

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Face Book: "Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church"

BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 20, 2015



SUNDAY/DECEMBER 20

Sunday Before the Nativity/St. John of Kronstadt (+1908)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Church School; Coffee Hour; Question & Answer Period

6:00p.m. Compline

MONDAY/DECEMBER 21

3:00p.m. Confessions; 6:30p.m. Memorial for (+) Julia Galida; 7:00p.m. Compline & Confessions

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 22

3:00p.m. Confessions; 6:30p.m. Memorial for (+) John Taluc; 7:00p.m. Compline & Confessions

WEDNESDAY/DECEMBER 23

7:00p.m. Compline & Confessions

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 24

Eve of the Nativity (Strict Fast Day)

9:30a.m. Royal Hours; 4:00p.m. Vigil

FRIDAY/DECEMBER 25

Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy (Nativity Fast Ends) 6:30p.m. Vespers

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 26

Synaxis of the Theotokos

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; 5:30p.m. Vespers & Compline; Confessions

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 27

Sunday After Nativity; St. Stephen the Proto-Martyr

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour with Christmas Carols

12:15p.m. Second Showing of 100th Anniversary DVD

Offerings Week of December 20

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Rosalia, Anna, Michael, Justina Anastasia; in memory of Vachsen and Emilia; in memory of Vaschena d Emilia; in memory of John and for the health of Vera; in memory of Gabriela, Floarea, Gheorghe, Alexandru, Elena, Petre and Elena;

Wine: for the salvation and protection of Mariana, Simona, Gabriel, Tabitha, Kurt, Stefan and Constantin; for the health of Katherine and Alexia.

Flowers: in memory of John (40th day); in memory of Lauren Elizabeth.

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 31 40th Day Zinaida Neudachin

Dec. 20, 1962 Michael Popko

Dec. 20, 1980 Anna Martin

Dec. 21, 1946 Helen Semoskovich

Dec. 21, 1997 Nadia Marchuk

Dec. 21, 2006 Nicholas Chabra

Dec. 23, 1950 Gregory Persurance

Dec. 23, 1989 Peter Kozura

Dec. 23, 1991 Olga Barna

Dec. 24, 1946 Steven Holovach

Dec. 24, 1947 Catherine Hriniaik

Dec. 24, 1961 Sophie O'Connell

Dec. 24, 1978 Anna Martinchuk

Dec. 25, 1990 Alexander Kuntzevich

Dec. 25, 1991 Helen Wislosky

Dec. 25, 2014 Julia Galida

Dec. 26, 1980 Jerry Russo

Dec. 26, 2004 Douglas Rose

Coffee Hour Hosts

(Fasting Foods: Nov. 15 thru Dec. 24th)

Dec. 20 Peterson, Bakaletz, Mattei & Erkman

Dec. 27 Kita, Nevitt, Keller & Turri

Jan. 03 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona

Usher Schedule

Dec. 20 Dennis F. & Peter B.

Dec. 27 Edward S. & Kahka K.

Jan. 03 Timothy S. & Peter B.

Counters

Dec. 20 Inga G. & Peter B.

Dec. 27 Ekaterini M. & Ciprian C.

Jan. 03 Rebecca O. & Edward S.

Names Day Greetings

St. Anastasia/Dec. 22: Anastasia Mickel, Anastasia Kita

St. Eugenia/Dec. 24: Joan Bongiorno

Many Blessed Years!

Nativity Lent Fasting Norms

A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil products. There are days permitting fish, wine and oil. These days are indicated on your Parish Wall Calendar, the November Printed Calendar and the Calendar on the Parish Website. The Nativity Lent ends after the Divine Liturgy on Dec. 25th.

2016 Parish Wall Calendars

Each household is asked to take only one.

The Mysteries of Confession & Communion

The Lenten Season is the appropriate time for receiving the Holy Mysteries. Those that receive Holy Communion on Sundays, be sure you have gone to Confession in this Lenten Time – Nov. 15- Dec. 24. Those that do not ordinarily receive the Holy Gifts, every week, are encouraged to benefit from these Holy Mysteries in this Lenten period.

The Christmas Cookie Walk

Our thanks to all of our bakers, helpers, customers and our chairperson, Jill Peterson for making this event so great! Everything was sold. A profit of \$1,744 was realized.

A Second Showing of the 100th Anniversary Video To Be Shown

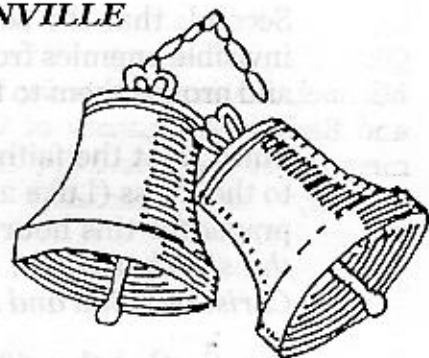
On Sunday, Dec. 27th at 12:15p.m. the film will again be presented, if you missed the previous showing or wish to see it again. Invite someone!

