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Sunday, February 5, 2012

Commemorations Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. Afterfeast of the Meeting. Repose of St. Theodosius of Chernigov (1696). Beginning of the Lenten Triodion. Holy Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily (251). Martyr Theodula of Anazarbus in Cilicia, and with her Martyrs Helladius, Macarius and Evagrius (ca. 304). Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, "SEARCH OF THE LOST."

Among the Saints **The Holy Virgin Martyr Agatha** was the fifteen year old daughter of rich and respected Christian parents from the city of Palermo in Sicily. During the persecution under the Emperor Decius (249-251), the city prefect of Catania, Quintianus, having heard about Agatha's wealth and beauty, sent his soldiers after her to bring her to trial as a Christian. At Catania they housed the saint with a certain rich woman, who had five daughters. They all attempted to tempt St. Agatha with fine clothes, amusements and entertainment, urging her to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, but the saint disdained all these things. The more they tried to move her, the more resolute she became. She prayed that she might soon face martyrdom. During her interrogation under Quintianus, the holy martyr was swayed neither by the flattery, nor by the threats, and she was subjected to cruel torments. They also tried to remove her breasts with metal tongs, and when this failed, they used knives. The holy Apostle Peter appeared to her in prison and healed her wounds. St. Agatha was led to torture again, and Quintianus was astonished to see her completely healed, with no trace of cutting. Then the torture began once more. At this moment an earthquake took place in the city, and many buildings were destroyed. Among those killed were two of Quintianus' advisors. The terrified inhabitants rushed to Quintianus, demanding an end to Agatha's tortures. Fearing a revolt by the people, Quintianus sent St. Agatha back to prison. There the martyr, offering thanks to God, peacefully surrendered her soul to the Lord.

MANY YEARS

To Mila Core, Elizabeth Robbins, Gust Macera, and Debbie Seeds on the occasion of their birthdays.

FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Fr. Michael, Fr. Stephen and Matushka Deborah, Fr. Michael, Matushka Ruth Kuchta, Mary Evelyn, Greg and their unborn son, Simeon, Erica and her newborn son Antonio, Sarah and her newborn son, Luke Michael, Luba, Sarah and Randy, Stephen, Xenia and Ron, Nina, Jackson Gregory and the Shaw family, Chrissy, Harvey, Evie, George,

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Allene, Alex, Helen, Cathy, William, James, Billie, Young William, and Timothy, Helen, Lois, Ann, Elizabeth, Robert, Frank, Jason, Dorothy and Randy.

Eternal memory

Michael, Mary, Rita, Olga, George, Julie, Maria, Jane, and Maria

Schedule of Services and Activities

Wednesday, Feb. 8 th	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, Feb. 11 th	6:00 PM	Vespers with General Confession Service
Sunday, Feb. 12 th	9:30 AM	Divine Liturgy-Prodigal Son
Saturday, Feb. 18 th	6:00 PM	Great Vespers
Sunday, Feb. 19 th	9:30 AM	Divine Liturgy-Meatfare Sunday; Last Judgement

Coffee Hour Hosts

February 12:	Robbins, Gossman, Mustric
February 19:	Kankia, Hancock, Conroy
February 26:	Brown, Czaruk, Pawlack
March 4:	Liturgy at The Greek Cathedral

Greeters

February 12:	Bronwyn Lewis, Emily Pawlack, and Nina Frase
February 19:	Sophia Stayer and Alexandra Ambrose
February 26:	Abigail Jogan and Rebecca Jogan
March 4:	Liturgy at The Greek Cathedral

NEWS, NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

HOME BLESSINGS are continuing. Please contact Fr. Matthew (if you have not done so already) if you would like to have your home blessed. It is Father's hope to have home blessings complete before the start of Great Lent, which is February 27th.

THANKS to the following who were sponsors for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple: Fr. Daniel and Victor Rentel, Karen Brown and Barbara Gossman. They provided a wonderful meal that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. God bless them for their kindness!

FEBRUARY IS FUND RAISING MONTH FOR STEPHEN GIDUS Several fund raising events are occurring this month to help Stephen Gidus defray the cost of his cancer treatment in Germany. The cost of the treatment is not covered by insurance so this young family must bear the burden of this by themselves. We are helping by sponsoring several events.

- Next Sunday, February 12 we will host a luncheon after church. 100% of your free will donations will go directly to Stephen. We were very fortunate to have all the food donated.
- Also on this Sunday, Jodi Moriak will have her Lia Sophia jewelry on display. All the profits from the sale of this lovely jewelry will go towards helping Stephen.
- For the month of February all donations placed in the Charities Box will go towards the fund.

