



SS. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

9230 Old Bustleton Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19115

Church Phone: 215-676-3311

Pastor: Father Stephen Siniari

Rectory Phone: 1-609-385-3757



Church Bulletin ~ September 2009

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful

Excerpts From The Letter Of A Pregnant Nun Who Was Raped I Am Lucy (One of the young nuns raped by Serbian soldiers)

Mother,

I am writing to you after what happened to my sisters, Tatian, Sandrai, and me...

Allow me not to go into the details of the act. There are some experiences in life so atrocious that you cannot tell them to anyone but God...

My drama is not so much the humiliation that I suffered as a woman, not the incurable offense committed against my vocation as a religious, but the difficulty of having to incorporate into my faith an event that certainly forms part of the mysterious will of Him who I have always considered my Divine Spouse.

Only a few days before I asked our Lord to grant me the grace of joining the ranks of those who died a martyr of Him.

God took me at my word, but in such a horrid way. Now I find myself lost in the anguish of internal darkness. He has destroyed the plans of my life which I considered definitive and uplifting for me and He has set me all of a sudden in this design of His that I feel incapable of grasping...

It was already daytime when I awoke and my first thought was the agony of Christ in the Garden...

Inside of me a terrible battle unleashed...

I asked myself why God had permitted me to be rent, destroyed precisely in what had been the meaning of my life, but also I asked to what new vocation He was calling me.

I made the sign of the cross and began reciting in my head the liturgical hymns...

What is my suffering, Mother, and the offense I received compared to the suffering and the offense of the One from whom I had a thousand times sworn to give my life.

I accept this dishonor that I suffered and I entrust it to the mercy of God.

The Lord had admitted me into the mystery of shame.

He has accorded me the privilege of being acquainted with evil in the depths of its diabolical force.

God has chosen me.

May He forgive my presumption to guide the most humble of my people towards the dawn of redemption and freedom.

They can no longer doubt the sincerity of my words, because I come, as they do, from the outskirts of revilement and profanation.

That night in which I was terrorized by the Serbs for hours and hours I repeated to myself: You must not die because you have been chosen to be part of the day...

I have been made to swallow a terrible pill...

The child will be mine and no one else's... I know that I could entrust him to other people, but he, though I neither asked for him nor expected him... he has a right to my love as his mother...

A plant should never be torn from its roots. The grain of wheat fallen in the furrow has to grow there, where the mysterious, though iniquitous sower threw it.

I will fulfill my religious vocation another way.

I will go with my child, I do not know where, but God, who broke all of a sudden my greatest joy, will indicate the path I must tread in order to do His will.

Someone has to break the chain of hatred...

And so, I will teach my child only one thing: Love.

The child born of violence will be a witness along with me that the only greatness that gives honor to a human being is forgiveness.

Through the Kingdom of Christ for the Glory of God.

(Thanks to Reader Viktor for sharing this letter with our community)

Special Announcements from Fr. Stephen

***** Father Stephen may be reached at 609-385-3757, Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM or by e-mail: ssiniari@covenanthouse.org**

Please remember that all confessions and consultations on Sunday mornings shall take place from 9 AM to 10 AM before the Divine Liturgy. Thank you.

Holy Days and Name Days in September

- ✦ **September 5** - Prophet Zachariah & Righteous Elizabeth; St Athanasius of Brest
- ✦ **September 8** - Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos
- ✦ **September 9** - Righteous Joachim and Anna
- ✦ **September 13** - Founding of Church of Holy Sepulchre; Hieromartyr Cornelius
- ✦ **September 14** - Exaltation (Elevation) of the Precious and Life Giving Cross
- ✦ **September 17** - Martyr Sophia and her daughters, Faith, Hope, and Love
- ✦ **September 23** - Conception of St John the Baptist; Virginmartyr Irais (Rhais)
- ✦ **September 24** - Protomartyr Thekla; Martyr Peter the Aleut; Martyr Juvenal of Alaska
- ✦ **September 25** - Repose of Ven Sergius of Radonezh; Ven Euphrosyne
- ✦ **September 26** - Repose of St John the Theologian
- ✦ **September 28** - Martyr Wenceslaus, Prince of the Czechs; Ven Chariton
- ✦ **September 30** - Hieromartyr Gregory, Bishop of Armenia

Martyr Wenceslaus, Prince of the Czechs

(Commemorated September 28)

The Holy Prince Wenceslaus (Vyacheslav) of the Czechs was a grandson of the holy Martyr and Princess Ludmilla (September 16), and he was raised by her in deep piety. He began to rule at age eighteen after the death of his father Prince Bratislav (+ 920).

