

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 11

November 2011

October Council Highlights

- ✘ September Operating Income was \$9,101.46 and Operating Expenses were \$15,711.88, resulting in an operating deficit of **\$6,610.42**.
- ✘ We currently have \$66,542.75 in the Parking Lot Project account.
- ✘ Timelines for the Parking Lot bidding was discussed; bid requests mailed on October 25, 2011.
- ✘ Annual Parish Meeting tentatively set for January 22, 2011, pending receipt of bid packages to be presented to parish.
- ✘ Plans underway for parish's 60th anniversary on February 11-12, 2012 with Bishop BENJAMIN.



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Be Sure Not to Do the Wrong Work

November 8 is a day when the Church commemorates angels—not only the Archangel Michael, who is named, but "all the other bodiless powers" as well.

Among these other celestial beings is the Archangel Jehudiel, who like the others has a special role in God's plan. Jehudiel is known as the angel of work. In particular, he watches over those who work for God's glory, encouraging them, strengthening them and giving them wisdom.

On this same day and the previous day, we read Colossians 2:13 to 3:3. In these verses Saint Paul writes about angels, but he is not describing the kind of benevolent care that Jehudiel and the others have for us. He is concerned that some people misunderstand what angels are, and give them a kind of respect that should be offered only to God.

Paul's worry is that false teachers are exerting great influence over the Colossian Christians. These teachers seem outwardly to be following the Gospel's warnings against self-indulgence, by "promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body" (2:23). But such teaching is

empty and even harmful, Paul says, because it doesn't come from Christ. It is the result of someone being "puffed up without reason by his s e n s u o u s mind" (2:18) and pretending to have some kind of supernatural knowledge. It only has the "appearance of wisdom."



when they learned to worship Jesus Christ as the true God, they were freed from the old, oppressive belief that "elemental spirits" ruled their lives and must be placated. Why, he asks, are they now willing to listen to these teachers who ask them to return to the worship of angels? Why do they agree to submit to unnecessary regulations: "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (2:21)?

All the regulations imposed by these teachers are a lot of work. Their followers must know what things to avoid, what things to do regularly, and what are the best ways to keep from being "disqualified" by their

teachers. Paul encourages the Colossians to forget all that, because it is the wrong work. He suggests that they do some other things: Hold fast to Christ who is the Head, and seek and set their minds on the things that are above rather than those that are on earth (2: 19, 3:1-2). Yes, these things are also work, but they are the right kind, because they lead to salvation. They are the kind of work that the Archangel Jehudiel can support and assist.

People who believe that angels rule the universe are misguided, Paul firmly says. It's true that we cannot understand everything about life or the world, because our "life is hid with Christ in God" (2: 3). But Christ is our life, and when He appears and is manifested in glory, "then you also will appear with Him in glory" (3:4).

Troparion - Tone 1

Commanders of the heavenly hosts, we who are unworthy beseech you, by your prayers encompass us beneath the wings of your immaterial glory, and faithfully preserve us who fall down and cry to you: "Deliver us from all harm, for you are the commanders of the powers on high!"

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

Message from Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the twenty-fifth of this month, our parish community will mark the sixtieth anniversary of its founding. Archimandrite Peter (Zaychenko), with several local Orthodox Christians who had first come together two years before, petitioned Bishop John (Shahavskoy), bishop of San Francisco and the Western United States, part of the Russia Orthodox Metropolia (the predecessor body of the Orthodox Church in America), and requested a blessing to establish a parish community here in the

Valley of the Sun. With its small church building built on property which Father Peter had purchased for his retirement, the small fledgling Orthodox community was officially designated as a parish on November 25, 1951, and was placed under the heavenly protection and intercession of the first-enthroned Apostles, Peter and Paul. The first parishioners, mostly of Russian and Carpatho-Russian descent, represented about twelve households at that time.

Since the date of its founding sixty years ago, our parish has continued to fulfill the mission with which Archbishop John entrusted it when he gave official recognition and formally established our parish—the very same mission given by Our Lord Jesus Christ to His holy Apostles and Disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Fa-

ther and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to fulfill everything I have commanded you. Behold I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mathew 28:19-20).

