

## Mission Statement

Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Parish is a member of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh who through the Holy Spirit is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a community and family, we grow in faith and in the image and likeness of God by dedicating ourselves to welcoming, celebrating and caring for all of God's people.

**Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation & Eucharist):** Must be a registered, active supporting member of the parish family. Pre-baptism instructions are required. Contact Fr. Andrew to schedule.

**Mystery of Crowning:** Must be a registered, active supporting member of the parish family. Must meet with Fr. Andrew before setting date and reserving your banquet hall. Pre-Cana program is required and three sessions with Fr. Andrew. The ceremony will be celebrated according to the prescription of the liturgical book of the Byzantine rite.

**Mystery of Reconciliation:** Celebrated Saturdays, 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM and upon request.

**Mystery of Anointing:** Celebrated upon request. Ideally celebrated in Church the Sunday before undergoing any surgical or other medical procedure.

**Visitation of the Sick:** The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, persons who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Andrew is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Andrew whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

**Funerals:** Families of the deceased or the funeral director must contact Fr. Andrew before setting and publishing the day and time of the funeral.

**Parish Membership:** We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish. 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 through the pastor by appointment. The Parish Office should be notified as soon as possible of any change of address within the Parish as well as one's leaving.

**Godparent/Sponsor Letters:** Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish.

**Rectory Office Hours:** The Parish office is open from 10 AM – 2 PM Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Father Andrew is available on other days and times by appointment.



- **Sun. Nov. 30** No ECF Religion Classes for our Children today.
- **Sun. Nov. 30** No Bible Study
- **Wed. Dec. 3** St. Vincent de Paul Meals Program – 9 AM to 2 PM
- **Wed. Dec. 3** 6 PM - Moleben to Emmanuel
- **Thur. Dec. 4** Bible Study – 10 AM in the Social Hall – Session 10
- **Fri. Dec. 5** 6 PM - Vigil Divine Liturgy for the Feast of our Holy Father Nicholas
- **Sun. Dec. 7** Bible Study – 4 PM in the Social Hall – Session 10

## SPIRITUALITY DAY

The Benedictine Sisters of Queen of Heaven Monastery are offering a Day of Spirituality, Saturday, December 13, 2014, from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. It will be held at SS. Peter and Paul Social Hall. To register, please call 330-856-1813 or email [qohm@netdotcom.com](mailto:qohm@netdotcom.com) by Monday, December 8, 2014. The presenter will be Reverend Christiaan Kappes, Professor of Liturgy and Patristics at SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. His topic will explain the relationship of the Theotokos to the Holy Eucharist and how this knowledge can transform us. There will be time for reflection, questions, refreshments and the Mystery of Reconciliation (Confession). You are welcome to pray Vespers with the sisters. There is no charge for the afternoon. Please avail yourself of the opportunity to further prepare for the glorious Feast of the Nativity.

## OUR PHILIP'S FAST OUT REACH

1. This year our parish will take part in *Be a Santa to a Senior* program which is being sponsored by the Home Instead Senior Care Office. They hope to collect 2,400 gifts to help more than 800 Seniors this Christmas. A tree with "ornaments" listing a senior's name and gift request is in the church on the Belvedere side. Please take an ornament, purchase the gift item and return **unwrapped gifts** to the church by **7 Dec. 2014**. Your gift and the visit that comes with the delivery will make their Christmas memorable and happy.

2. The teens of our ECF program are collecting new and "gently used" books to be distributed to local charities. The book levels can range from those for infants and children to young adults. Collection boxes are in the Social Hall. Deadline is 14 December 2014.

## Divine Liturgy Attendance weekend of 23 November:

5:00 PM: **85**; 11:00 AM: **116**

**Our return to the Lord for all He has given us ..... \$2,729.12**

In addition to prayer & sacraments generally, in particular, I might mention the Jesus prayer (Hesychasm) – silence, visitation to monasteries, pilgrimages to holy sites, observance of fasts and feasts, and much else. All these have the purpose of rendering us available to God.

So we can see, when we consider it, that the truly Christian way of life is the cultivation of heightened availability to God; it leads us to place ourselves in those settings and locations where His power is greatly manifested.

