

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JANUARY 16, 2011

SUNDAY/JANUARY 16

34th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 1)
Veneration of the Chains of
Apostle Peter

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour; Church School & Teen Class

MONDAY/JANUARY 17

4:00p.m. Memorial for
(+) Mary Kralovich
7:00p.m. Outreach Meeting

THURSDAY/JANUARY 20

7:00p.m. Parish Council Meeting

SATURDAY/JANUARY 22

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession
12:00p.m. Baptism of Matthew Moriak
by Bishop Michael
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/JANUARY 23

35th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 2)
"Sanctity of Life Sunday"

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour with Question & Answer Period

Fast Days

Wednesday/Jan. 19

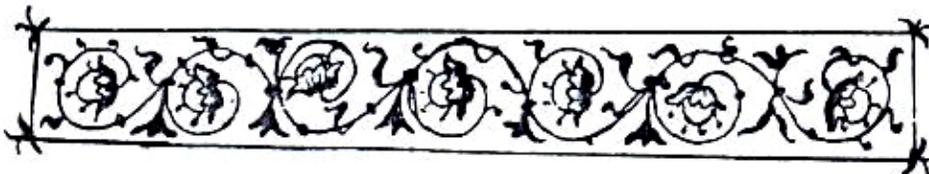
Friday/Jan. 21



Lessons in Divine & Christian Love (40)

On the tree of knowledge was a mixture of good and bad fruit. And the bad fruit was more attractive, as always, not only in taste, but in appearance, with bright colors and beautiful shapes. Deluded, curious, the woman reached out and ate first the fruit of evil and then the fruit of good. Because of this, she first gave birth to the bad Cain and then the good Abel. And from then on they continued to bear both bad and good, through all the ages and generations of men. Estrangements, conflicts, quarrels, wars filled the whole history of mankind. The history of the world is a macrocosm of the Tree of Knowledge.

- Fr. Callistratus of Mileseva



Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Jan. 09, 1995 Michael Hobora
Jan. 17, 1938 Fr. Michael Lilikovich
Jan. 17, 1953 Radion Tzarkov
Jan. 17, 1975 Mary Kralovich
Jan. 18, 1927 Anastasia Petrushevich
Jan. 18, 1963 Helen Trehubets
Jan. 18, 1990 Constantine Putyrskye
Jan. 19, 1974 Vera Gromack
Jan. 19, 1999 Basil Charles Fetchko
Jan. 20, 1960 Nazar Pasechnik
Jan. 20, 1963 Charles Chabala
Jan. 21, 1971 Andrew Zorella
Jan. 22, 1923 Tarasius Lasin



March For Life – January 24th, Monday

Bishop Michael will join Metropolitan Jonah and other Orthodox Christians in this day of prayer and witnessing in Washington, DC. Come along.

Offerings for the week of January 16

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; for the health of Matthew (birthday); in memory of Elena (40th day).

Wine: in memory of Gia.

Winter Weather Conditions

May necessitate a change in the schedule, please check the parish website for up-dates. Any necessary changes will be posted at least 1 hour before the scheduled event.

The Parish Website: www.ssppoc.org

Has posted – “schedule of services” – the parish calendar of services, events, adult studies, church school, meetings, deanery and diocesan events thru June of 2011. Check it out and plan your own calendar accordingly.

The Blessing of Homes

With the newly-blessed Waters of Theophany (January 5th) will begin Jan. 7th thru Feb. 12th. Please speak with Fr. James to arrange a date and time for your home blessing.

TGIF

Today God Is First.

Parish Up-Dates Sent By Email

Usually once a week a Parish Up-Date is emailed. To receive Up-Dates, all you need to do is to subscribe on our parish website.

Annual Parish Meeting

February 13th, Sunday at 11:45a.m. All reports for the Annual Meeting must be submitted no later than February 1st.

Coffee Hour Hosting

Jan. 16 - Motoviloff, Kachek, Torrisi
Jan. 23 - Combs, Mantzafos, Parsells, Sokol
Jan. 30 - Hunchar, Erkman and Turri

Icon Print Collection

Icon Prints from calendars and Christmas Cards may be deposited in the Special Collection Box in the vestibule. Please do not deposit whole calendars and cards but **cut out the prints** for deposit.

