



SS Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church
9230 Old Bustleton Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19115
Church Phone: 215-676-3311

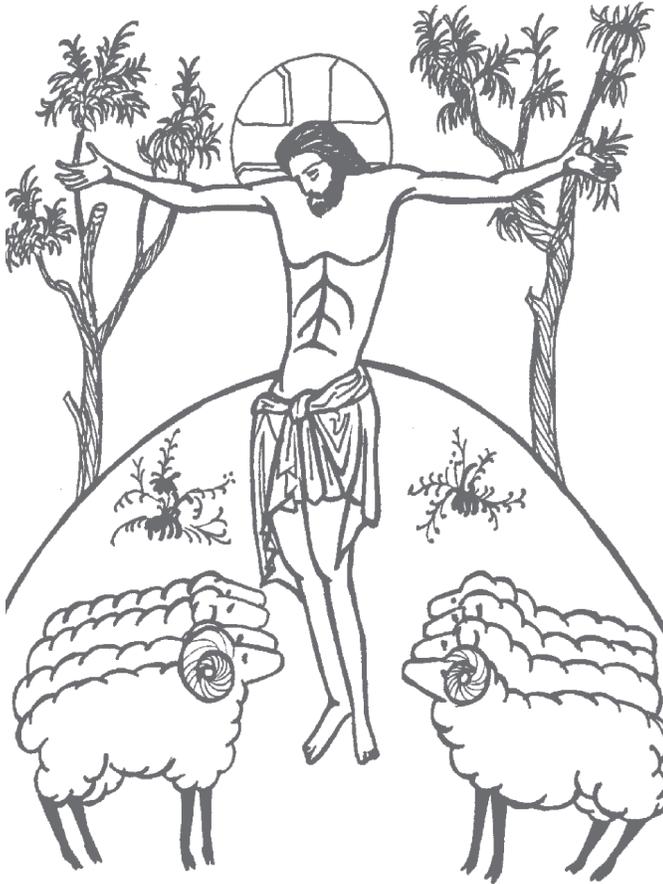
Pastor: Father Stephen Siniari
Rectory Phone: 1-609-385-3757



Church Bulletin ~ May 2007

Father Stephen's Message to the Faithful
23rd Psalm - A Psalm of David

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;



He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters;

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

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!

Events & Announcements

Liturgical Schedule - March/April/May 2007

HOLY ASCENSION THURSDAY - MAY 17 - **Divine Liturgy, 9 AM**

HOLY PENTECOST - SUNDAY, MAY 27 - **Divine Liturgy, 10 AM**

SS PETER & PAUL FEAST DAY - FRIDAY, JUNE 29 - **Divine Liturgy, 9 AM**

Church News & Reminders

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2007 - Dues are **\$115** per person and can be paid at any time to James Schaeffer, our Treasurer. *Thank you!*

ICON PLEDGES - Pledges can still be made *by contacting the treasurer, James Schaeffer or Stephen Murianka with the Saint's name and the amount. **Please note:** when returning your Icons, please return them to the treasurer, James Schaeffer.*

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - To be announced (usually the 1st Mon of each month). All Parishioners are welcome to attend.

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.*

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.

The Joy of Giving

CASSEROLES FOR THE HOMELESS - **In April:** *12 casseroles and 1 bag with razors and personal items were delivered. Disposable razors and individual/small tubes of hand lotion are still needed.* Please continue to help feed the hungry. Frozen casseroles are collected on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month by Harry Halkedis. A \$10 donation for casseroles can be given at any time. *Thank you!*

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.

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.

POP TAB COLLECTION PRGRAM FOR RONALD McDONALD HOUSE - RJ (with the help of his parents, Debbie & Bob Krimetz) is collecting flip tabs from soda cans, soup and vegetable cans, dog food cans, and any aluminum cans with flip tabs to donate to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. **A container has been placed upstairs in the Church Hall for the tabs.** *Help RJ help the Ronald McDonald House! Thank you and remember to bring your tabs!*

Sunday School News

REMINDER TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SUNDAY SCHOOL - We are still collecting snack bag items for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Please bring in your donations **by next Sunday, May 6th**, so the children can start assembling the bags. Any questions, please contact Greg or Rose Shaloka.