3 Seeds of Growth for December

- 1) Know something about the life of your Patron saint and the date of your names day.
- 2) Invoke your Patron saint daily, "O Holy (Name) my patron, pray unto God for me."
- 3) "Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! (Psalm 47). At the Divine Liturgy sing loud/soft the hymns and responses.



THE BELLS OF SS. PETER & PAUL CHURCH, MANVILLE



The Parish of Ss. Peter and Paul are blessed to have three bells named after the Archangels Uriel (600 pounds), Salaphiel (300 pounds) and Jegudiel (225 pounds). These bells were installed in 1957 and re-dedicated in 2004.

In this year of 2015, as a 100th anniversary gift, the electric ringing system of our bells, dating from 1957 has been up-dated. Through the generosity of a benefactor, a 21st century computer based system is now operable, enabling for a great variety of bell ringing that previously was not possible. The old system originally made to function for time based automatic ringing had been inoperable for decades and replacement parts no longer manufactured. May the Lord bless the benefactor of this honorable gift.

ON THE RINGING OF BELLS

The ringing of bells is "a summons for worship." There is the "first" ringing to beckon us and the "second" bell to commence the service. By the time the of the "second" ringing church discipline requires us to already be in our places in the church. Bells are also rung during certain parts of certain services. Additionally, bells are rung not only as a call to services but as "a spiritual proclamation." At certain times bells may be rung to invite to pray the faithful wherever they find themselves. The sound of the bells, coupled with prayer may strengthen our piety and faith. Bells are often referred to as "singing icons." Bells establish acoustic space, as icons visual space. As the holy icons are grace-filled and have spiritual power, so "bells are alloyed with divine grace to disperse and destroy the forces of cruelty and of demonic suggestion."

THE NOONDAY RINGING OF BELLS

An appropriate time for the ringing of bells outside of service is 12:00noon, or in the language of the scriptures, "the 6th hour." We are presently ringing the bells everyday at 12:00p.m. There are a number of theological reasons for this.

First: that by the voice of the bells ringing all destructive winds, storms, thunder and lightning, and all harmful weather and destructive things of the air may be appeased, calmed and ceased to be.

Second: that the sound of the bells may drive away very power, craft and slander of invisible enemies from all the faithful people who will have heard the voice of its ringing, and arouse them to the observance of the teachings of the Lord.

Third: that the faithful may be mindful that 12:00noon was the time Christ was affixed to the Cross (Luke 23:44 and Mark 15:33) to take away the sins of the world. A liturgical prayer for this hour: *"O Thou who on the 6th day and 6th hour has nailed to the Cross the sin that Adam committed in Paradise: tear up the record of our trespasses, O Christ our God and save us!"*

Fourth: that the 6th hour (12:00p.m.) is the time of the day the Lord encountered the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well (John 5: 1-42) and evangelized her. We the faithful are reminded our daily task is to bring the Good News to those who do not know Christ. *"Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest."* (John 4:35).