January/February Envelopes

Due to mailing difficulties, you may receive two sets of envelopes. The problem has been addressed. All parishioners are asked to make their offerings to the church through usage of the envelope system. Extra blank envelopes may be found on the vestibule stand.

Questions About Holy Water

Q. When should I drink holy water?

A. When you feel a spiritual need, that is when you find yourself strongly tempted, feel in an evil way; are about to set out on a journey; will miss the divine services; before a difficult encounter; in illness, afflictions etc. It is the custom of some pious people to take a drink of holy water the first thing every day before they eat or drink anything else (except on days they receive Holy Communion).

Q. Where should I keep the holy water?

A. The water may be kept in the Icon Corner or the refrigerator.

Q. Does holy water have magical powers?

A. No. But it is matter that is “spirit-bearing,” which brings the blessing of God, cleansing, healing and can be used for every purpose that is expedient.



ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE METROPOLITAN JONAH FOR SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY 2010

January 23, 2011
Sanctity of Life Sunday

To the Venerable Hierarchs, Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

The Orthodox Church is like St John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness, or Jesus baptizing by the Jordan. We, like them, preach a message of repentance and the remission of sins in the new desert, the decadent culture of the modern West, mired in the chaos of moral collapse.

The Orthodox Church's message is a message of hope, of healing, of the transformation of one's life, of attaining to the fullness of personhood, of the realization of the divine potential in each human being. Yet, this message requires not only acceptance, but a voluntary cooperation by those who accept this message. The Church demands a serious discipline of all who would be members, all who would follow this straight and narrow difficult path that leads to salvation. It is a way that demands that we be crucified to the world and its desires, dead to the flesh and its demands, so that we can be focused solely on God.

The culture of this world cries out for "justice." It demands vengeance, and it despises the forgiveness of God. It cries out for bread in the wilderness; and when it is not satisfied with bread, it demands meat. It ignores the radiant Presence of God, and laments the fleshpots of Egypt. Nothing can satisfy its endless lusts for money, sex and power. In terror it refuses to even stand in silence and contemplate the abyss of death, ever trying to distract itself from the ultimate annihilation it so boldly preaches. This complete denial of death thus leads it to the kind of decadence that has overtaken us: greed, hedonism and licentiousness, which have led to gender confusion, depersonalization, and the loss of value of human life. A culture of hedonism leads only to the narcissism of a solitary individual, enslaved by his/her lusts, using others for the gratification of the passions.

The world validates abortion, the sacrifice of the life of an innocent child for the convenience of the mother, oblivious to the suffering it will cause that very woman. It depersonalizes the child, as a "fetus;" while at the same time developing technologies to save nearly identical fetuses in troubled pregnancies. The criterion is not the life of the child; the criterion is simply the desire of the parent: whether the parent wants the child or not. If so, no expense is spared. If not, it is a useless bother, a mass of flesh to be excised like a tumor. What is left, however, is a lifetime of regret, guilt, self-hatred and self-loathing. This is not just an act, but a state of sin.

The last thing the world wants to hear about is sin. And if it refuses to admit sin, neither can it receive forgiveness. Often rightly it cries out against the injustice of the hypocrisy of judgment and condemnation by those who are righteous in their own eyes. But no matter how loud the outcry, the reality of the sin remains, the broken lives and broken hearts. What it needs is to hear the call to repentance, and to heed it. It is the bitter medicine that alone will bring healing. But it is only bitter

in that it is the toxin that destroys pride, which is the cancer at the heart of the illness.

The Lord Jesus cries out through the Church, Repent and receive the remission of your sins! Whether those in the Church heed it or not, it is this good news that gives hope. To receive it is an act of humility. To accept the message of repentance, to transform one's life in obedience to Christ's teachings, is the means of life itself. It demands that we accept responsibility for our sins. But by accepting this responsibility, we overcome them and their effect through repentance. For having accepted responsibility for our own sins, we are no longer controlled by them, but rather, we gain control over our own lives. We can no longer live by following our mindless passions and desires; rather, we must live deliberately, in a disciplined way, denying the passions of the mind and of the flesh.