Please support us in one or all of these events so we can help ease their financial burden.

The parishioners at St. Gregory's are the most generous we have ever encountered and we are thankful for your support. Please contact Cathy Vrugitz if you have any questions or if you would like to help in any way.

Thank you so much. Fund Raising Committee

SCOUT SUNDAY Today, scouts all over the United States will celebrate National Scout Sunday. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas has designated this as Orthodox Scout Sunday. Through the Eastern

Orthodox Committee on Scouting, the Assembly and its predecessor, SCOBA, have been actively supporting both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the USA since the 1960s. Orthodox Scouts may earn one of the three age-appropriate religious awards: St. George for the youngest scouts, Chi-Rho for the “middle years”, and Alpha-Omega for the older scouts. Read about the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting on the web site:

www.eocs.org

BLESSINGS TO ALL GODPARENTS ON GODPARENTS DAY! The Bookstore would like to thank Susan Ruh for all her kind help with the bookstore, her generous donations, and for her dedicated cataloging of our inventory. We wish her all the best in her new beginning in a new home and town. The store may seek out her help with projects in the future (not so easy to leave us). We’ll miss you, Susan! Pray for us and visit us whenever you can. (Bookstore: sgnbookstore@stgregs.info) (Mary Conroy)

ADULT GREETERS NEEDED The adult greeters group is in need of a few more welcoming people to help with Sunday Greeting. The young girls will continue handing out bulletins and opening the door, but we need to have a friendly adult there to say hello and answer any questions a visitor might have when first coming to St. Gregory’s. A group of 5-6 people to help with this responsibility is needed so you would only have to come to Church early (around 9:15) once every 4-6 weeks. If you have any questions or are interested please see Kyra Shaluha or Fr. Matthew.

PROSFORA BAKING Those who had volunteered to begin baking prosfora are invited to participate in a “workshop” with Fr. Matthew and Sub-Deacon John on Saturday, February 18th at approximately 2 PM. If you are interested in baking and cannot attend that day, please let Fr. Matthew know. We would like to have as many new bakers ready by the beginning of Lent as possible.

REFLECTION—*by Fr. Michael Chendorain, pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Rockaway, NJ*

Most people find it an interesting and surprising piece of trivia to learn that I am an Eagle Scout. To this day, I am still surprised by the reaction I receive when people discover that about me. Yes, at age 17, I received Boy Scouting’s highest honor. After all those merit badges, summer camps, meetings, Klondike Derbys and re-creating Camp Nazareth’s Beatitude Trail on the grounds of my home parish in Phoenixville as my Eagle Project, I managed to pull it off and finish the course. Scouting (boy and girl) and the Orthodox Faith share so much in common. The Scout Law (their ‘creed’ if you will) has 12 tenets much like the Nicene Creed reveals the 12 tenets of The Faith. Both institutions teach discipline and order so that they may function to carry out their respective goals. Orthodox Christianity requires its faithful to put into practice the commandments of Christ so that we orient our lives towards becoming Christ-like. Scouting encourages its participants (young and old) to openly practice the ideals of service to others before self in an honest effort to open oneself up to receiving more by giving of one’s own time, talent and treasure. Orthodoxy and Scouting both have core principals, each to its own, although very much similar. It is from these core principals, beliefs and teachings that neither will stray. And while the Church has been under attack for millennia over its professions of faith, the Boy Scouts are now facing the politically correct winds of secularism for core elements that are fundamental to their remaining true to who and what they are. In my humble opinion, scouting is Orthodoxy in action. Though I honestly never thought of it like this when I was a scout, scouting gave me the chance to witness to my particular faith in the presence of those who were of a different faith or no faith altogether. As a scout, I could practice the corporal acts of mercy and charity unto the least of my brethren and wear a cool uniform while doing it. I was earning badges and advancing in rank, but I realize now the things I did to earn those achievements were the very things I should have been doing in the first place as an Orthodox Christian. Scouting is the active fulfillment of missionary work. Boy/girl scouts are taught to be stewards of God’s creation. It is more than a club or organization, exactly what we should strive to keep the Church from becoming. If kept in perspective with our Orthodox Faith, I believe scouting is another viable example of what it means to be an Orthodox Christian while participating in a secular institution. I applaud our Orthodox youth who have been in scouts and I encourage our youth who are presently in scouts. Your participation in this worthwhile group should not be dismissed because a few people who want to impose their will upon the scouts and you should never compromise the ideals for which the scouts stand. Stand united with one another and witness to the tenets and

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teaching of scouting and you are witnessing for your faith as well.