For sixty years, the clergy and faithful of our parish have responded to the Lord’s invitation and commission to call others to discipleship through their own living and teaching of the Gospel message. For sixty years, the clergy and faithful of Saints Peter and Paul Church have been faithful to the life and teachings of the Orthodox Faith; they have sought to grow in personal holiness and thus transform the world; they

have gathered weekly to proclaim the Word of God, to give thanks to God, and to celebrate the Holy Mysteries; they have rejoiced in the Lord in moments of joy and success and turned to the Lord in times of loss and sorrow. And the Lord has received these sixty years of fidelity by continuing to bless us with and through one another—and by sending others to join us and share in our common life of faith.

As we reflect upon these past six decades of parish life, we give praise and thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for those who have worked and sacrificed—and continue to do so—so that we may benefit from their faith and their generous service. We pray to the Lord, asking Him to grant rest with the saints and memory eternal to Archimandrite Peter, our parish founder, to all the “founders of this holy house,” and to

all the clergy and faithful of our parish who have departed this life before us. We ask the Lord to continue to bless those who throughout these many years have been faithful to the life and mission of our parish as well as all those who are a part of our community at this time. May all of us, by God’s Grace, through the prayerful intercession of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, strive to continue the work of the Gospel begun here so many years ago. We pray that God who began this good work will bring it to fulfillment on the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

In reflecting upon our sixtieth anniversary this month, I also invite all of you to “mark your calendars now” for the official observance of this memorable occasion. His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN, will join us for special services of thanksgiving on the weekend of February 11-12, 2012. More information about this celebration will be forthcoming as the day draws nearer.

Also, be assured of my prayerful best wishes for a happy and healthy celebration of the Thanksgiving Day holiday. As we begin our preparation for the celebration of the Lord’s Nativity (Nativity Fast begins November 15) may we do so with joyful and thankful hearts for all the Lord has done for us.

With love in the Lord,

Father David



SS Peter & Paul Parish Nativity Card

I would like to be included in the SS Peter and Paul Parish Nativity card.

Name(s) to appear on

card: _____

Mailing Address



On the Nativity Fast-The Preparation of the Soul

M.C. Steenberg

'Make ready, O Bethlehem: let the manger be prepared, let the cave show its welcome. The truth has come, the shadow has passed away...'¹

The herald of the pending miracle begins. It is the Eve of the Nativity as these words are sung. The transformation of the world, the birth of God, is but hours away, and it is through such words that the faithful are called into attentiveness and anticipation. *'Make ready, O Bethlehem!'* We can see the radiant lights of the feast just beyond the horizon, we can taste the sweetness of the miracle that took place beneath a star; and through the words sung around and within us in the Church, the great eve of the birth of God is made a reality in our present experience. We make ready, and we wait. But this is not the first moment of preparation for the Feast. For 'forty days', with the usual adjustments to that length for Sabbaths and Sundays causing it to begin on 15 November,² the Church has been setting herself in readiness, drawing her attention to the mystery to come, waiting in expectation. She has made use of the great joy that will arrive on Christmas day as occasion to take up the task considered by so many as opposite to joy: fasting, with all its rigour, its harshness, its discomfort. These are the steps which, for Orthodox Christians throughout the world, lead to the radiant wonder of the Nativity of Christ.

Whence the spirit of this fast, which each year 'stands in the way' of our arrival at Christmas rejoicing? The question itself helps guide the way to an answer: the fast seems awkward because so often we see Christmas as joy alone and do not appreciate fully the deep and profound mystery that is at the heart of our rejoicing. 'Hark, the herald angels sing!' we are eager to recall, but quietly we forget the universal significance of the event that is the cause of their singing. It is not just that a babe is born: He who is without birth is born. He who created all is made a created child. He who holds the universe in the palm of His hand, is held in the hands of a tender mother.

