



Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church



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CONFESSIONS: 30 MINUTES BEFORE LITURGY

Sunday, December 29, 2019

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SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES FOR THIS WEEK:

Sunday	12/29/19	11:00 AM	<i>Sunday after Christmas</i>	+Mildred Jama By Arleen Jama
Wednesday	01/01/20	11:00 AM	<i>Circumcision of Our Lord / Basil the Great Archbishop</i>	+Eleanor Joscak By Mary Ozimok
Thursday	01/02/20	06:30 PM	<i>Sylvester Pope</i>	+Edward Thomas By Ed Queer
Sunday	01/05/19	11:00 AM	<i>Sunday Before Theophany</i>	+Connie Clore By Mary & Dan Joscak

SICK AND SHUT-INS *Please remember in your prayers our parishioners who are sick, homebound, hospitalized, living in nursing facilities, or need your prayers for their personal intentions:*



Andrew Cencarik, Don Downey, Phillip Fall, Anna D. Fialkovich, Mark Fialkovich, Benjamin Kaefer, Jr., John Kopay, Jr., Sylvia Kopay, Pauline Massa, Mary Anne Ference Mistick, Richard Paloscko, Nancy Pcolar, Bob Newton, Rebecca McCullough, Will McCullough Shirley Carmony Torbich, Marie Churley, Joanne Skinta and Those serving in the Armed Forces.

****If you have a family member in the hospital or other facilities, and would like us to remember them in prayer, contact Father Vitalii and we will be glad to publish their name in the bulletin – even if they are not a parishioner of Saints Peter & Paul Parish.**

DIVINE SERVICES ATTENDANCE

The attendance for Sunday, December 22, was: 39; for Tuesday, December 24, was 51; Wednesday, December 25, was 22; for Thursday, December 26, was 12; for Friday, December 27, was 5.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Fr. Vitalii is accepting requests for 2020 Divine Liturgy's on a first come first serve basis. Please submit your requests in writing with the intention and date requested to St Peter and Paul attention with your offering and place on Sunday collection basket.

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS



It's that time of year to think about filing our taxes. Our Sts Peter and Paul wishes to credit you whatever you contribute in 2019. The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year is today, Sunday, December 29, 2019. Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2020. For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2019 for the following year's record. Please keep this in mind when you are preparing to file your income tax. Thank you for remembering your Church throughout 2019! May God bless your sacrificial generosity so that our Sts Peter and Paul Church may continue to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). — END OF THE YEAR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION RECORDS CAN BE SENT VIA E-MAIL OR MAIL IN JANUARY! PLEASE REQUEST IT NOW BY SUBMITTING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS!

FEAST OF OUR LORD'S CIRCUMCISION & Feast of St. Basil the Great — January 1



The Mosaic Law prescribed that when a woman brought a male child into the world, he had to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Our Lord submitted to the circumcision prescribed by the Law on this day, which is the eighth day after His birth, and received, according to the announcement of the angel, the name which is above all names, "Jesus" or Savior. In celebrating the name day of the Lord today, we begin the New Year at the same time under the sign of the Nativity of Christ. Saint Basil the Great belonged, through his father also named Basil, to the province of Pontus, and through his Emmelia, to the province of Pontus, and through his mother Emmelia, to Cappadocia. He was born in Caesarea in Cappadocia around 329-330. He studied in Caesarea, then in Constantinople under Libanius, and finally in Athens, where he became a close friend of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. Shortly after his return to Caesarea which occurred about 356, he retired in solitude to the outskirts of Neocaesarea, where his mother and his sister

Macrina already led the monastic life. It is at that time he composed his ascetical writings. He was ordained a priest by Eusebius, Archbishop of Caesarea, and at the death of the latter was elected in 370 to succeed him and rule the Church of Christ. He governed it for eight years, during which time he proved himself a witness of the truth in the face of heresy and full of courage before the threats of the Arian Emperor Valens. He died on January 1, in the year 379. The wisdom and the learning which fill his works, his Philokalia (extracts from the works of Origen), his Treatise on the Holy Spirit, his theological work against the Arian Eunomius, his ascetical writings, his monastic rules, his commentaries on Sacred Scripture, the panegyrics which he made of many saints, his correspondence, and finally the splendor and the force of his words, have won for him rightly the epitaphs of "Revealer of Heaven," and of the "Great."