THE GOSPEL READING FOR CHILDREN

This morning, we are honoring our Godparents on Godparent Sunday. Our Godparents help us to learn about our faith, and are good examples for us. In the Gospel today, Jesus tells a story about someone else setting a good example. Jesus tells a story about two men who went to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a Publican. A Pharisee was someone who was a religious leader at the time. A Publican was another name for a tax-collector. Tax-collectors were not very popular people, and often times cheated people out of their money. While they were praying, the Pharisee was bragging about all of the good things that he did. Does that sound like good prayer to you? Then, he notices the Publican, who is praying in a very different way. He is kneeling, not even looking up, and he asking for the Lord to have mercy on him because he was a sinner. That sounds a lot more like good prayer, doesn't it? I mean, after all, think of how many times we say "Lord have mercy" when we pray in Church? Now, while this was only a story that Jesus told, think of it a different way. Think of that Publican as being someone we talked about last week: Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a tax-collector. Imagine, after having met with Jesus in his own home, running to the temple to pray, and continuing to repent, only for this Pharisee to stand before him and judge him. That's an important lesson for all of us to keep in mind. When we brag, and when we judge other people, we have no idea whether or not that person has already been forgiven by God. When you pray, follow the example of the Publican: be humble, don't brag, and ask the Lord for mercy.



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

GENERAL CONFESSION, except during the period of Great Lent, is held on the second Saturday of each month, directly after vespers. Those Orthodox Christians who receive Holy Communion on a regular basis are expected to participate in this sacrament of Reconciliation.

ST. GREGORY'S PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO THOSE IN NEED through a Saturday lunch program and other related services. Parishioners are encouraged to decline requests from individuals asking assistance. Instead, these persons may be redirected to Charles Robbins for assistance.

DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS SICK, HOSPITALIZED, OR A SHUT-IN? Please let Fr. Matthew know at frmatthewll@hotmail.com or 614-882-6036. Please keep in mind that due to privacy policies, visitations can be made only if the patient or a family member makes a request. If Fr. Matthew cannot be in attendance, please call Fr. Stephen.

THE PRAYER GROUP prays for those in need several times a day. Please submit names to Connie Wargo at cgw00728@yahoo.com.

ST. ELIZABETH GROUP, under the patronage of St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, will send cards to parishioners and others who are seriously ill, hospitalized or unable to leave home. Our hope is that the group will flourish in acts of kindness and service. Members of the Committee are Kathy Johnson, Ann Marie Mecera, Cathy Vrugitz, Joyce Henkel, Marsha Mitchell, Luba Ambrose and Betty Vincent. Fr. Matthew will notify the Committee when he receives necessary information.

GENERAL PARISH CONCERNS can be submitted and discussed at monthly Parish Council meetings. Those who have a topic of concern may contact the rector, one of the attached clergy or Lay Vice Chair Ann Marie Mecera to set up a time to attend a Parish Council meeting. Parish Council does not address issues of concern via e-mail due to privacy issues, sensitivity of some topics and the potential for misunderstandings.

COLLEGE STUDENTS: Make St. Gregory's your spiritual home away from home. Join with us in fellowship. Questions about the parish and/or our outreach to students maybe directed to Fr. Stephen Frase: frstephenfrase@yahoo.com or 614-786-7166; or to Subdeacon Joseph Shaluha at: 614.532.0332. Two or More Discussion leaders this year are Greg and Mary Evelyn Smith. Meet them in the upper room with questions.

THE ENTRANTS' GROUP under the direction of Fr. Stephen Frase, welcomes those who are interested in learning more about the Orthodox faith.

CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12 should be accompanied by an adult when going upstairs during services. Also, after services, they should not be in the sanctuary or other parts of the church property unaccompanied during coffee hour. This policy is designed to protect them, particularly due to our urban setting. Thank you for your understanding and adherence to this policy.

THANK YOU for choosing to worship with us on the Lord's Day. We're grateful for your prayers and participation. By our liturgy and His love, the Lord Jesus Christ comes to us in Holy Eucharist. Receiving Him, we become members of His Body. In respect for other persuasions, Holy Communion is offered only to Orthodox believers.

Please come back as often as you are able. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return. If you would like a St. Gregory of Nyssa "Welcome Packet" please ask a greeter. Greeters will answer immediate questions you might have.