Before Thy birth, O Lord, the angelic hosts looked with trembling on this mystery and were struck with wonder: for Thou who hast adorned the vault of heaven with stars hast been well pleased to be born as a babe; and Thou who holdest all the ends of the earth in the hollow of Thy hand art laid in a manger

of dumb beasts. For by such a dispensation has Thy compassion been made known, O Christ, and Thy great mercy: glory to Thee. (Sticheron of the Third Hour, Eve of the Nativity)

We do not tremble when we think of Christmas, we are not always struck with the wonder of the Nativity. Instead, we buy gifts and plan parties, catching a glimpse of the joy of the Feast, but without a heart immersed in its wonder. Thus the fast becomes that which we must 'get through' in order to reach that joyful day. When we arrive there, however, if this has been our attitude, we are caught askance by the hymns the Church feeds into our hearts. We find ourselves joined to a celebration of triumphal release from bondage, but we little understand what that bondage means. We sing songs of joy for deliverance, but we do not truly comprehend how we are enslaved. We find ourselves suddenly transported to the mountaintop, but without having climbed there from the valley far below, the scene we see is only another beautiful picture casually set before our eyes, and not the vision for which we have worked and struggled and longed with all our being. We may feel joy, perhaps even Christmas joy; but we will know, deep inside, that our joy is not like that which is exalted in the hymn:

Make glad, O ye righteous! Greatly rejoice, O ye heavens! Ye mountains, dance for joy! Christ is born; and like the cherubim the Virgin makes a throne, carrying at her bosom God the Word made flesh. Shepherds, glorify the newborn Child! Magi, offer the Master gifts! Angels, sing praises, saying: 'O Lord past understanding, glory to Thee!' (First sticheron of the Praises, Nativity Matins)

A Time of Preparation

The Fast of the Nativity is the Church's wise solace and aid to human infirmity. We are a forgetful people, but our forgetfulness is not unknown to God; and our hearts with all their misconceptions and weakened understandings are not unfamiliar to the Holy Spirit who guides and sustains this Church. We who fall far from God through the magnitude of our sin, are called nonetheless to be close to Him. We who run afar off are called to return. Through the fast that precedes the great Feast of the Incarnation—which itself is the heart and substance of our calling—the Church helps draw us into the full mystery of what that call entails.

Like Great Lent, the fast of the Nativity is a journey. *'Come, O ye faithful, and let us behold where Christ is born. Let us join the Magi, kings from the east, and follow the guiding star'*.³ Let us 'join the Magi', let us 'follow' and 'behold'. On the fifteenth of November, the Church joins together in a journey toward that salvation first promised to Adam in God's curse laid upon the serpent (Gen 3.14-15). The One who will crush the head of the serpent, of sin and the devil and all that is counter to the life God offers, is Him to whom the star leads us. The fast of the Nativity is our journey into the new and marvelous life of the Holy Trinity, which is offered by God but which we must approach of our own volition. In this act, we are joined to the story of our fathers. The gift of a new land and great blessings was freely given by God to Abraham, but in order to obtain it, *'Abram went, as the Lord had told him'* (Gen 12.4).

A journey is, by its nature, naturally ascetic. Unless my life is already very humble, I cannot take the whole of my possessions on a journey. I cannot transport social and political ties along a journey's path. I can never be too reliant on the plans I have made for my journey: a control lying beyond the self must be admitted and accepted. This is the spirit to which the fast calls us.

A journey is, by its nature, an act of movement, of transportation, of growth. What is old is left behind, newness is perceived and embraced, growth of understanding takes place. And even if the journey comes to a close in the same physical location from which it began, that place is transformed *for us* by the journey through which we have re-approached it. The aid shelter on a street corner in London is no different after a journey to the Middle East; but after witnessing there first-hand the struggles and torments of poverty, of suffering, of sorrow, the meaning and importance of that small shelter is indeed different *for me*.

Here the importance of the fast. As the Nativity approaches, that great feast of cosmic significance and eternal, abounding joy for which heaven and earth together rejoice, the fast calls me to consider: *do I rejoice? Why do I rejoice?* The hymnography of the Church makes it clear that this is a feast for all the world, for all creation; and the fast calls me to take my place in that creation, to realise that, despite all my infinite unworthiness, Christmas is a miracle for my soul too.