The Church's discipline of life is strict, but ultimately, it is the path to true freedom. It is a path to salvation and sanctity, shown again and again in the lives of the saints; it is the path to true personhood and true maturity. Those who would try to change it, so that it accords with the values and standards of the world, miss the point that the Church's discipline, morality and life is not of this world, and calls us above and beyond it. The Church's discipline, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles passed on through the Fathers, is not judged by this world, but in fact is the conscience of the world, judging the world. The Church's discipline is the only way out of the morass of sin and brokenness, bitter self-enslavement and self-condemnation, and cycles of abuse.

The discipline of the Church brings us to freedom, because it not only is a code of behavior, but heals our souls, and allows us to give and accept forgiveness. This forgiveness, through repentance, cleanses and purifies, and allows us to accept ourselves and others without judgment. Thus, we are free! We live in God's freedom, and the fullness of his love.

Thus, however we have sinned, we can be forgiven. Whether we have aborted a child, or consented to it, we can be forgiven. If we bear a child as a single mother, we can be accepted in the community of the Church with love. If we have judged and condemned others, and burn with resentment, we can be freed through repentance. No matter what we have done, no matter how broken we are or how completely we have messed up our lives, we can be healed, forgiven, accepted and loved. And then maybe we can forgive ourselves, and attain to that true freedom.

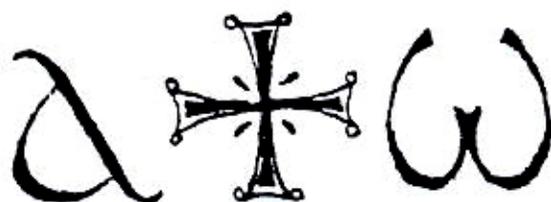
The Lord said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." How true these words are! They are freedom and they are life. No matter how much the world has pulled us down, how deeply it has had us in our grasp, if we accept this light burden and easy yoke of the Orthodox discipline of life through repentance, He is faithful to forgive us our sins. And thus with Christ and in Christ, we overcome the world.

With love in Christ,

+ **Jonah**

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada





TROY POLAMALU SAYS 'KALA CHRISTOUGENA!'

CHRISTMAS ARRIVES TODAY FOR MANY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD

Friday, January 07, 2011 - By Ann Rodgers, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The most famous Orthodox Christian in Pittsburgh, if not the nation, has a greeting for his fellow believers today: "Kala Christougena!" said Steelers safety Troy Polamalu. That's Greek for "Merry Christmas!"

Mr. Polamalu and his wife, Theodora, actually celebrated Christmas 13 days ago, but they keep the same Orthodox traditions as those who observe today. Most Orthodox celebrate on Dec. 25, but many Slavic churches tie liturgy to the old Julian calendar, which is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. The Greek Orthodox Church and some others have adopted the Gregorian calendar — except at Easter.

"We all celebrate Easter on the same day," said Mr. Polamalu, 29. Orthodoxy is the Eastern wing of the earliest Christian church, which split into the Orthodox and Catholic churches in 1054.

He and Theodora converted to Orthodoxy about five years ago. His background was Catholic and Protestant, hers Muslim and Protestant. They were Christians in search of a deeper, more consistent experience of God.

"Orthodoxy is like an abyss of beauty that's just endless," he said. "I have read the Bible many times. But after fasting, and being baptized Orthodox, it's like reading a whole new Bible. You see the depth behind the words so much more clearly."

That fasting is a Christmastime difference between Eastern and Western Christians. While many Americans pile on the food from Thanksgiving to Christmas, Orthodox Christians start fasting Nov. 15 or 28.

"Christmas Lent" or "Winter Lent" lasts 40 days, broken by a feast on Christmas, said the Rev. Ste-

lyios Muksuris, administrative assistant to Metropolitan Maximos of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh and professor of liturgy and theology at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. Slavic Orthodox keep a strict fast, abstaining from meat, dairy products, oil and fish for 40 days. Greeks usually permit fish, cheese and oil for the first few weeks, then fast strictly for the last two, he said.

Mr. Polamalu is of Samoan heritage, and belongs to the Greek church, but fasts like a Russian.