My brothers & sisters in Christ, the bent over woman in our Gospel had no special claim to the mercy and grace of God. God simply was a priority in her life; so much so, that she was willing to endure pain, suffering, and discomfort to be faithful to him. But in that process of putting God first, she found the solution to her life's biggest problem. When the mercy and salvation of God entered that synagogue on that day, she was there. She didn't have to plead for anything from God; but she was available. And so the abundance of God's goodness was poured out on her. One can't help but recall Jesus' statement: "...seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."

Let us take those words to heart. Seek first the kingdom of God; be there; make yourself available to God; and may his great mercy be poured out on you now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



### OUR HOLY FATHER NICHOLAS OF MYRA, WONDER-WORKER

St. Nicholas stands out in the Church as a "model of faith and an example of virtue." Nicholas was Archbishop of Myra in Lycia in the fourth century. He is called the Wonder-worker. His greatness lies neither in theological works nor in writings. He is a personification of a shepherd, a defender, and an intercessor. For us, Nicholas is a man of faith. He shows us what humility is and teaches us the values of moderation and poverty. All generations have acknowledged him as a holy bishop. The Icon of St. Nicholas brings him into our life. He is shown with his right hand raised in blessing and his left hand clasping a scroll. As bishop, he blesses his people in the name of Christ and brings the Word of Truth to them. The Icon encloses the image of Christ holding the Gospel Book on one side of the Saint, and the Mother of God holding the Bishop's omophorion on the other side. This is an obvious reference to his choice as Bishop of Myra. It is common for events from the lives of the Saints to be shown in their icons. In a vision prior to his election as Bishop, Nicholas beheld Christ handing him the Book of Gospels, and the Mother of God placing the omophorion on his shoulders. With st. Nicholas we stand in faith and worship, seeing him as a model for our Christian lives and a model for Christian leadership. We ask him to pray to Christ for us.

30 NOVEMBER 2014

### SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday,	30 November	<i>TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Holy and Glorious Apostle Andrew the First-called.</i>
<b>(Vigil Liturgy)</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>+Steve Zombar – Betty, Steve, Jennifer &amp; John</b>
<b>(SM)</b>	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>+Andrew Wujick – Estelle Wujick Liming</b>
<b>(PP)</b>	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Intention of Father Andrew – Benedictine Sisters</b>
Monday,	1 December	<i>Holy Prophet Nahum.</i> <b>No Divine Liturgy</b>
Tuesday,	2 December	<i>Holy Prophet Habakkuk. Passing of the Blessed Confessor Ivan Slezyuk, Bishop of Ivano-Frankivsk.</i> <b>No Divine Liturgy</b>
Wednesday,	3 December	<i>Holy Prophet Zephaniah.</i> <b>Moleben to Emmanuel</b>
<b>(PP)</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	
Thursday,	4 December	<i>Holy Great Martyr Barbara. Venerable Father John of Damascus</i>
<b>(Chapel)</b>	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Sp. Int. of Sr. Barbara – Benedictine Sisters</b>
Friday,	5 December	<i>Venerable and God-bearing Father Sabbas the Consecrated.</i>
<b>(PP)</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>+John Enasko – Charles and Joan Enasko</b>
Saturday	6 December	<i>OUR HOLY FATHER NICHOLAS, ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA IN LYCIA, THE WONDERWORKER.</i>
<b>(Vigil Liturgy)</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>+Sylvester Minarish – Bieringer Family</b>
Sunday,	7 December	<i>TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Pre-festive Day of the Maternity of the Holy Anna. Holy Father Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.</i>
<b>(SM)</b>	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Prayer Intentions of Altar/Rosary Society</b>
<b>(PP)</b>	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>+Irene Frankos – Jim and Mary Elko</b>



## Attentive to the Word

### *Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost*

*Luke 13: 10-17*

*Use the papers provided*

There are few things in life more difficult to bear than a prolonged illness or permanent debilitating condition. Just the other day on TV, I watched the story of a beautiful teenage girl struggling to walk after being crippled by a bullet at a school shooting. This is something she will struggle with all the rest of her life, all because of a senseless and self-indulgent act.