(Continued on page 4)

On the Nativity Fast-The Preparation of the Soul

(Continued from page 3)

Make ready, O Bethlehem: let the manger be prepared, let the cave show its welcome. The truth has come, the shadow has passed away; born of a Virgin, God has appeared to men, formed as we are and making godlike the garment He has put on. Therefore Adam is renewed with Eve, and they call out: 'Thy good pleasure has appeared on earth to save our kind'.

Adam and Eve, all of humankind, are renewed and made alive in the Incarnation of God in Christ, who 'appeared on earth to save our kind'. Fallen flesh, so long bound to death, so long yearning in for growth and maturation into the fullness of life, is sewn into the garment of Christ and at last made fully alive. There is a pleasing old saying, with perhaps more than a touch of truth to it, that humankind drew its first full breath at the infant Christ's first cry.

We are called, then, to approach this great mystery as God's condescension into our own lives, personally and collectively. The Canon of Matins for the Nativity lays it out clearly: 'He establishes a path for us, whereby we may mount up to heaven'.⁴ The Nativity is not only about God's coming down to us, but about our rising up to Him, just as sinful humanity was lifted up into the person of Christ in the Incarnation itself.

We are called to arise, then, during the fast that is the journey into this Feast. 'O blessed Lord who seest all, raise us up far above sin, and establish Thy singers firm and unshaken upon the foundation of the faith'.⁵ The faithful take up this call through the abandonment of those things which bind, rather than free, in order that a focus on God as 'all in all' might become ever more real and central to daily life.

Meals are lessened and regimented, that a constant, lingering hunger may remind us of the great need we each have for spiritual food that goes beyond our daily bread. The number of Church services is gradually increased, that we might know whence comes that true food. Sweets and drink are set aside, that we might never feel content with the trivial and temporal joys of this world. Parties and social engagements are reduced, that we might realise that all is not so well with us as we often take it to be. Anything which holds the slightest power over us, whether cigarettes or television, travel or recreation, is minimized or—better—cast wholly aside, that we might bring ourselves to

be possessed and governed only by God.

The fast is an ascetic time, designed by the Church to strip away common stumbling blocks into sin, to provide us with the means of self-perception that we lack in our typical indulgence, and to begin to grow the seeds of virtue. All these are necessary if we are ever to know even partially, or appreciate even menially, the 'depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God'.⁶ We must take up the task of our own purification, gifted by God and achieved only through His grace, that we might approach Him on Christmas Day as did the Magi and the shepherds in Bethlehem:

Come, O ye faithful, inspired by God let us arise and behold the divine condescension from on high that is made manifest to us in Bethlehem. Cleansing our minds, let us offer through our lives virtues instead of myrrh, preparing with faith our entry into the feast of the Nativity, storing up treasure in our souls and crying: Glory in the highest to God in Trinity, whose good pleasure is now revealed to men, that in His love for mankind He may set Adam free from the ancestral curse. (Sticheron of the Sixth Hour, Christmas Eve)

True Joy in the Mystery of the Nativity

The Church journeys toward the birth of Christ God, steered by the ship that is the Nativity fast. She does so with the knowledge that unless she struggles up the mountain that is desperately too steep for her to climb, she will never know the breadth of the gift that is the mountain's levelling by the hand of God. Resurrection unto life is the ultimate gift of the Incarnation, but unless a man understands that he is dead, he will never know the meaning of resurrection.

The fast is a holy and blessed tool that brings us closer to such self awareness. It reveals to us who we are, perhaps more importantly who we are not, and makes us more consciously aware of that for which we stand in need. Then and only then, with eyes opened—even only partially—by the ascetic endeavour, we will truly know the life-giving light of the Nativity of Christ. We will hear with awe the proclamation of the hymn at vespers, taking the mystery presented therein as united directly to us:

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord as we tell of this present mystery. The middle wall of partition has been destroyed; the

flaming sword turns back, the cherubim withdraw from the tree of life, and I partake of the delight of Paradise from which I was cast out through disobedience. For the express Image of the Father, the Imprint of His eternity, takes the form of a servant, and without undergoing change He comes forth from a Mother who knew not wedlock. For what He was, He has remained, true God: and what He was not, He has taken upon himself, becoming man through love for mankind. Unto Him let us cry aloud: God born of a Virgin, have mercy upon us! (Sticheron of Vespers of the Nativity)

We will never fully comprehend this ineffable mystery; some knowledge is properly God's alone. But by His grace through the ascetic effort, we will come to understand -- perhaps, most of us, only to the slightest degree -- how this mystery is our own mystery, how His life is our own life, and how the salvation of Christmas Day is, indeed, our own salvation. And with this realisation, joy: joy far greater than a mere entrance into the temple on Christmas Day could ever bring us. This is the joy of the age-old journey of man, our own journey, come to its fulfilment in the awe-inspiring mystery of God Himself become a man. With this joy in our hearts, we shall embrace the hymnographer's words as our own:

Today the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word. Hearing this, be of good cheer, O inhabited earth, and with the angels and the shepherds glorify Him whose will it was to be made manifest a young Child, the pre-eternal God. (Kontakion of the Forefeast)

1. Sticheron at the Royal Hours, by St Sophronius of Jerusalem. [back]

2. According to the Church Calendar; 28th November on the civil calendar. [back]

3. Sessional Hymn of the Nativity Matins. [back]

4. Irmos of Canticle Two, from the Iambic (second) Canon of the Nativity Matins. [back]

5. Irmos of Canticle Three, Iambic Canon of Nativity Matins. [back]

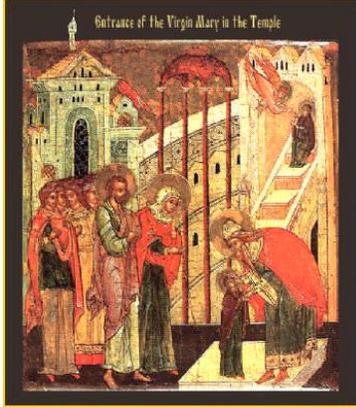
6. Cf. Romans 11.33; found in the sticheron in tone four from the Sixth Hour of Christmas Eve. [back]

Reprinted from *Monachos.net*, [Http://www.monachos.net/content/liturgics/liturgical-reflections/97](http://www.monachos.net/content/liturgics/liturgical-reflections/97) ✕

Hell Cannot Hold Him Nor Can a Bag

On November 21st we celebrate the feast of the Entry of the Most-Holy Theotokos into the Temple. The coming of Jesus Christ into the world is so important that everything surrounding it, including the event this feast commemorates, is also important.

For years before Jesus' birth, His Mother was prepared for her role. While she was still very young, her parents and neighbors took her to the Temple, singing holy songs and carrying candles. She walked up the steps of the Temple and was met by the high priest. She



entered the Holy of Holies with him as a sign of her special destiny. Normally nobody entered that place except the high priest, once a year. Then Mary grew up and matured spiritually among holy people, until God was ready to send His Son to us and to have her give Him birth.

We celebrate and revere the people and events surrounding the Incarnation because we believe it alone tells the truth about God. Only Christians teach that God's Divine Son came among us to offer us life through His death and resurrection. That is why we can't go along with those who say that every religion is basically the same, and leads to God.

Among those who say this is Rick Steves, the well-known travel writer and TV personality. Though Steves is a committed and community-serving Lutheran, he apparently shares the idea that all religions are equal and the same.

He describes with admiration a man he met in a remote Turkish village. The man had an embroidered bag hanging in a place of honor on a wall of his house. The bag, he told

Steves, contained a copy of the Qu'ran as well as a Bible and a copy of the Talmud. Though a devout Muslim himself, the man felt that he honored all three faiths by keeping their holy Scriptures together in one bag.

This man is an example, Steves writes, of the way we should all be. How appropriate, how good a symbol of unity it would be if we could all have bags with the various holy Scriptures in them.

But this day's feast reminds us that Christians cannot settle for such a tidy solution to the problem of spiritual disunity among human beings.

We are not "people of the Book" because we worship a God who did infinitely more than give us a sacred Scripture. He was born from the long-prepared Mary as a Man, and when grown He burst the walls of hell asunder. If hell could not contain Him, certainly a bag can't do it.

Our own Scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ came to save everyone, not just those who call themselves His followers. We must love and respect those of other faiths, and need to work at finding common ground with them. But we also have to show them the Man who died on

Troparion - Tone 4

Today Anna bequeaths joy to all instead of sorrow by bringing forth her fruit, the only ever-Virgin.

In fulfillment of her vow,
today with joy she brings to the temple of the Lord
the true temple and pure Mother of God the Word.

Kontakion - Tone 4

Today the universe is filled with joy
at the glorious feast of the Mother of God, and cries out:
"She is the heavenly heavenly tabernacle."

the cross for them—the Man who just won't fit in that bag.

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Why Fast Before the Nativity?

Question:

I was wondering why we fast before Nativity. The Lenten fast seems more obvious. Also, from what foods do we normally fast from during the Nativity fast?

Answer

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control

us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor. [We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food!] While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we "ruin our appetite" we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently. If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of

course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a "must." In Matthew Christ says, "WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites," not "IF you fast" or "IF YOU CHOOSE to fast."

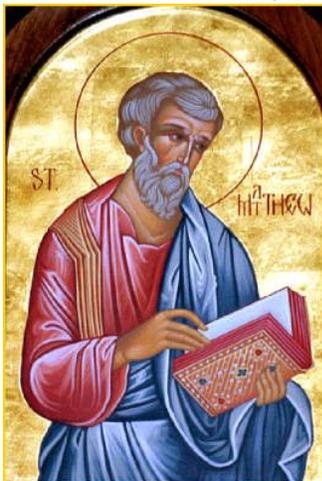
Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society—a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products—fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace—and pay large sums of money for—his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at "no cost"] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible. ✠

The Jefferson Bible Rewrite

During the week of November 13, we remember two saints who are intimately connected with the Holy Bible. One is the Gospel writer Matthew, and the other is Saint John Chrysostom.

Matthew's Gospel enlightens readers about Jesus Christ as the promised Savior and fulfiller of the Old Testament prophecies. Writing to his fellow Jews, Matthew presents Christ's life as the completion of God's plan for humanity, worked out over the centuries of Israel's history. Saint John Chrysostom loved the Bible, and passionately exhorted Christians to read it. He wrote, "If we are willing to examine the Scriptures in this way, carefully and systematically, we shall be able to obtain our salvation."

Chrysostom was particularly concerned about children: "Never deem it an unnecessary thing that [a child] should be a diligent hearer of the divine Scriptures...Do not imagine that the monk alone stands in need of these lessons from Scripture. Of all others, the children just about to enter the world especially need them." We might imagine that the brilliant Thomas



Jefferson also honored the Scriptures and agreed with Chrysostom that they undergird our salvation. But a small book called "The Jefferson Bible" proves that we would be wrong.

To create his book, Thomas Jefferson cut, rearranged and pasted the Gospels, leaving out the miracles and other parts he deemed useless. Jefferson admired many sayings of Jesus as displays of "fine imagination, correct morality and the most lovely benevolence." But other sayings were full of "so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same Being."

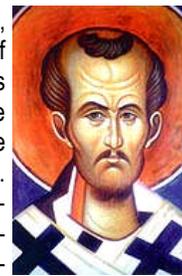
Jefferson blamed the "feeble minds" of the disciples for the problem. They had piled superstitions, fabrications and "things impossible" on top of Jesus' pure moral and ethical teachings. So he removed their additions, leaving the exquisite moral precepts intact.

The resulting book has strange gaps left by Jefferson's editing. One example is Jesus' encounter with the man born blind. The disciples

ask Him who sinned, the man or his parents. Jesus answers, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

But the very next verse is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door of the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." The blind man's healing, the exact thing to which Jesus is referring when He says that the works of God should be made manifest in him, is gone. The sheepfold verses don't even logically follow, and the healing miracle which exemplifies Jesus' divine compassion is consigned to the wastebasket.

