

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Orthodox Church O.C.A.

420 Laura Street
Philipsburg, PA 16866
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<http://nativityofstjohn-oca.org>

Very Rev. John Horosky - Priest
John Conkey - Council President

February 2014

Glory Be to Jesus Christ

Service Schedule

February 2 Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple/ Zacchaeus Sunday

General Confession & Hours @ 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
Special collection for Seminarian
Coffee Hour following Liturgy

February 9 Publican & Pharisee Sunday

Hours @ 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
Coffee Hour following Liturgy

Annual Parish Meeting

February 16 Prodigal Son Sunday

Hours @ 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
Coffee Hour following Liturgy

February 23 Meatfare Sunday

Hours @ 9:30 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
Pot Luck following Liturgy

Reader's Schedule

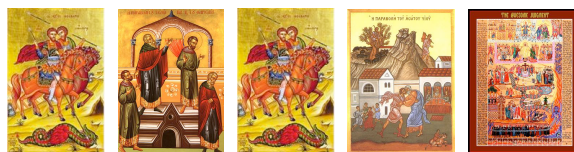
Hours

| | | |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| 2/2 | John Conkey | John Conkey |
| 2/9 | Tom Demchak | Tom Demchak |
| 2/16 | Doug Donovan | Doug Donovan |
| 2/23 | Mark Ammerman | Mark Ammerman |

Epistle

Feasts & Saints

| | |
|------|---|
| 2/2 | Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple |
| 2/2 | Zacchaeus Sunday |
| 2/6 | St. Christina |
| 2/6 | St. Dorothy |
| 2/8 | St. Theodore Tiron & 2/9 St. Theodore Stratelates |
| 2/9 | Publican & Pharisee Sunday |
| 2/16 | Prodigal Son Sunday |
| 2/23 | Meatfare Sunday (Last Judgment) |



Remember in your prayers: Bishop MELCHISEDEK, Father John, Father Adam, Father Ted, Father Paul, Father Michael, Matushka Judy Horosky, Matushka Ksenia Batchko, Larry Ammerman, Mary Ann Ammerman, Karen Blackburn, Matthew Boroughf, Chris Conkey, Drew Conkey, John Conkey, James Crites, Helen Czar, Eugene Demchak, Joe Demchak, Mike Demchak, Steve Demchak, Kari Donovan, Matthew Donovan, Michael Evans, Bonnie Fetcenko, Randy Fetcenko, Rose Marie Fetcenko, Olga Finlayson, Kenneth Finlayson, Jack Foster, Mary Foster, Harry Horosky, Alexandra Mamrak, Evan Morgan, Richard Nakles, Harry Socie, Eleanor Sura, Andrew Tocimak, Irene Tocimak, Louise Tocimak, Walter Varagea, Delores Varagea

“O Master, the all-sustainer, and Holy King, Who punishes, but reduces not to death, Who strengthens the failing and raises the outcast, Who remedies the bodily sorrows of men, we pray unto Thee, O Our Lord, visit Thine infirm servants with Thy mercy; forgive them every transgression, voluntary and involuntary. Verily O Lord, send down from Heaven Thy healing power, touch the body, extinguish the fever, lessen the suffering and every infirmity of Thy servants, raise them decumbent, from sickness, and from the bed of evilness, make them whole and all-restored, return them to Thy Church well-pleasing and fulfilling Thy will. For it is of Thine own, to be merciful and to save us, O Lord, and unto Thee we send glory, to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Birthdays

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Dorian Batchko | 2/1 |
| Mary Ann Conkey | 2/2 |
| George Sura | 2/2 |
| Emily Demchak | 2/4 |
| Julia Batchko | 2/15 |

Anniversaries

none

Our Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for February 9 after Liturgy. Please plan on attending.

Special Thanks to Richard Nakles for performing an audit for St. John's. Our records are in order.

From the Desk of Father John Horosky

We have celebrated the Nativity of Christ, Theophany, and soon we will celebrate the Entrance of Our Lord into the Temple on February 2. This is also the first Sunday of the Lenten Triodion, which signals the coming of Great Lent. This year Lent begins a little early and Pascha will be April 20, 2014. As you see many services are before us, and as your Pastor I am imploring you to try to attend as many of the services as possible. Next Sunday we will bless candles for the Entrance of the Lord. I am truly grateful for the attendance we have been having and may God bless you all. *Father John*

A Message from your Parish Council

At our last council meeting, in addition to our regular agenda, we decided that our goal this year is to find ways to be positive and live our lives accordingly. The answers on how to do this can be found in scripture. Each month we will share bible verses in the bulletin and ways to find the joy in living a more Christ-like life.

Romans 12:2, says that we should be “transformed by the renewing of our mind.”

Ephesians 4:23 says, “let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.”

The question is: How we can become more positive in our lives?