PASTOR EXTENDS GRATITUDE FOR CHRISTMAS REMEMBERANCE



Fr. Vitalii extends heart-felt thanks to all who remembered him by way of prayers, greeting cards, gifts and cooperation to ready the Church for this Christmas Season. A special thank you for all who attended the special Holy Day Services and the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation. God bless all of you for your remembrances, kindnesses & thoughtfulness!!!

THIS WEEK'S USHER TEAM - Team A

OUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH, DECEMBER, 22 AND 25, 2019:

SUNDAY OFFERING	\$ 664.00	70.00
LOOSE CASH	10.00	140.00
CANDLES	21.00	18.00
MONTHLY	10.00	0.00
CHRISTMAS	230.00	3114.00
HOLIDAY FLOWERS	5.00	10.00
HOLY DAY	288.00	35.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,228.00	3,387.00

CATHOLIC TEACHING

JESUS AND THE TEMPLE

Like the prophets before him Jesus expressed the deepest respect for the Temple in Jerusalem. It was in the Temple that Joseph and Mary presented him forty days after his birth. At the age of twelve he decided to remain in the Temple to remind his parents that he must be about his Father's business. He went there each year during his hidden life at least for Passover. His public ministry itself was patterned by his pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great Jewish feasts.

Jesus went up to the Temple as the privileged place of encounter with God. For him, the Temple was the dwelling of his Father, a house of prayer, and he was angered that its outer court had become a place of commerce. He drove merchants out of it because of jealous love for his Father: "You shall not make my Father's house a house of trade. His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." After his Resurrection his apostles retained their reverence for the Temple.

On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building, of which there would not remain "one stone upon another". By doing so, he announced a sign of the last days, which were to begin with his own Passover. But this prophecy would be distorted in its telling by false witnesses during his interrogation at the high priest's house, and would be thrown back at him as an insult when he was nailed to the cross.

Far from having been hostile to the Temple, where he gave the essential part of his teaching, Jesus was willing to pay the Temple-tax, associating with him Peter, whom he had just made the foundation of his future Church. He even identified himself with the Temple by presenting himself as God's definitive dwelling-place among men. Therefore his being put to bodily death presaged the destruction of the Temple, which would manifest the dawning of a new age in the history of salvation: "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father."

JESUS AND ISRAEL'S FAITH IN THE ONE GOD AND SAVIOUR

If the Law and the Jerusalem Temple could be occasions of opposition to Jesus by Israel's religious authorities, his role in the redemption of sins, the divine work par excellence, was the true stumbling-block for them.

Jesus scandalized the Pharisees by eating with tax collectors and sinners as familiarly as with themselves. Against those among them "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others", Jesus affirmed: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He went further by proclaiming before the Pharisees that, since sin is universal, those who pretend not to need salvation are blind to themselves.

Jesus gave scandal above all when he identified his merciful conduct toward sinners with God's own attitude toward them. He went so far as to hint that by sharing the table of sinners he was admitting them to the messianic banquet. But it was most especially by forgiving sins that Jesus placed the religious authorities of Israel on the horns of a dilemma. Were they not entitled to demand in consternation, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" By forgiving sins Jesus either is blaspheming as a man who made himself God's equal, or is speaking the truth and his person really does make present and reveal God's name.

Only the divine identity of Jesus' person can justify so absolute a claim as "He who is not with me is against me"; and his saying that there was in him "something greater than Jonah, . . . greater than Solomon", something "greater than the Temple"; his reminder that David had called the Messiah his Lord, and his affirmations, "Before Abraham was, I AM", and even "I and the Father are one."

Jesus asked the religious authorities of Jerusalem to believe in him because of the Father's works which he accomplished. But such an act of faith must go through a mysterious death to self, for a new "birth from above" under the influence of divine grace. Such a demand for conversion in the face of so surprising a fulfilment of the promises allows one to understand the Sanhedrin's tragic misunderstanding of Jesus: they judged that he deserved the death sentence as a blasphemer. The members of the Sanhedrin were thus acting at the same time out of "ignorance" and the "hardness" of their "unbelief".

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED AND WAS BURIED.)