Ladies' Society News

MAY OR JUNE (Date to be Announced) ~ **Hot Roast Beef Sandwich Sunday**

General Interest

ANCIENT FAITH RADIO - 24 hour a day *Orthodox radio station* providing high quality internet-based Orthodox programming, music, teaching, interviews, features, convert testimonies, conference recordings, and much more! The URL is: **<http://ancientfaithradio.com>**

Miscellaneous

WEB PAGE/E-MAILS - SS Peter & Paul Webpage: **<http://homepage.mac.com/alicaj17/sspeterpaulhome1.html>**. New Bulletins can be viewed the Saturday before distribution by 7 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 me an e-mail at: **alicaj17@mac.com**

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS ABOUT PARISHIONERS - If you have any items to include in next month's Bulletin, please leave the information in my wicker basket in the office. Or, call Alicia at **215-742-0492** or e-mail: **alicaj17@mac.com**. The deadline for the next Bulletin is Sunday, **May 27**. Thank you! Parishioners will be able to pick up the Bulletins at the Church on Sunday **6/3/07**. 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 **May Birthdays**: **Letitia Desloges, Olga Gorskaya, Haralambos Halkedis, Nina Iakimenko, George Kendro, Aleksandra Liberman, Dhimiter Maskuti**

May God grant them all many, many years!

SOPHIE BACON is recuperating from a broken arm.

Please keep Sophie in your prayers! May God grant her a speedy recovery!

A VERY HAPPY AND BLESSED MOTHER'S DAY to all of our Mothers, Grandmothers, Great-Grandmothers, Aunts, and to all of the women in our lives who have been like Mothers to us.

May God grant them all many, many years!

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU to all of our Parishioners who helped in any way with their time and efforts or with donations during Great Lent and Pascha.

A very special thank you to Fr Stephen Siniari, Fr Gregory Dudash, Fr Dn Gregory Vrato and all the Readers for their participation in the Lenten and Pascha Services

A very special thank you to Belinda Mentzer and all her helpers (*Lester Speero, Alexandra Murianka, Haralambos Halkedis, Sally O'Brien, Paulette Steffa, Joe Bacon*) for arranging all the flowers, and to *Mary Jaxheimer* and *Priftesha Margot Siniari* for helping with the palm crosses

A very special thank you to the following Parishioners who helped set up our beautiful Epitaphios: *Janet Caparros (Bachelor), Diane Miller (Bachelor), Kristen Miller, Jan Miller, Edna Bachelor and Elizabeth Waynshteyn*

A very special thank you and commendation to Christina Murianka and the entire SS Peter & Paul Choir for the beautiful singing at every service

A very special thank you to Martha Murianka, Nina Iakimenko, Spiro and all other Parishioners for all their help with the linens and with the cleaning

Last, but not least, a truly special thank you and deep gratitude to Stephen-Murianka for all his help and services not only during the Pascha Season but all through the year

May God grant them all many, 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!

Baptism of Grace Sophia Vrato

The Baptism of *Grace Sophia*,
daughter of Fr Dn Gregory and Kathryn Vrato,

will be celebrated on **April 29th** at Noon.
All Parishioners are welcome to attend the Baptism.

Light refreshments and cake will be available
on Sunday, May 6th, after Divine Liturgy
for the celebration with our Parish Family.

May God grant Grace Sophia many, many years!

Let Us Keep Them in our Prayers

Please continue to pray for the full and speedy recovery of: **Gregory Vreto, Sr., Nina Horowitz, Spiro Costas, Harry Cappo, Matthew Murianka, Joyce Dorsey, Andi Steffa, Martha Murianka, John Palmerick, Thimi Daka, Helen Arndt, Al Rifkin, Sophie Bacon, Fr Stephen Siniari**

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

Holy Days and Name Days in May

- May 1 - Prophet Jeremiah; St Tamara of Georgia
- May 3 - Venerable Theodosius of Kiev
- May 5 - Great Martyr Irene of Thessalonica
- May 6 - Sunday of the Samaritan Woman; Righteous Job the Longsuffering
- May 7 - Repose of St Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre
- May 8 - Holy Apostle John the Theologian
- May 9 - Prophet Isaiah
- May 10 - Apostle Simeon the Zealot
- May 11 - SS Cyril & Methodius, Apostles to the Slavs
- May 13 - Sunday of the Blind Man
- May 14 - St Isidore of Chios; St Isidore, Fool-for-Christ of Rostov
- May 15 - St Pachomius the Great
- May 16 - Leavetaking of Pascha; Forefeast of Ascension
- May 17 - Ascension of Our Lord

- May 20 - Relics of St Aleksy, Metropolitan of Moscow
- May 21 - St Constantine Equal-to-the-Apostles & his Mother Helen
- May 25 - 3rd Finding of the Head of St John the Baptist
- May 26 - Memorial Saturday of the Holy Forefathers
- May 27 - Holy Pentecost
- May 28 - Day of the Holy Spirit; St Germaine of Paris
- May 29 - Blessed John of Ustiug

Right-believing Tamara, Queen of Georgia

In 1166 a daughter, Tamara, was born to King George III (1155– 1184) and Queen Burdukhan of Georgia. The king proclaimed that he would share the throne with his daughter from the day she turned twelve years of age. Father and daughter ruled the country together for five years. After King George’s death in 1184, Queen Tamara was enthroned as ruler of all Georgia at the age of eighteen. She is called “King” in the Georgian language because her father had no male heir and so she ruled as a monarch and not as a consort.