His consists of a "fast from dairy, from meat and from oil for 40 days — as well as from sex," he said. "It's to prepare you for the birth of Christ, of God incarnate."

Fasting doesn't affect his football fitness, he said. "When you fast, you can eat extremely healthy by eating a lot of light food, like fruits and vegetables."

There are other aspects to fasting.

"Maybe not watching as much TV, or not getting caught up in idle talk or different things, in order to keep you spiritually healthy," he said.

The most important Orthodox fast is Great Lent, for 50 days before Easter.

When he has kept longer fasts "I have never felt more spiritually strong," he said. Referring to great theologians of the early church, he said, "The church fathers have said that when you eat gluttonously or you eat a lot of meat, your passions get stronger, so your inclination toward sinning becomes stronger. ... [Fasting] really does soften your passions. It gives you spiritual insight."

In Orthodox theology "passions" are negative impulses — such as sadness or greed — that can harm the soul.

He doesn't claim that practicing the faith improves athletics. The player known for crossing himself on the field has seen his faith grow more from his injuries than his interceptions.

"When I got injured, I learned so much from it spiritually, just thanking God for the health that I had when I was healthy," he said.

"People have this idea that the more pious and devout I am, the more successful I am. Which is very dangerous. If you look at faith in that way, you're bound to fail at both - - spiritually and in your career."

As the Polamaluses build Christmas traditions for their children, Paisios, 2, and Ephraim, 3 months, "It's become less about Santa Claus and more about the birth of Christ and the celebration of the Virgin birth," he said.

They spent Christmas Eve at an Orthodox monastery. The service lasted several hours, ending at 1 a.m. It was entirely chanted.

"Orthodox chanting is non-emotional, it's very monotone," said Mr. Polamalu, who also calls it "the most beautiful thing."

"It's the perfect environment for prayer," he said. "Chanting in Greek ... is like a beautiful opera, but way better. You have candles, not [electric] lights. It's dark. You have the women sitting on the left and the men sitting on the right. Everything is to

keep your mind focused on God. ... To me the most beautiful thing anyone on earth can experience, other than maybe marriage and child-bearing, would be the Orthodox Liturgy."

Before he became Orthodox, he said, songs in church sometimes moved him to tears. He now distrusts those passing feelings.

"I'd start crying and feel 'This is awesome.' If I'd had a Red Bull, I'd feel it even more. If I'd had breakfast, I'd feel good. If I didn't have breakfast, I didn't feel anything, I was grumpy," he said.

"It was a very superficial experience. I was thinking, 'God, why did I not feel you today?' because I wasn't feeling the music today. Orthodoxy is very sensitive to that, to take the emotion out of it, to really go after the heart."

The difference between the heart and emotion, he said, is like the difference between the deep love he has for his

wife and their daily ups and downs.

"I could say, emotionally, I'm mad and sad with my wife. But that has nothing to do with how much I love my wife within my heart," he said.

"Before we were Orthodox we were able to separate our spiritual lives and our daily lives. Now that we're Orthodox, because of the prayer life that is required ... and the fasting, it consumes your life. It's the number one thing in your life."



ABOUT TROY POLAMALU

From Wikipedia.org

Troy Polamalu is a professional football strong safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers of the NFL. Polamalu's favorite pastimes include surfing, growing flowers, making furniture and playing the piano. Despite Polamalu's hard-hitting style on the gridiron, he is known off the field as a soft-spoken family man.

Polamalu is also well read in the history and theology of early Christianity, which ultimately led him and his wife Theodora to convert to Orthodox Christianity in 2007. He makes the Sign of the Cross after every play (from right to left, in the Orthodox Christian manner, as opposed to the Roman Catholic left to right motion). Among his spiritual activities is a pilgrimage to Orthodox Christian sites in Greece and Turkey, taken in 2007. He seldom gives interviews, but when he does, he often speaks of the role his spirituality plays in his life. Polamalu has said that he tries to separate himself from his profession as much as possible, including not watching football games at home. He prays after each play and on the sidelines. His children, Paisios, and Ephraim, are both named after well-known Greek Orthodox Christian saints.