VISITATION OF THE SICK

The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, person who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Vitalii is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Vitalii whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: BOOK OF NEHEMIAH



Author: Unknown; Date Written: 440-350 BC; Date of Narrative: 445-425 BC

The book of Nehemiah follows on the heels of Ezra. In fact, in the Hebrew Bible the two are actually a single book. Ezra narrates the first two returns, the reconstruction of the Temple and the reinstatement of the Mosaic Law. Nehemiah details the last wave of return, the building of Jerusalem's walls and the repopulating of the Holy Land.

Both men are Jews. Ezra is a priest but Nehemiah is a political leader. The book begins with Nehemiah in the Persian capital of Susa where he holds an important position in the king's court. Nehemiah hears of Jerusalem's sorry state and he obtains permission from King Artaxerxes I to go there and help.

When Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, he inspects the walls and immediately launches a building project to reconstruct them. Most ancient cities were walled to protect their populations against military attacks. Jerusalem's lack of walls left it defenseless and politically unimportant. Local Persian rulers feel threatened by the rise of Jerusalem under Nehemiah's leadership, so they openly oppose the wall project. The rulers Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem prepare a military attack, but the Jews' vigilance prevents open conflict. The situation is so tense that the workers keep themselves armed at all times (4). The local rulers try to lure Nehemiah to an assassination attempt and accuse him of plotting an insurrection (6). But through all this opposition, Nehemiah and the Jews complete the wall in just 52 days.

Nehemiah also takes care of some social problems in Judah. Some wealthy Jews were lending money to poor Jews at high interest rates against the Law of Moses (see Exod 22:25) so Nehemiah rebukes the creditors and brings debt relief for the poor borrowers.

Nehemiah sets out to renew the covenant in several other ways. Under his leadership, Ezra reads the Law of Moses aloud to the people during the Feast of Tabernacles (8). The people celebrate the Day of Atonement and mourn for their sins, offering a beautiful prayer of repentance for their covenant unfaithfulness (9). After the prayer they formally recommit themselves to the covenant (10). The people promise to keep the Law, to avoid intermarriage, to keep the Sabbath, to provide for the Temple worship and to offer tithes.

After the walls are built and the covenant renewed, people need to live in Jerusalem. Therefore the leaders chose ten percent of the people by lot to live in the city. Many of the priests and Levites settle in Jerusalem to conduct the Temple worship. Ch. 11 lists where the Jews settle and Ch. 12 gives the important list of priests, designating who can serve in the Temple.

The people enjoy a celebratory dedication of the wall of Jerusalem and they renew the order of Temple worship. Nehemiah deals with a few problems of covenant faithfulness in the last section of the book. He cleanses the Temple, enforces the Sabbath and rebukes those who had intermarried.

Nehemiah demonstrates deep fidelity to the Lord. His faithful perseverance and heroic courage, especially in light of internal resistance, are an example for us.

GENERAL INFORMATION

For security reasons, during 11:00 AM Sunday Liturgy, **the back door will be locked at 11:15 AM**. Also, please remember during the Weekly Liturgy, the back door will be locked. Please park your car in front of the church.

JOAN SKINTA AT CARE CENTER

Woodhaven Care Center, c/o Joan Skinta Room 226, 2400 McGinley Rd., Monroeville Pa 15146

By Baptism we are God's holy family. Pray today for the grace to live faithfully your vocation as a single, married, ordained or consecrated person. If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, contact Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych.



PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

The **Byzantine Catholic Serra Club of Pittsburgh** is an organization that fosters and promotes priesthood and religious vocations in the Byzantine Catholic Church. They also support Seminarians, Priests and Religious Sisters in their sacred ministry. The Byzantine Serra Club meets monthly. If you would like to join, call William Kress 412-761-1499 or email kb.kress@gmail.com (*Next dinner meeting, January 15, 2020*)
Join the Serrans in their work to ensure the future of our Church.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member, they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only by the pastor.

THE WEEKLY S.O.T. IS AVAILABLE VIA EMAIL

Just as a reminder that you are able to receive the weekly Church Bulletin via email by requesting it. If you are on vacation or perhaps unable to with good reason not to attend the Weekend Divine Liturgy, this would be a great way to stay up-to-date on the happenings at the Church. Request the S.O.T. Church Bulletin by emailing the pastor: stspeterpaulbc@gmail.com.

