letter to the White House this week urging President Obama to re-activate the National Guard State Partnership program to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

The United States began the program in the early 1990s to deliver aid following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The goal was to stabilize Eastern bloc nations and put them on the road to democracy



## WHY WE FAST

*blogs.ancientfaith.com*

*This Sunday, November 15, marks the beginning of the Nativity Fast (40 days before Christmas). The following article offers some thoughts on the purpose of fasting.*

Fasting is not very alive and well in the Christian world. Much of that world has long lost any living connection with the historical memory of Christian fasting. It is as though they were Jews who heard there was such a thing as kosher and decided to make up the rules for what to eat and what not to eat because no one knew what was actually kosher.

There are other segments of Christendom who have tiny remnants of the traditional Christian fast, but in the face of a modern world have reduced the tradition to almost meaningless self-

sacrifice.

I read recently (though I cannot remember where) that the rejection of Hesychasm was the source of all heresy. In less technical terms we can say that knowing God in truth, participating in His life, union with Him through humility, prayer, love of enemy and repentance before all and for everything, is the purpose of the Christian life. Hesychasm (Greek *Hesychia*=Silence) is the name applied to the Orthodox tradition of ceaseless prayer and inner stillness.

But these are incorrectly understood if they are separated from knowledge of God and participation in His life, union with Him through humility, prayer, love of enemy and repentance before all and for everything.

And it is the same path of inner knowledge of God (with all its components) that is the proper context of fasting. If we fast but do not forgive our enemies – our fasting is of no use. If we fast and do not find it drawing us into humility – our fasting is of no use. If our fasting does not make us yet more keenly aware of the fact that we are sinful before all and responsible to all then it is of no benefit. If our fasting does not unite us with the life of God – which is meek and lowly – then it is again of no benefit.

**Fasting is not dieting.** Fasting is not about keeping a Christian kosher. Fasting is about hunger and humility (which is increased as we allow ourselves to become weak). Fasting is about allowing our heart to break.

I have seen greater good accomplished in souls through their failure in the fasting season than in the souls of those who “fasted well.” Publicans enter the kingdom of God before Pharisees pretty much every time.

Why do we fast? Perhaps the more germane question is “why do we eat?” Christ quoted Scripture to the evil one and said, “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” We eat as though our life depended on it and it does not. We fast because our life depends on the word of God.

I worked for a couple of years as a hospice chaplain. During that time, daily sitting at the side of the beds of dying patients – I learned a little about how we die. It is a medical fact that many people become “anorexic” before death – that is – they cease to want food. Many times family and even doctors become concerned and force food on a patient who will not survive. Interestingly, it was found that patients who became anorexic had less pain than those who, having become anorexic, were forced to take food. (None of this is about the psychological anorexia that afflicts many of our youth. That is a tragedy)

It is as though at death our bodies have a wisdom we have lacked for most of our lives. It knows that what it needs is not food – but something deeper. The soul seeks and hungers for the living God. The body and its pain become a distraction. And thus in God’s mercy the distraction is reduced.

Christianity as a religion – as a theoretical system of explanations regarding heaven and hell, reward and punishment, is simply **Christianity that has been distorted from its true form.** Either we know the living God or we have nothing. Either we eat His flesh and drink His blood or we have no life in us. The rejection of Hesychasm is the source of all heresy.

Why do we fast? We fast so that we may live like a dying man – and in dying we can be born to eternal life.

## A Prayer for One's Enemies - *by St Nicolai of Zica*

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.  
Enemies have driven me into Thy embrace more than friends have.  
Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.  
Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world.  
Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an unhunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Thy tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul.  
Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.  
They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world.  
They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself.  
They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments.  
They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.  
Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.  
Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish.  
Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf.  
Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background.  
Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand.  
Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep.

Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out.  
Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Thy garment.  
Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.  
Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me: so that my fleeing to Thee may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins: arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.  
Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself.  
One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends.  
It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies.  
Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies.  
A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand.  
But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life  
Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.  
Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.  
Amen

## “VIBRANT PARISH” PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, as you once gathered lost sheep that they might hear Your voice and be Your flock, so also today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community, and send down on it Your Holy Spirit, that it might be a place to receive the joy of Your Good News. Strengthen us with Your presence, and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter You, the merciful God. Bless our spiritual leaders with Your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give of our time, talents and treasure for the building up on Your Kingdom. Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits Your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit, and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that Your Name, O Savior, may be praised, together with Your eternal Father, and Your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.



### GOD'S EXTENDED HAND

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

#### **Pastor:**

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**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
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***Prayer to the Theotokos***

To me you are my dear love, my beauty, the great hope of salvation. Help your servant, O most glorious Virgin. My voice tells of you tearfully: my heart burns for love. Give heed as well to the prayers of all my sisters and brothers who cry unto you: O Virgin, you are full of grace; through you may the grace of Christ ever preserve us ...

May devotion and honor recall your memory in this place, O Queen of heaven, greatest hope of our life. With your kindness, look upon God's handmaids and servants here who call unto you, O Virgin most mild. In your mercy, give heed in every moment to our prayers, and by your prayers direct our days, always and everywhere ...

Virgin and Mother whose merit is un-

equaled! Mary, you alone are the one whom the Lord preserved in such a condition of soul and body as to make you worthy of the mystery in which the Son of God assumed a body from you as the price of our redemption. O most merciful, through whom the whole world has been saved, I pray you, intercede for me, the most unclean of all and stained with every kind of wickedness; intercede for me, for because of my sins, I deserve to receive nothing except eternal punishment. O most glorious Virgin, grant that I, saved by your merits, may reach the eternal kingdom.

*Alcuin*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit  
[www.ecpubs.com](http://www.ecpubs.com)**