In our gospel today, we meet a woman who probably expected a similar lifetime of struggle. For eighteen years she had been dominated by her malady. There was no reason to believe her situation would change. She was bent over at the waist - she had a most abnormal crease in the middle of her body. She couldn't straighten up. In a kind of forced humiliation, she saw life from the level of half her stature. The horizon of her vision was the dusty realm of wagon ruts and hoof prints. Bent double, she had to look at the people she met at a strange and unnatural angle. Her life had become a forced bow. It's easy to envision how others reacted to her on the dusty streets. Those afflicted with a visible handicap, such as cerebral palsy, would understand it well. Many undoubtedly quickly looked away when her sideways glance met their stares. We can readily hear in our own ears the innocent questions of the children: "Mommy, why is that lady bent over like that?"

There were probably those who were even cruel enough to tease and torment her. Hers was a sad condition indeed. Sadder yet, she had no reason to believe it would ever be better. Bent as this lady was, however, we might notice that her priorities were a lot straighter than those of many who walk erect. Did you notice where her healing occurred? Luke tells us that it happened in one of the Synagogues on the Sabbath. Let's take a moment and consider this question: "What was this lady doing in the synagogue?" Well, obviously, she was there to worship. But you know what? It couldn't have been easy for her to be there. If she had been looking for an excuse not to be there, she had the perfect one!

You can imagine it: "Rabbi, I just prefer to stay home. It's hard for me to walk to synagogue, my back hurts terribly by the time I get there. When I'm there, people stare at me and I feel so uncomfortable. It's just better for me to stay home!" Put yourself in the position of the rabbi. What could you say? The bottom line is that she was there because it was important for her to be there. Her body may have been bent,

but her priorities were straight. God came first. She didn't care if it hurt. She didn't mind if it was humiliating. Or maybe she did care and she did mind. But you know what? She didn't let it stop her. She was there. That's the point.

Her example certainly points out the utter lameness of so many of the excuses that priests, ministers, and rabbis hear to this day. If it's important to you to be here, you'll be here as long as you're physically able. Let's face it: most people usually figure out a way to do the things they really want to do. We all have our priorities. So in spite of the raw deal life had handed her, this woman had hers: God would be honored first. So, she was there. That's our first point: she was there.

Now I want you to notice another feature of this story: her healing was the result of her presence in the synagogue that day, not the cause of it. There is no indication in the text that she came looking for healing. She just came to the assembly where God's people were gathered as was probably her custom. Jesus saw her and called out to her. She didn't see Him and call to Him. She was simply there being faithful to God in worship. So we can see that because she was there, she was available. She was available to receiving the healing grace that Jesus offered that day. Had she just stayed home that Saturday, her back would have remained just as bent as it was on Friday.

A couple of weeks ago, we considered the example of the woman with the issue of blood - the one who reached out, touched Jesus and was healed. It was clear in that account that she took the initiative. Had she not reached out, Jesus just would have passed on by.

But this story is different. The bent woman did not reach out. Unlike so many others we meet in the gospels, she does not beg for, or even ask for her healing. Jesus simply fixed his gaze on her, and once he saw her condition, her healing was underway. The only condition for her healing was that she was available for Jesus to do his work.

Here's the point for us: A most basic condition for the grace of God to act powerfully in our lives is that we be available to God. But not everybody understands this. I've known people who did not pray, did not attend church or receive the sacraments, did not study the Scriptures or any other pious literature, and even lived openly immoral lives, complain that God deserted them when grave problems or tragedy visited their lives. And so they became very angry with God.

The basic philosophy seems to be that "I can utterly ignore God, but when I have a need he'd better be there for me." Well, let me ask: Do you think God was there for them? Of course, he was there. What was the problem? They were not available to God. They were not there. They were not in the place where God's mercy, power, and healing were available: neither alone in the quiet of their hearts - in prayer; nor in church, nor in any good spiritual relationships - whether with clergy or friends. On the contrary, our Eastern Christian tradition teaches us to make ourselves available to God, and offers us many ways how to do so: