



SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church (Portage)
St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church (Beaverdale)
Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church (Dunlo)
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla, D.D.
Served by: Very Rev. Fr. James A. Spontak
Fr. Deacon Daniel F. Perich
Rectory: 143 Church Drive Portage, PA 15946
Phone: 814-736-9780
Website: www.ByzantineCatholic.net

Mysteries of Christian Initiation: There is to be **preparatory instruction** for parents and godparents prior to the celebration of the **Mysteries of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist**. It is desirable that Christian Initiation be celebrated together with the Sunday Divine Liturgy, as the entire faith community welcomes its newest member. Those selected to be sponsors must be persons who are qualified to be a sponsor according to the norms of Church law and practice.

Crowning in Marriage: A **six month period of preparation** is to precede the marriage. Couples are to meet with the pastor before other arrangements are scheduled. The **Pre-Cana Program** offered by the Archeparchy in the spring of each year is a **required** part of the marriage preparation for all couples.

Holy Anointing & Pastoral Care of the Ill: Please contact the pastor prior to surgery or in the event of illness to require the **Mystery of Holy Anointing**. When you or a family member are hospitalized or enter a nursing home or other facility, **please inform the pastor**. Due to privacy regulations, hospitals and other facilities do not always notify the pastor; and it is best for the family to notify the pastor.

Mystery of Repentance (Confessions): **Saturdays: 3:00 p.m. (Portage) and 4:30 pm (Beaverdale/Dunlo)**. Also, **½ hour before services [except Sunday]**, and by appointment. Confessions are in the priest's sacristy area, before an icon of Christ, before whom we are confessing our sinfulness

Opportunities for Stewardship: Parishioners are asked to make a commitment of **Time, Talent, and Treasure...** **Work Parties** are scheduled the first Saturday of each month, and **Church Cleaning** is scheduled the first Monday, unless a Church Feast Day falls on the same date.

Troitsja & Bulletin Schedule

<u>Sunday December 1</u>	<u>Troitsja:</u> Abby Koban	<u>Bulletins:</u> Lexi Slanoc & Kaleb Castel
<u>Sunday December 8</u>	<u>Troitsja:</u> Ryan Lenz	<u>Bulletins:</u> Jakob Czapp & Bella Koban
<u>Sunday December 15</u>	<u>Troitsja:</u> Easton Slanoc	<u>Bulletins:</u> Evan Lenz & Easton Slanoc

Parish Sunday Bulletin Available Online and by Email Transmission

The Sunday bulletin is posted on the parish website, www.ByzantineCatholic.net. Also, like us on **Facebook at Sts Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church**. To receive weekly bulletin by email send your email address to james_armand_spontak@verizon.net with this request.



Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra and Wonderworker

The Feast of *Our Holy Father Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra and Wonderworker* is celebrated on December 6th. The Church observes the Feast of Saint Nicholas with a splendid solemnity. The popularity of this saint likewise is noteworthy, holding a place of esteem and honor in the hearts of Christians. This is true is a particular way of our own celebration of his feast.

Father Thomas Hopko in The Winter Pascha reflects on this affection and reverence with which Saint Nicholas is remembered:

"The extraordinary thing about the image of Saint Nicholas in the Church is that he is not known for anything extraordinary. He was not a theologian and never wrote a word, yet he is famous in the memory of believers as a zealot for orthodoxy, allegedly accosting the heretic Arius at the Council in Nicea. He was not an ascetic and did no outstanding feats of fasting and vigils, yet he is praised for his possession of the "fruit of the Holy Spirit...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" [Gal 5 :22-23] . He was not a mystic in our present meaning of the term but he lived daily with the Lord and was godly in all of his words and deeds. He was not a prophet in the technical sense, yet he proclaimed the Word of God, exposed the sins of the wicked, defended the rights of the oppressed and afflicted, and battled against every form of injustice with supernatural compassion and mercy. In a word, he was a good pastor, father, and bishop to his flock, known especially for his love and care for the poor. Most simply put, he was a divinely good person." [Winter Pascha, 37-39]

"Goodness" as reflected in the life of Saint Nicholas is nothing less than a measure of God's love, life and compassion. It is the holiness and genuine piety of Saint Nicholas that allowed this divine goodness to be visible for people in a way that is still recognized today. Saint Nicholas continues among us in the church, especially as we celebrate his feast, restoring our faith with gifts of the Holy Spirit and renewing our hope in this time of preparation for Christmas.

Prayer for the Christmas Fast

"O Christ our Lord and our God, You did not think equality with God something to be grasped at, but You emptied Yourself, took the form of a slave and were born in human likeness. Enlighten us as we prepare to celebrate the feast of Your holy birth. Make us worthy to see the mystery of Your becoming human for us, while remaining God in eternity. Fill our minds with understanding, that we might see You even in the least of our brothers and sisters. You have given us the gift of Your Holy Spirit, You have loved us even to the point of Your saving death and glorious resurrection, grant us also a faith that cannot be confounded, a love that does not pretend, and a wisdom that is complete. You have said, "Unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," grant that in this feast we may again experience the rebirth we were given in baptism, that we may sing out with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those on whom His favor rests." You have humbled Yourself, O Christ our God, may Your Name be exalted, together with the Name of Your eternal Father and the Name of Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever."

Eastern Christian Formation Program Saint Nicholas Celebration

There are no *ECF* classes today--Sunday, December 1 for the *Thanksgiving Holiday*.

Eastern Christian Formation classes are preparing for our parish Saint Nicholas celebration which is scheduled for Sunday, December 15. ***Parents are asked to take note*** that a practice session for this presentation will be held at the end of classes on Sunday, December 8. There will be a *later dismissal* on these days at 11:30 am.

Please remember in your prayers our Catechists, ECF students, and their families.

The Philip's Fast – Preparation for Christmas

The *Philip's Fast* [November 15 - December 24] is our journey to the Feasts of Christmas and Theophany. This period of forty days is set aside for the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Observance of this penitential season is voluntary.

Remembrance of Homebound Parishioners for Christmas

A Christmas remembrance is being prepared for our homebound parishioners. To help us prepare gift bags for homebound parishioners, please consider donating suggested gift items: *Seasonal/non-seasonal door decorations; tissues* [dollar store boxes]; *light scent body spray; word search books; lotions; lap blankets; shampoo*. You may also have ideas of your own. There will be a box in the narthex of each church to collect these items.

Please bring gift items by Sunday, December 1. The gift bags will be prepared in the rectory conference room on Wednesday, December 3 at 10:00 am.

Food Pantry Donations

During the Philip's Fast donations of canned goods and non-perishable food will be collected for either the *Portage Food Pantry* or to the *Forest Hills Food Pantry* [from Beaverdale and Dunlo]. *Donations of cash may also be made and will be forwarded*. Please do not bring food past the expiration dates. Containers are in the narthex.

Giving Tree Project

Thank you for your response to the *Giving Tree* to provide gifts at Christmas for children in need. The gifts are to be brought to Church by Sunday, December 15.

PARISH NEWS & COMING EVENTS

Church Cleaning & Work Party for December

- The *Church Cleaning* for December is scheduled for Monday, December 2, at 9:00 am.
- The *Work Party* for December is scheduled for Saturday, December 7, at 9:00 am.
- *Thank You* to those who volunteer for the monthly *Work Party* and *Church Cleaning*.

Sanctuary Candle

The Sanctuary Candle this week is offered at Saints Peter and Paul, Portage, in memory of **+George** and **+Mae Haschak**; requested by Patty Haschak.

Visits to the Homebound

In preparation the Feasts of Christmas and Theophany, Father Jim will schedule visits to homebound parishioners or those in nursing homes and other care facilities. If you or a family member would like to be added to the list of those visited for the Mysteries of Confession and the Eucharist, please call the rectory at your earliest convenience.

Remember In Prayer

Please pray for the health of **Barry Krisko; Marian Simala** [Mansfield Rehabilitation, McKeesport]; **Jennifer Crum Bailey; Michael Barelick; Kennady Grace Spaid; Joseph Lysic; Rose Single; Dorothy Majer; Mary Donnelly; George Pyo Jr.; Daniel Zaliznock; John Rakar; Bernadette Kostan, Patty Haschak; Shawn Crum; Dennis Ratosky, Sr.; Dorothy, Phil and Cathy Walters; Alina Rusnak; Ruby Moore; Charles and Joan Plishka; Tom Goncher; Patrick & Joan Ditko; Helena Ditko; Cliff Inman; Father Paul Tigyer; Kelly Colwell; Sarah Kelt; Mary Beth Blackburn;** and all the ill & homebound.

Liturgical Chant –Sundays after Pentecost

- The Troparion and other prescribed parts of the Divine Liturgy for the **Feast of our Holy Father St. Nicholas of Myra [December 6]**, may be found on p. 274-276.
- The Troparion and other prescribed parts of the Divine Liturgy for **Sunday, December 8, Resurrection Troparion Tone 1**, may be found on p. 125-126; and for the **Feast of the Maternity of Holy Anna [December 8]**, may be found on p. 277-280
- The “Our Father”, in **Tone 1** may be found on p. 66.
- Please note instructions at the beginning of the Liturgy for opening hymns etc.

Pre-Cana Preparation Program in 2020

The **Pre-Cana Preparation** program offered by the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh will be on Saturday, March 21 and Saturday, March 28 at Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. Those contemplating Marriage and the celebration of the Holy Mystery of Crowning in Marriage in 2020 are asked to note that the **Pre-Cana Program** is a required part of the marriage preparation. Information at www.archpitt.org; go to “Offices” and “Office of Religious Education”.

Online Faith Formation: *Preparing for the Feast of the Nativity.*

The Gift of God: Preparing for the Feast of the Nativity, by Rev. David Anderson on Wednesday, December 16 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ET. As the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Lord draws closer, using the prayers of the Church in this holy season as our guide, we will ponder God's gift of Himself to us, and consider how we can respond by making a gift of ourselves to Him.

This course is offered as live webinar, free of charge. Register at EasternCatholic.org/Events.

OTHER NEWS & EVENTS

Archieparchial Choir Christmas Concert

The East Wind Symphonic Band and the Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archieparchial Choir present Holiday Sounds: A Christmas Cookie Cabaret. Sunday, December 15, 3:30 PM at St. John Cathedral Center, Munhall, PA. Free admission; www.ewsb.org for more information.

Christmas Preparation Retreat: Mt. St. Macrina House of Prayer

Christmas Preparation Retreat at Mount Saint Macrina House of Prayer, Uniontown Saturday, December 14, 9:15 am to 1:00 pm. Includes Lunch. Presented by *Sr. Carol Petrasovich, OSBM* on the theme: "*Light Conquering Darkness*". How often do we really stop and reflect on how and why we are to prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth?

Offering: \$35. Registration by December 12. Call 724-438-7149; or email hpmsm@verizon.net.

Chili Cook-off During Winterfest

Looking for Chili Making Masters! **Hammers Street Church of God** is hosting a **Chili Cook-off** during WinterFest, on Saturday, December 14, from 2:30-6:00 p.m. Prizes: \$100 for the People's Choice; \$100 for Judges' Choice; Call 814-736-8216 to register and for more details.

Chili Tasters are also need. If you want to taste up to 16 entries, come to Hammers Street Church, 906 Hammers Street in Portage, 2:30-6:00 p.m. Only \$5 to taste them all!

63rd Annual Saint Nicholas Celebration & Fundraiser

The **63rd Annual Saint Nicholas Celebration** benefitting the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius includes an additional fundraiser to benefit the Seminary--a raffle. The winner will receive twelve [12] **\$50 Gift Cards** to national restaurants, and \$1,500/cash. *The choice of restaurants will be determined on the locality where the winner lives.* Donation: \$10. The winning number is based on the PA Lottery Evening Pick 3 Number drawn on Sunday, December 15, 2019.

For a ticket for this benefit raffle, contact Father Jim.

Portage Area School District Secret Santa Program.

The Portage Area School District annual **Secret Santa Program** provides a joyful holiday for children in school district families. Children found toys, clothing, winter coats, and more under their trees on Christmas morning. Each family enjoyed a holiday dinner, with turkey and pumpkin pie!

Mail donations to: Portage Area High School Secret Santa Project; % Mary Ann George; 85 Mountain Avenue; Portage, PA 15946. For questions, call Ms. George at 736-9636, extension #1310.

Thank you for your generosity and for helping to support this project.

Homebound and Nursing Home Residents—Remember in Prayer

At Home: SS Peter & Paul (Portage): Dorothy Billy; Catherine Czapp Louise Halovich; Joseph Mandichak; Michelle Maskal; Joseph Raptosh [*St. Michael's, Canonsburg*]; Stella Raptosh; Cathy Walters; Helen Zaher; **St. Mary (Beaverdale):** Nancy Andrako; Catherine McGough;

Nursing & Other Care Facilities:

- **Saint Benedict Manor, Carrolltown,** Catherine Thrower [Dunlo];
- **Arbutus Park Manor:** Margaret Rachael [Dunlo];
- **Autumn View:** June Nezneski;
- **Amber Hills Ebensburg:** *Father Ronald Borsuk*
- **John Paul II Manor, Cresson:** Kathryn Mackovyak
- **Rose of Sharon Home, Saint Michael:** Anna Garanich
- **Just Like Home Personal Care, Cresson:** Dorothy Resconich

Pilgrim Vocation Icon

During the weeks of December 1, **Paulette & Ed Fedorko** will have the **Pilgrim Vocation Icon**.

The list to sign up for the **Pilgrim Vocation Icon** to pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and monastic religious life is in the narthex. Please remember seminarians of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh: **Lector Kyprian Wojciechowski; Lector Robert Jones; Seminarians John Welch; Luke Iyengar Nathaniel Tapsak**; Diaconate Studies candidates; and all of the Seminary community.

Liturgical Schedule 25th Week After Pentecost—December 1, 2019

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Saturday November 30

Beaverdale **5:00 PM** Vigil Divine Liturgy [+Father Roy Schubert, by Theresa Kundrat]

Sunday December 1

Portage **9:00 AM** Sunday Divine Liturgy

Monday December 2

No Divine Liturgy scheduled

Tuesday, December 3

No Divine Liturgy scheduled

Wednesday, December 4

Portage 7:45 AM The Third Hour
8:00 AM **Divine Liturgy** [+Charles Hufford, by Joseph & Deb Babiak]

Feast of our Holy Father Nicholas Archbishop of Myra & Wonderworker

Thursday, December 5

Beaverdale **6:00 PM** Great Vespers with Litija

Friday, December 6

Portage 8:45 AM The Third Hour
9:00 AM **Divine Liturgy**

Saturday December 7

Portage 3:00 PM Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]
Dunlo 4:30 PM Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost Feast of the Maternity of Holy Anna

Saturday December 7

Dunlo **5:00 PM** Vigil Divine Liturgy

Sunday December 8

Portage **9:00 AM** **Sunday Divine Liturgy**
[+Pasquale & +Elena Pieraccini, by Barbara & John Havrilla & family]