In spite of his youthful age, he ruled wisely and justly and concerned himself much about the Christian enlightenment of the people. The holy prince was a widely educated man, and he studied in the Latin and Greek languages.



St Wenceslaus was peace-loving. He built and embellished churches, and in Prague, the Czech capital, he raised up a magnificent church in the name of St Vitus, and he had respect for the clergy. Envious nobles decided to murder the saint and, at first, to incite his mother against him, and later to urge his younger brother, Boleslav, to occupy the princely throne.

Boleslav invited his brother to the dedication of a church, and then asked him to stay another day. In spite of the warnings of his servants, the holy prince refused to believe in a conspiracy and exposed his life to the will of God. On the following day, September 28, 935, when Wenceslaus went to Matins, he was wickedly murdered at the doors of the church by his own brother and his brother's servants. His body was stabbed and discarded without burial.

The mother, hearing of the murder of her son, found and placed his body in a recently consecrated church at the princely court. They

were not able to wash off the blood splashed on the church doors, but after three days it disappeared by itself.

After repenting of his sin, the murderer transferred the relics of St Wenceslaus to Prague, where they were placed in the church of St Vitus, which the martyr himself had constructed (the transfer of the relics of St Wenceslaus is celebrated on March 4). The memory of Prince Wenceslaus has been honored from of old in the Russian Orthodox Church.

~ Reading & Icon Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~

✚✚✚ Events & Announcements ✚✚✚

Liturgical Schedule - September/October 2009

✚ EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 - Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

Schedule of Other Services

BIBLE STUDY - EVERY WEDNESDAY - 7 PM - 8:30 PM in the Church Hall - Bible Study led by **Fr. Dn. Gregory**. The title for the Bible Study is "*Seeking the Treasure of Christ Throughout Scripture*." The study will use the new Orthodox Study Bible of the Old and New Testament as a base. The first topic of discussion will be the meaning of the story of Adam and Eve and the discussions will proceed with a journey through the Hebrew Bible.

Church News & Reminders

◇ **MEMBERSHIP DUES 2009** - **Please note: THE CHURCH FISCAL YEAR ENDS SEPTEMBER 30TH;** *if at all possible, please have your dues of \$125 per person paid by that time.* Dues can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

◇ **ICON PLEDGES** - Can be paid at any time to our treasurer, James Schaeffer. **Please note:** *when returning your Icons, please return them to the Church Store. You will be given a receipt for all Icons returned.* **All icons are to be returned by the end of September.**

◇ **SPECIAL SERVICES** - If you are planning to have a special service in the Church, please be considerate and notify either Father Stephen or the Church Committee one week in advance. When you are planning for a Baptism, Wedding, Funeral, or any other Prayer Service in the Church, please speak with Father Stephen in advance to determine if there is any way you can contribute to help the Church in helping others. Thank you. **Please note:** *if the services of the Church Choir are required, please notify the Choir Director, Christina Murianka, as soon as possible.*

Memorials: Any help in setting up and cleaning up from the families involved is truly appreciated and welcomed by the Ladies Society.

◇ **NO SMOKING/NO CELL PHONES** - Please remember that SS Peter & Paul has a no smoking policy in the building and that ringers on cell phones should be off during the Divine Liturgy.

◇ **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** - Monday, September 14, 7 PM. All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

The Joy of Giving

◇ **PASTORAL FUND COLLECTION** - Collections for the Pastoral Fund will take place every 3rd Sunday of the month. Please donate generously. "Pastoral Fund" donation envelopes are found in the Church foyer, on the left side of the glass partition, should you wish to donate at another time.

◇ **CHURCH LIBRARY DONATIONS** - We are greatly in need of monetary donations for buying books to establish our Church Library to help all of us continue to learn about the Orthodox Faith. Any amount is truly appreciated and can be given to our Treasurer, James Schaeffer, at any time. *May God bless you for your generosity!*

◇ **COLLECTION FOR THE POOR** - A special collection for the poor will be held on the 1st Sunday of every month. Please plan to give generously every month to those whose lives are less fortunate than ours. Donations can also be placed in the **Poor Box** at any time.

◇ **ORTHODOX HERALD COLLECTION** - Collections for the *Orthodox Herald* will take place every 2nd Sunday of the month. Please donate generously.

◇ **DONATIONS OF WINE & OIL** - Altar wine and virgin olive oil for the altar lamps are always needed. The name of the altar wine is **Mavrodaphne of Patras** and it is available at most PA State Stores. Please help make sure that we always have a plentiful supply.