At the beginning of her reign, Tamara convened a Church council and addressed the clergy with wisdom and humility: “Judge according to righteousness, affirming good and condemning evil,” she advised. “Begin with me—if I sin I should be censured, for the royal crown is sent down from above as a sign of divine service. Allow neither the wealth of the nobles nor the poverty of the masses to hinder your work. You by word and I by deed, you by preaching and I by the law, you by upbringing and I by education will care for those souls whom God has entrusted to us, and together we will abide by the law of God, in order to escape eternal condemnation.... You as priests and I as ruler, you as stewards of good and I as the watchman of that good.”

After this initial victory the Georgian army launched into a series of triumphs over the Turks, and neighboring countries began to regard Georgia as the protector of the entire Transcaucasus. By the beginning the 13th century, Georgia was commanding a political authority recognized by both the Christian West and the Muslim East.

Georgia’s military successes alarmed the Islamic world. Sultan Rukn al-Din was certain that a united Muslim force could definitively decide the issue of power in the region, and he marched on Georgia around the year 1203, commanding an enormous army. Having encamped near Basiani, Rukn al-Din sent a messenger to Queen Tamara with an audacious demand: to surrender without a fight. In reward for her obedience, the sultan promised to marry her on the condition that she embrace Islam; if Tamara were to cleave to Christianity, he would number her among the other unfortunate concubines in his harem. When the messenger relayed the sultan’s

demand, a certain nobleman, Zakaria Mkhargrdzelidze, was so outraged that he slapped him on the face, knocking him unconscious.

At Queen Tamara's command, the court generously bestowed gifts upon the ambassador and sent him away with a Georgian envoy and a letter of reply. "Your proposal takes into consideration your wealth and the vastness of your armies, but fails to account for divine judgment," Tamara wrote, "while I place my trust not in any army or worldly thing but in the right hand of the Almighty God and the infinite aid of the Cross, which you curse. The will of God—and not your own—shall be fulfilled, and the judgment of God—and not your judgment—shall reign!"

The Georgian soldiers were summoned without delay. Queen Tamara prayed for victory before the Vardzia Icon of the Theotokos, then, barefoot, led her army to the gates of the city. Hoping in the Lord and the fervent prayers of Queen Tamara, the Georgian army marched toward Basiani. The enemy was routed. The victory at Basiani was an enormous event not only for Georgia, but for the entire Christian world.

During Queen Tamara's reign a veritable monastic city was carved in the rocks of Vardzia, and the God-fearing Georgian ruler would labor there during the Great Fast. The churches of Pitareti, Kvabtakhevi, Betania, and many others were also built at that time. Holy Queen Tamara generously endowed the churches and monasteries not only on Georgian territory but also outside her borders: in Palestine, Cyprus, Mt. Sinai, the Black Mountains, Greece, Mt. Athos, Petritsoni (Bulgaria), Macedonia, Thrace, Romania, Isauria and Constantinople. The divinely guided Queen Tamara abolished the death penalty and all forms of bodily torture.

A regular, secret observance of a strict ascetic regime—fasting, a stone bed, and litanies chanted in bare feet—finally took its toll on Queen Tamar's health. For a long time she refrained from speaking to anyone about her condition, but when the pain became unbearable she finally sought help. The best physicians of the time were unable to diagnose her illness, and all of Georgia was seized with fear of disaster. Everyone from the small to the great prayed fervently for Georgia's ruler and defender. The people were prepared to offer not only their own lives, but even the lives of their children, for the sake of their beloved ruler.

God sent Tamara a sign when He was ready to receive her into His Kingdom. Then the pious ruler bade farewell to her court and turned in prayer to an icon of Christ and the Life-giving Cross: "Lord Jesus Christ! Omnipotent Master of heaven and earth! To Thee I deliver the nation and people that were entrusted to my care and purchased by Thy Precious Blood, the children whom Thou didst bestow upon me, and to Thee I surrender my soul, O Lord!"

The burial place of Queen Tamara has remained a mystery to this day. Some sources claim that her tomb is in Gelati, in a branch of burial vaults belonging to the Bagrationi dynasty, while others argue that her holy relics are preserved in a vault at the Holy Cross Monastery in Jerusalem.

St. Tamara is commemorated on the Sunday of the Myrrh-beating Women in addition to her regular commemoration on May 1.

~ Reading and Icon Courtesy of OCA Webpage ~