PLEASE WRITE AMOUNT ON YOUR ENVELOPES

Often times when our devoted Counters are dealing with several different envelopes (Sundays, Holy Days, Special Collections, etc.) it is possible that a donation slips by without a written amount on the envelope. Would you please help them out and place the amount on your envelope prior to placing it in the collection basket? Also, be sure that your checks are signed and that you place the contribution in the envelope. Often times, we receive envelopes with no donation inside. It will be greatly appreciated!

2020 ENVELOPES

Please pick up your box of 2020 envelopes in the social hall. If you know someone who will be unable to pick up their 2020 envelopes, please take their box to them. If there is no box for you, please contact Father Vitalii.

ALL SOULS SATURDAYS – HRAMOTAS

The first All Souls Saturday is February 15th. The remaining Saturdays will be March 7th, 14th, 21st, and May 30th. We will celebrate a Divine Liturgy with a Panahida **on each of the Saturdays at 11:00 a.m.** If you wish to remember deceased loved ones, please use the envelopes provided in your envelope box.

If you wish to remember loved ones, write them on a piece of paper and enclose in the envelope provided in your box of envelopes (**first names only**). You **MUST** make up a new list. **Please submit your list by Sunday, February 9th.**

VESTMENTS



The bishops traditionally probably also wore the phelonion over which they placed the **omophorion**, the sign of their episcopal office as leading pastor of the local church. When the Christian empire was captured by the Turks in the fifteenth century, however, the Christian bishops of the East were given civil rule over all Christians under Turkish domination. At that time, since there was no longer a Christian empire, the bishops adopted the imperial insignia and began to dress as the Christian civil rulers used to dress. Thus, they began to wear the **sakkos**, the imperial robe, and the mitre, the imperial crown. They also began to stand upon the **orlets** (the eagle) during the divine services and to carry the staff which symbolized more their secular power than their pastoral office. At that time as well, the word despota (vladyko or master) - a title for temporal rather than spiritual power - was used in addressing the bishops, and the clergy began to grow long hair which was also a sign of earthly rule in former times.



In the Church some of these new insignia were “spiritualized” and given a Biblical meaning. Thus, the mitres became signs of Christian victory, for the saints receive their crowns and reign with Christ. The eagle became the sign of the flight to the heavenly Jerusalem since it is the classical Biblical symbol of Saint John and the fourth gospel. The staff became the symbol of Aaron’s rod, and so on. It should be understood, however, that these particular insignia of the bishop’s office are of later and more accidental development in the Church.

In relation to the bishop’s service in the Church, the use of two special candelabra with which the bishop blesses the faithful also developed. One of these candelabra holds three candles (**trikiri** - on right) while the other holds two candles (**dikiri** - on left). These candelabra stand for the two fundamental mysteries of the Orthodox faith: that the Godhead is three Divine Persons; and that Jesus Christ, the Saviour, has two natures, being both perfect God and perfect man.



Bishops and priests in the Church also wear other special garments. There are, first of all, two pieces of cloth: one square (**nabadrennik**) and one diamond-shaped (**epigonation** or palitsa). The former is worn only by priests as a sign of distinction, while the latter is always worn by bishops and is given to some priests as a special distinction of service. Probably these cloths were originally “liturgical towels.” Their symbolical meaning is that of spiritual strength: the sword of faith and the Word of God. They hang at the sides of their wearers during divine services.



There are also clerical hats which carry special meaning in some Byzantine Churches—the pointed hat (skufya) and the cylindrical one (kamilavka). The kamilavka is normally worn by all Greek priests, but only by some clergy in other national Orthodox churches as a special distinction. The kamilavka may be black or purple; monks, and by extension all bishops, wear it with a black veil. The skufya is worn by monks and, in the Russian tradition, by some of the married clergy as a special distinction, in which case the hat is usually purple.

Finally, it must be mentioned that bishops and priests wear the cross. The bishops also wear the image of Mary and the Child **panagia**—the “all holy.”

As the various details of clerical vestments evolved through history, they became very complex and even somewhat exaggerated. The general trend in the Church today is toward simplification. We can almost certainly look forward to a continual evolution in Church vestments which will lead the Church to practices more in line with the original Christian biblical and sacramental inspiration.

The Byzantine Church is quite firm in its insistence that liturgical vesting is essential to normal liturgical worship, experienced as the realization of communion with the glorious Kingdom of God, a Kingdom which is yet to come but which is also already with us in the mystery of Christ’s Church.