◇ **POP TAB COLLECTION PRGRAM FOR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE** - **RJ** (and his parents, Debbie & Bob Krimetz) is collecting flip tabs from any aluminum cans to donate to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. *Help by bringing your tabs! Thank you!*

◇ **PASTORAL FUND BOX/POOR BOX** - Please note: There are now 2 collection boxes in the back of the church, **the Poor Box AND a Pastoral Fund Box.** *Please donate generously!*

Sunday School News

◇ **START OF SUNDAY SCHOOL** - ***Sunday, September 13, 2009***

Ladies Society News

◇ **A REQUEST...** if you have borrowed any containers, trays, bowls, coffee carafes, etc. from the kitchen, ***please return them as soon as possible.*** These items are used for many of the functions held in the Church Hall and they are needed. *Thank you!*

Events at SS Peter & Paul

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL ANNUAL CLAM BAKE** - **CANCELLED** for September 19. Further information to come.

◇ **FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION** - ***Tentatively scheduled for October 24 - 25*** - A celebration of 30 years for the Consecration and Dedication of our current building and 90 years for the Dedication and choosing the name of SS Peter and Paul. *More information to follow shortly!*

Events of Interest

◇ **9/11 INTERFAITH CEREMONY OF PRAYER, PEACE, AND REMEMBRANCE** - **Thursday, September 10, 7:00 PM** - cohosted by Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church (BVM), 9220 Old Bustleton Ave. and Temple Beth Ami Synagogue (TBA), 9201 Old Bustleton Ave. *This ceremony will start promptly at 7:00 PM at BVM in the Lower Church.* After a brief service, the participants will process down the street to Temple Beth Ami to conclude the services. *Everyone is invited to come together to remember and pray.*

◇ **FALL RETREAT AT CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION, ELKINS PARK** - **Saturday, October 17, 9 AM - 1:30 PM** - Fr Luka A. Veronix will be speaking on the topic "Lessons from a Turn-Around Church". The registration fee is \$20 (\$5 for students) before 10/15 and \$25 (\$5 for students) at the door. Light refreshments in the morning and lunch are included. Registration forms are available in our Church Hall, or you can download a pdf version of the flyer with the registration form:

<http://homepage.mac.com/aliciaj17/RetreatFrVeronis.pdf>

General Interest

◇ **ANCIENT FAITH RADIO** - **24 hour a day internet Orthodox radio station:**

<http://ancientfaithradio.com>

◇ **ALBANIAN FORUM ON THE INTERNET (FORUMI SHQIPTAR)** - Ne gjuhen shqipe: per te dhena informative mbi Kishen Orthodhokse, klikoni "Komuniteti Orthodhoks" ne uebsajten Forumi Shqiptar me poshte: **www.forumishqiptar.com/forumdisplay.php?f=186**

Miscellaneous

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH STORE** - Open Sundays at 9:30 AM (1/2 hour before Divine Liturgy)
Items available: Divine Liturgy Books, Icons; Crosses (Baptismal, lapel pins, Georgian style, orthodox); Prayerbooks (Georgian and English); Censors; Unique and different wearing apparel; CDs and cassettes; Religious Books

◇ **SS PETER & PAUL HAS A NEW WEBSITE** - **The new url is: www.sspeterpaulalbanianorthodox.org.** We will be gradually phasing out the current website. If you have any news or announcements that you would like to see up on the new website, please e-mail David Biando at davidbiando@verizon.net or call him at 215-725-3797 and he will post it ASAP. Suggestions are always welcomed.

◇ **WEB PAGE/E-MAILS** - SS Peter & Paul Webpage: <http://homepage.mac.com/aliciaj17/sspeterpaulhome1.html>. New Bulletins available online by Saturday 8 PM. If you would like to be kept up-to-date by e-mail or to be removed from our "paper" mailing list, please send Alicia an e-mail at: aliciaj17@mac.com

◇ **ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS ABOUT PARISHIONERS** - If you have any items to include in next month's Bulletin, please see Alicia or call her at 215-742-0492 or e-mail: aliciaj17@mac.com. *The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, **September 27**.* Thank you! *Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday **10/4/09**.* Bulletins will be mailed to any Parishioners unable to attend.

Please remember to let Alicia know the names of our members who are ill or in need of prayer so that they can be included in our Bulletins.

◇ **Thank You** to all members of the Parish who have helped out or volunteered in any way with their time and efforts, and a very special **thank you** to anyone whose name was inadvertently omitted from the Bulletin.

Parishioner's Corner



◇ **A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY** is wished to the following parishioners and friends who are celebrating **August** Birthdays: Richard Burdumy, Brunilda Gepele, Elizabeth Hansburg, David Lane

May God grant them all many, many years!