There are people today who also cut and paste the Bible, and accuse the followers of Jesus Christ of adding to His original teachings. But we are called to take the Bible as the Church has given it to us. Otherwise we are, in Chrysostom's words, merely performing "labors without advantage."



This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and other Christian

Around SS Peter & Paul

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Nancy Tarasevich
November 19

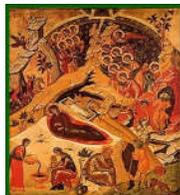
Nick Kossob
November 24

Will Osolinsky
November 27

**Many Years!
Mnogaya Leta!**

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

SS Peter and Paul will be preparing and mailing out a parish Christmas card. If you would like to have your name included in the card, please fill out the SS Peter and Paul Christmas Card form which will be distributed during Coffee Hour. The suggested minimum donation is \$10. All proceeds will benefit the church's operating fund. The deadline for submitting names is
Sunday, December 4, 2011.



PRAYER LIST

*"I was sick and you visited me."
Matt 25:36*

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Dorothy Yost
Nancy Tarasevich
Mary Maul
Ann Garza
Pauline Vinay
Bill and Rose Koval
Beatrice Washington

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Father David.

Bits and Pieces

NATIVITY FAST

The Nativity fast begins on Tuesday, November 15. Please refer to your church calendars for the fasting guidelines which are particular to this period of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Nativity.

BREAKING THE FAST ON THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving for Americans is a family event. The roots of the feast are found in the inclination of the human heart to offer thanks to God for the abundance of blessings He has bestowed upon us. As Orthodox Christians, who value the unity and strength of the family, we are inclined to adopt this feast as our own, especially at a time when the institution of the family is under attack from all directions. Considering the traditional Thanksgiving meal, however, which involves turkey, ham and dairy products, Orthodox Christians trying to hold the fast of Christmas are faced with the dilemma: "Should I hold the fast and go contrary to the established social and cultural norms associated with Thanksgiving Day or should I break the fast in order to facilitate the need of blending in and not making others uncomfortable with my presence?" Responding to the request of the faithful under their pastoral care, the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in America apply "economia," discreetly granted a blessing to break the fast on Thanksgiving Day while focusing on the unity of the family and the eucharistic aspects of this feast, but quickly return to the observance of the fast immediately afterwards. The non-Orthodox cultural norm is thus transformed through our theology and this pastoral approach to a positive element for the strengthening of family bonds, while keeping with the necessity of our spiritual practice of fasting in preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Nativity.

GREAT FEAST of the ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN THE TEMPLE

On November 21 the Church commemorates the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Temple. The main theme of the feast of Mary's entrance to the Temple, repeated many times in the liturgical services, is the fact that she enters the Temple to become herself the living temple of God, thus inaugurating the New Testament in which are fulfilled the prophecies of old that "the dwelling of God is with man" and that the human person is the sole proper dwelling place of the Divine Presence. (Ezekiel 37:27; John 14:15-23; Acts 7:47; II Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 2:18-22; 1 Peter 2:4; Revelation 22:1-4).

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM BISHOP BENJAMIN

As has been previously announced and as

anticipated, in an ukaz dated October 20, 2011, His Grace BENJAMIN, Bishop of San Francisco and the West, has released Priest Damian Kuolt from his assignment as rector of St. John the Theologian Mission, Tempe, and has canonically attached him to the Altar of Saints Peter and Paul Church.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Adult Education classes resumed on Wednesday, October 5, and continue through the fall, ending before the celebration of the Nativity. This year's fall series will begin with a discussion of the lives and teachings of the Fathers of the Church. The schedule for upcoming classes is as follows: November 9, 16, and 30; December 7 & 14. All classes will begin at 7:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please speak with Fr David.

PARKING LOT PROJECT UPDATE

On October 25, 2011 the *Invitation to Bid Letter, Specifications and Plans/Drawings* were mailed to 6 General Contractors who had expressed an interest in bidding. On November 8, 2011 a Pre-Bid Meeting will take place with those Contractors still interested in bidding. Before the end of December we should receive "firm hard bids" to evaluate and then make our recommendations at a Special Parish Meeting in January. In the meantime, Fund Raising must continue in order to complete this long awaited Project early in 2012.

PIROGHI WORKSHOP

The FOCA will be hosting a Piroghi Workshop on Saturday, November 12, 2011. We need people to help with the dough, making the potato filling, pinching, boiling, packing, and clean-up. No prior experience is needed! Come enjoy a day of service and fellowship. If you are interested in helping and/or ordering piroghi, please contact Stephanie Homyak at 602.432.7473. Orders are first come, first serve. We are planning to make 120 dozen.

PARISH LIBRARY

Our parish library has many resources to assist you in your spiritual journey throughout the Lenten season. Stop by after services and pick a book to read as part of your spiritual exercises. There are hundreds of titles for you to choose from.

BOOKSTORE

The hallmarks of an Orthodox fasting season are prayer, fasting and spiritual reading (in addition to your daily Scripture reading). The

bookstore has all the resources necessary to accompany you through the Nativity Fast. Here are a few ideas:

- The classic Jordanville Prayer book, \$18
- The Pocket Prayer book, \$6
- *When You Fast Cookbook*, \$24
- *The Winter Pascha*, \$16
- *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, \$15

Stop by for these or many other soul-enriching titles.



Katrina Delsante

FOCA MEETING

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) will hold its next meeting on Sunday, November 20, 2011 after coffee hour in the conference room. All are welcome!

FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER

The last two months of the year are now upon us. Now is your last chance to make sure your 2011 church pledges/donations/contributions are in and accounted for in this year. Please make every effort to contribute. The church has again had a financially challenging time this year, as have all of us. We would at least like to 'break even' with our operating income & expenses. Please consider the church in your year-end financial planning, especially for tax purposes.

The only thing preventing us from having the paved expanded parking is funding. Your help and financial support is greatly needed.

Please make every effort to make your year end 2011 contributions prior to December 31st. Any monetary contribution received in January 2012 will be attributed to 2012, as the church's 2011 accounting books will be closed. If you have any questions, please see David in the church office.

WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship. It's also a great time to look at our bookstore.

MBAS

Next MBAS meeting is November 14th.

Please join us!

Marty Gala



November 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Parish Christmas Card To have your name included in the Parish Christmas Card, please complete the forms on page 2. Extra forms will be available in the narthex or on the Bookstore counter. Deadline is December 4, 2011.</p>			<p>2 Shuisskaya Hodigitria Icon</p> <p>No Adult Education</p>	<p>PIROGHI WORKSHOP Saturday, November 12, 2011 Please contact Stephanie Homyak (602.432.7473) if you are able to help.</p>		
<p>6 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 Synaxis of Archangel Michael and the Others</p> <p>6:00pm Council</p>	<p>9 Icon "She Who is Quick to Hear"</p> <p>7:00pm Adult Ed'n</p>	<p>ADULT EDUCATION Adult Education classes continue Wednesdays through mid-December. See calendar for details.</p>		<p>12 Piroghi Workshop</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>13 St John Chrysostom Archbishop of Constantinople</p> <p>8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL MBAS Meeting</p>	<p>14 Holy Apostle Philip</p>	<p>15 BEGINNING OF NATIVITY FAST</p>		<p>16 Holy Apostle & Evangelist Matthew</p> <p>7:00pm Adult Ed'n</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>FOOD DRIVE FOR ST MARY'S FOOD BANK Please bring in your nonperishable food donations. Collection containers are in the church narthex and Cultural Center.</p>						
<p>20 Forefeast of the Entry</p> <p>8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL FOCA Meeting</p> <p>5:00pm Vespers</p>	<p>21 Entrance of the Theotokos</p> <p>9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>No Adult Education</p>	<p>24 THANKSGIVING</p> 	<p>25 Leavetaking of the Entry</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>27 Znamenije Icons: Kursk-Root & Others</p> <p>8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 St. Andrew</p> <p>7:00pm Adult Ed'n</p>	<p>We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</p>		<p>3</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p>