Ask God to help you

Dear God,

So far today, I've done all right.

I haven't gossiped, and I haven't lost my temper.

I haven't been grumpy, nasty or selfish.

But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed and that is when I'm going to need a lot of help.

Funny, but so true. Life is difficult. We all have problems. We all have our battles to fight. There are times that we feel so overwhelmed, we feel like we're drowning. But if you're going to choose to live with a positive attitude, you've got to ask God for help.

In Chapter 4 of Philippians, Paul tells us to petition God with our requests.

In Chapter 3, Paul reminds us that, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”

Start your day off with the right mindset

“This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.”

This is the Prokeimenon for Pascha and what a beautiful way to rise in Christ each morning. Think of the Resurrection as you wake and how you truly rise in Christ. Ask Our Lord to guide your mind, your thoughts and your actions. Make each day a fresh start and ask God to help you do His will for His glory.

It's amazing what can happen in our lives when we are intentional about the way we chose to view life.

Everybody faces good days and bad days. How we choose to live will make all the difference. Remember the saying: “Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it.”

More in March

Zacchaeus Sunday (St. Luke 9:1-10)

St. Luke introduces us to a tax collector named Zacchaeus. *“At that time, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.” And he came down quickly and received him with joy. (When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.” (More than what the Law required) And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”*

Each one of us should find hope in this story because, literally or figuratively, we have compromised in our lives. Perhaps in our work, by failing to live fully the implications of our faith. Perhaps in our family, by failing to love in the way that we know we ought, *sacrificially*. Perhaps in our “free time”- by giving into pursuits that we know actually lead to bondage. The “Good News” is that, no matter what has happened in our past, Jesus walks into the dusty streets of our own lives this day. He comes for us. Let us learn some lessons from Zacchaeus about life in a Sycamore tree.

The Christian life is about God’s action and our response to what He is already doing. Jesus reminds us “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16). Zacchaeus serves to remind us of who does the choosing and who does the responding.

Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10–14.)

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

“I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every man that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

The Gospel lesson (Luke 18:10-4) pictures a man who is always pleased with himself and who thinks that he complies with all the requirements of religion. He is self-assured and proud of himself. In reality, however, he has falsified the meaning of religion. He has reduced it to external observations and he measures his piety by the amount of money he contributes to the temple. As for the Publican, he humbles himself and his humility justifies him before God. If there is a moral quality almost completely disregarded and even denied today, it is indeed humility. The culture in which we live constantly instills in us the sense of pride, of self-glorification, and of self-righteousness. It is built on the assumption that man can achieve anything by himself and it even pictures God as the one who all the time "gives credit" for man's achievements and good deeds. Humility-- be it individual or corporate, ethnic or national-- is viewed as a sign of weakness, as something unbecoming a real man. Even our churches-- are they not imbued with that same spirit as the Pharisee? Do we not want our every contribution, every "good deed," all that we do "for the Church" to be acknowledged, praised, publicized? <http://www.antiochian.org/great-lent->

Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32.)

And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants,[c] ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and

shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

What can we learn from this parable?

- We can be a genuine son of the Father--who is spiritually "alive"--and be "lost" through sin.
- We can turn our backs on our heavenly Father and leave him of our own free will.
- Mortal sin is a real possibility.
- Mortal sin inevitably lands us in a far worse state than we were in originally.
- We can, however, return to the Father and be accepted by him with great joy. In fact, he is ready and eager to accept us back and forgive us, no matter what we've done.
- Christians who have never fallen should not resent those who come back. They should share in their Father's joy.
- Their own place is secure and their heavenly reward is not threatened. God loves them just as much as he loves those who come back through a dramatic conversion.

Meatfare (Last Judgment) (Matthew 25:31-46)

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Christian love is the "possible impossibility" to see Christ in another man, whoever he is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a "good deed" or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself. For, indeed, what is love if not that mysterious power which transcends the accidental and the external in the "other"-- his physical appearance, social rank, ethnic origin, intellectual capacity-- and reaches the soul, the unique and uniquely personal "root" of a human being, truly the part of God in him? If God loves every man it is because He alone knows the priceless and absolutely unique treasure, the "soul" or "person" He gave every man. Christian love then is the participation in that divine knowledge and the gift of that divine love. There is no "impersonal" love because love is the wonderful discovery of the "person" in "man," of the personal and unique in the common and general. It is the discovery in each man of that which is "lovable" in him, of that which is from God.

The Hanging Vigil above the Royal Doors of the iconostasis is supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her sister and brother-in-law Margaret and Robert Stefanko.

The Vigils on the Tetrapod are supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her parents, sisters, brothers, husband, nephew and stepfather.

The votives in front of the iconostasis, on the candle stands and in front of the icons in the nave are supported by Andrew & Louise Tocimak in loving memory of George Tocimak.