◇ **SINCEREST CONGRATULATIONS TO SOPHIE & JOE BACON** who celebrated **50 years** of marital bliss on September 5th! *May God grant Sophie and Joe good health and many years!*

◇ **GREGORY VRATO, SR.**, is at the **John Neumann Nursing Home**, Room 726, at the intersection of Haldeman & Tomlinson Road (make a right on Tomlinson and the parking lot is immediately on your right). Visitors are welcome anytime from noon to 8:00 PM.

Please continue to keep Gregory in your prayers. May God grant him good health!

Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers

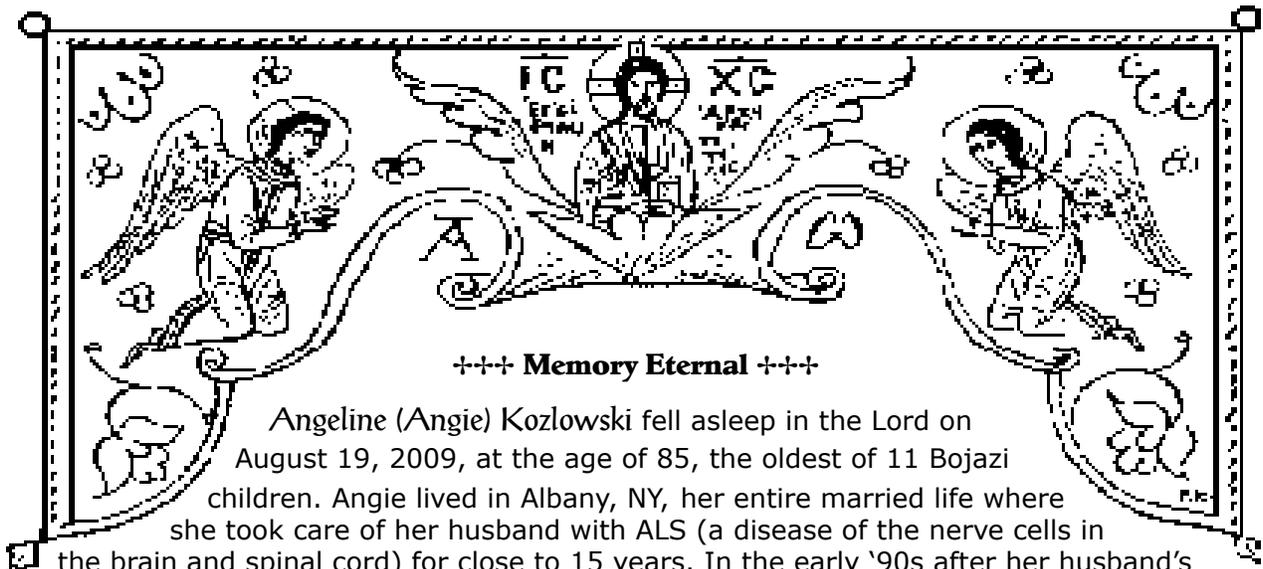
Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of: **Gregory Vreto, Sr., Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Al Rifkin, Sophie Bacon, James Vesho, Margot Craig, Eteri Okropiridze, Katherine Halkedis, Mary Ann Clark, Paulette Steffa, Alexandra Pana, Nicholas Desloges**

*** **God knows the names and ages of all who need His love and mercy...**

+++ Memory Eternal +++

† Elena (Nina) Horowitz fell asleep in the Lord on July 19, 2009. A sweet and gentle lady, Nina was a true believer and an avid churchgoer until her pain made it impossible for her to come to Church. She always had a smile and greetings for everyone and helped out whenever she could. Nina's gracious manner and her warmth will always be cherished and remembered by the Parishioners of SS Peter and Paul. Nina's 40-Day Memorial was held on August 30th.

May her memory be eternal!



+++ **Memory Eternal** +++

Angeline (Angie) Kozlowski fell asleep in the Lord on August 19, 2009, at the age of 85, the oldest of 11 Bojazi children. Angie lived in Albany, NY, her entire married life where she took care of her husband with ALS (a disease of the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord) for close to 15 years. In the early '90s after her husband's death, she move back to Philly (a place she always considered "home") to be closer to her siblings. When she required assisted living, Angie moved to NJ to be closer to her sons, but deeply missed family, friends, all the folk of SS Peter and Paul, and especially all the ethnic foods. The family (which includes 2 sons, 3 grandsons, and one great-grandson) always fondly referred to her as "Geka" (their translation of her name in Albanian). Her quiet ways, her charming personality, her generous nature, and her deep caring will always be lovingly remembered, cherished, and sadly missed by family, friends, and church members.

The 40-Day Memorial for Angie will be on September 27th.
May her memory be eternal!



Troparion for Saints Peter and Paul

**O Leaders of the Apostles
And Evangelizers of the World
Intercede with Christ our God
To grant Peace to the World
And Salvation to our Souls**