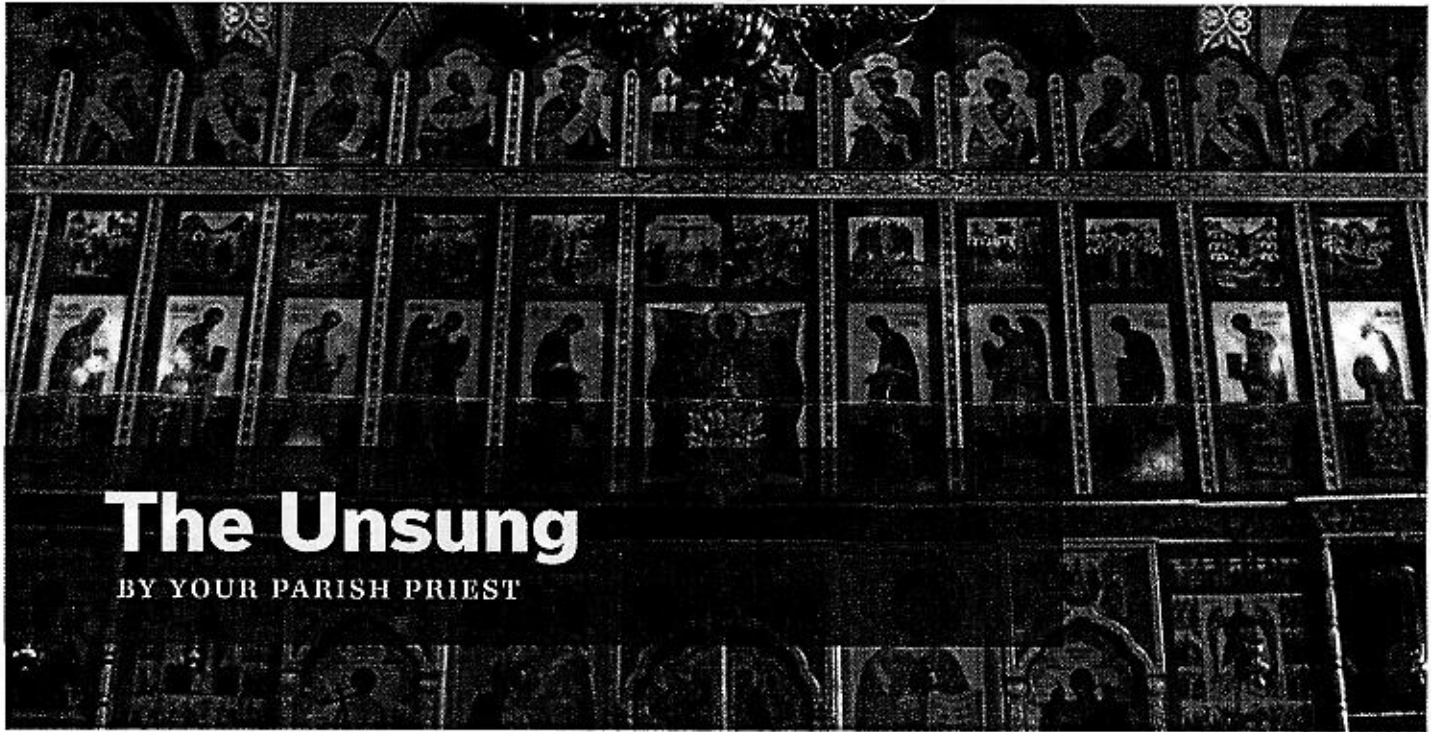
Fifth: that 12:00noon is an hour of prayer, as indicated in Psalm 53, the appointed psalm for this time of day, *"O God hearken unto my prayer, give ear unto the words of my mouth."* Again in Psalm 54, also appointed for this hour: *"As for me, unto God have I cried, and the Lord hearkened unto me. Evening, morning and noonday, will I tell of it and will declare it, and He will hear my voice."*

Sixth: High noon is the time especially when the devil is at work. The third appointed psalm for this hour—Psalm 90—speaks of this. *"With a shield will His truth encompass you; you will not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day. Nor for the thing that walks in darkness, nor for mishap and demon of the noonday."* The noonday demon stalks those that are burnt out, inattentive, weary, disappointed, frustrated and stressed. The noonday demon "makes hay while the sun shines." Hence, the call at 12:00noon, by the ringing of bells to arouse us from spiritual lethargy and falling prey to the devil.

Seventh: the ringing of bells in the middle of the day, announces to the non-believer the reality of the presence of the Christian Church. By the grace of God, the bells may be music to their ears, a remembrance of Christian Faith present in their locality, a consolation of soul, a joy to the spirit and a blessing as the Lord so imparts. To all, the Lord bestowing according to their needs.

Eighth: The ringing of the bells at high noon is a prophecy in sound of the "Unending Day of the Kingdom." In the Age to come the sun and moon will not give forth light (Revelations 21:23). The zenith of the Day (High Noon in earthly terms) will reign supreme without evening, night, darkness, eclipse or shadow. It is this "Day" that is illuminated with the glory of God, *"for the Lamb is the light."* The noonday bells anticipate and remind us of the "Day of the Lord," to be bathed in His Uncreated Light.

At the 6th Hour, (12:00noon) whether we hear the bells or not, let these pious thoughts be in our minds and raise our lips and hearts in prayer to the Lord.



The Unsung

BY YOUR PARISH PRIEST

"WE PRIESTS ARE INCREDIBLY privileged, because despite the difficulties we face, we usually get to see the best in people. They speak to God in our presence in Confession, saying things they might never say to anyone else; they help us to fulfill our ministry by serving on the council, cleaning the church, tending the grounds, and doing all the work we don't have time to do if we're visiting the sick, serving the cycle of services, counseling parishioners—doing priestly work."

These were the words of a venerable archimandrite, a holy and unpretentious man who had no lack of difficulties in his parish ministry. After sitting with young priests and listening to their struggles, he would often give them this gentle correction. Like a mother who finds her child playing with all the wrong things, he would gather them up, turn them 180 degrees, set them down, and give them a push in the right direction: "We are incredibly privileged..."

These are my words, too. Even if I don't say it from the amvon, it occurs to me, when I stand in the silence of my icon corner, to marvel at the sacrifices of my parishioners. In an age that can seem cold, self-centered, and utilitarian, those sacrifices shine all the more brilliantly.

Like the parishioner who often gets to church first on Sunday. When I arrive and see the doors open, the lights on, and the walkway swept, I know there is someone else who couldn't wait to get to church for Liturgy. Or the one who diligently tends the lamps, changing the wicks and refilling the oil—who, despite his gray hairs, still finds joy in the simple act of lighting a candle. Or the one who knows when running the vacuum cleaner just won't do, and lugs the carpet shampooer to church during the week. I have seen parishioners spend hours at a time on their hands and knees, working to get candle wax out of the carpet, refusing to yield the job to someone younger. Still others work invisibly, replacing the batteries in smoke alarms, fixing doors that stick, changing lightbulbs, beautifying the temple in small ways—all without anyone noticing.

It's not about what we give, but whom.

There are others who, by the simple act of bringing wine, water, oil, incense and flour, remind us that these are not just supplies to be ordered but *gifts* to be *offered*. They rejoice

to go unnoticed. They ever look to barter what they have for an opportunity to spend time in the House of the Lord, alone with Him, while they wait for sunlight to stream through this window, then that one—so they know where to dust next. *How many candles can I light with a single match? Can I make it to church before the priest?* These are the innocent games of the Unsung, the child-like pleasures found even in the Holy of Holies.

If we asked them to speak about their work or the joy they find in it, they would demure. Perhaps they would want us to learn a simple lesson—that stewardship is not about *what* we give but *whom*—before asking us not to *notice so much* next time.

Through the small and imperceptible, the humble and the necessary, they give themselves to the Church. Knowing how easy it is to get caught up in five-year plans and capital campaigns, they trust the Lord to reward them for their labors. To follow their example, we must become small, humble, even invisible. The question can never be, "How much do I need to give?" For our salvation, the question must be, "How can I give myself to the Lord and His Church? How can I join the ranks of the Unsung and trade the perishable for the everlasting?"

Stewardship Facts

Parishes that encourage members to be more generous because it will enhance the Church's mission and create more opportunities for spiritual growth receive **much higher** contributions from parishioners than the parishes asking members to give toward various material needs in the church.

Three characteristics of an Orthodox parish have the strongest positive influence on greater giving. These three characteristics are:

- a) being a parish that cares about and supports members in times of difficulty and need;
- b) being a parish with a participatory and inclusive process of decision making where all members (not only parish leadership) are engaged in discussion, deliberation and actual decisions;
- c) being a parish that is successful in engaging its members in various volunteer positions and tasks.

In both measures of giving (as actual dollar amount or as percentage of the household's income), parishioners who **pledge** (i.e., commit to give a certain amount each year) contribute significantly more to their parishes than those church members who only give to their parishes "spontaneously" and without advance planning.

Taken from "Highlights of Findings from the Study 'Exploring Orthodox Generosity: Giving in US Orthodox Parishes'" released by the Assembly of Bishops (<http://bit.ly/1MMpOVp>).



STEWARDSHIP IN THE SAINTS

St Herman of Alaska (Dec. 13) lived a life of complete simplicity. His clothes were the same for winter as for summer. He did not wear a shirt; instead he wore a smock of deer skin, which he did not take off for several years at a time, nor did he change it, so that the fur in it was completely worn away, and the leather became glossy. Then there were his boots or shoes, cassock, an ancient and faded riassa full of patchwork, and his klobuk. He went everywhere in these clothes, and at all times; in the rain, in snowstorms, and during the coldest freezing weather.

The Elder always interceded before the governors in behalf of those who had transgressed. He defended those who had been offended. He helped those who were in need with whatever means he had available. The Aleuts—men, women and children—often visited him. Some asked for advice, others complained of oppression, others sought out defense, and still others desired help. Each one received the greatest possible satisfaction from the Elder. Father Herman especially loved children. He made large quantities of biscuits for them, and he baked cookies for them; and the children were fond of the Elder.

Through fasting, prayer and almsgiving, St Herman grew in godly love for the Alaskan people, and thus remained unattached to material possessions. He gave his entire life to the Lord, and his love for the Aleuts reached the point of self-denial.

Adapted from oca.org

SCRIPTURE AND STEWARDSHIP

Psalms What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord... I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. (115:3-4, 8)

Tobit Do almsgiving based on the quantity of your possessions. If you possess only a few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. You are storing up a good treasure for yourself in the day of necessity. For almsgiving delivers us from death and prevents us from entering into the darkness. Indeed, almsgiving is a good gift for all who do it before the Most High. (4:8-11)

Matthew Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (6:19-21)

Mission Statement

First Fruits is written to encourage everyone in our Diocese to be good stewards of all that God has given them. Please feel free to send comments and suggestions for future articles to Archpriest Gary Breton at gjbreton@gmail.com.