

## CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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### BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 8, 2009

#### Please Remember in Prayer

Diane Evanusa (recovering from surgery) Kathy and Bill Parrish, Raymond, Thomas, Judith Kocinski, Jane Koshutko, Carole Boris, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas, Yvonne, Katherine, Michael, Gregory, Olga Leisure, Nina Gordon, Fr. Christian, Constantina & Christos. If you have a request, please let Fr. John know.



#### Reading Group – Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>

On Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00pm we will be discussing the Life and Teachings of St. Silouan the Athonite. All are invited to attend!

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>

##### PUBLICAN & PHARISEE SUNDAY

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Reading Group

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>

##### PRODIGAL SON SUNDAY

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

#### Fast-free Week

During the week of the Publican and Pharisee, February 8-15, we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Friday.

#### Orthodoxy 101 – Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>

On Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00pm we will have a class on the Orthodox Faith entitled "Making the Most of Great Lent". The class will focus on ways in which we can benefit from this sometimes dreaded but most important season of repentance and spiritual renewal.



#### About Hospitalization

Federal Privacy Laws (HIPAA) do not allow clergy access to a hospital's census. This means that the only way your priest will know that you are in the hospital is if you tell him, either yourself or through a family member or friend.

#### Concerning Children in Church

As a reminder, children are a blessing of the Lord, and parents who bring their children to church do a great service to their own families and to our parish community. If from time to time, our youngsters get a little rambunctious in church – and this is normal and should be expected – let us see this as a sign that our parish is healthy and growing. No one should be discouraged from bringing their children to church, even if they get a little "excited" when praising the Lord; remember, what Christ tells us: "Let the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 19:14)



#### Looking Ahead:

- ❖ Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Meatfare Sunday
- ❖ March 1<sup>st</sup> – Cheesefare Sunday
- ❖ March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Great Lent Begins
- ❖ March 25<sup>th</sup> – Annunciation
- ❖ April 12<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday
- ❖ April 17<sup>th</sup> – Holy Friday
- ❖ April 19<sup>th</sup> – Pascha

#### READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Feb 15<sup>th</sup>

Jen Alexion

Sunday, Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Kathy Parrish



#### Spiritual Reading

is an important way for Christians to grow in their relationship with God. This is because the more we come to understand our Faith the better we can live it. What spiritual book are you currently reading? Want a recommendation, just ask Fr. John.



#### Have Something on Your Mind?

Talk to your priest. He can be reached anytime via phone or email.



## THE PRACTICING CHRISTIAN

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

***"It is the aim of my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you a spirit of wisdom, the spirit that brings you a new Revelation, as you come to know Him more and more fully" (Ephesians 1:16)***

The definition of a doctor who is actively at work as a healer is termed a "practicing" physician. Practicing, as opposed to "retired." We could borrow the term for all Christians. None of us is ever retired, not even after death. The church fathers never cease reminding us that the wisdom of God is never complete in us, because by nature God is who God is, and we are who we are. As we grow in understanding the ways of God's love for us, we never exhaust the revelation. We learn by epiphanies -- when our prayers are heard -- when the sick person we gave up for dead is healed, the position or job we yearned for is granted, or the grace of peace after a soul-shaking trauma comes to us as a spiritual gift. In such realizations of God's power, we are given a peek into the love of the Lord; but like Elijah who sneaked a quick glance hiding in the crack of a rock, we catch only a fleeting glimpse at the passing of the Lord. [1 Kings 19:21]

St. Paul said "a new Revelation" is granted through the grace of the Holy Spirit. We learn even by sorrow or disappointment that the God of love heals the wounds of minds and souls the way He makes our skin or inner organs return to normalcy after a wound or illness. Despondence is not forever or need not be unless we will ourselves to be miserable.

The Revelation he speaks of is not found at the last pages of the New Testament. If we open the eyes of our heart, we may experience life as a series of revelations -- the life and acts of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others. The kindness that comes our way we discover after the profound mystery of our

Lord Jesus Christ, because He not only left the world to return to His place in His Father's kingdom, but He fulfilled His promise that we would not be alone and without Him. In some miraculous manner He is present in the hearts of those who open their own hearts to receive Him, to all who hear with an inner ear His knocking at the door of

their hearts, and who open to let Him in. They become as powerful as the apostles in the days of Christ's life after Resurrection Day. But it takes eyes to see and ears to hear, as He said. [Matthew 11:15]

There are manifold ways to practice Christian faith: The obvious total life commitment as monks, nuns or clergy -- 24/7 commitment -- is one way, but clearly not the only way. The term "laity" means "people of God" [laos tou theou]. That's the category of most of us. It's the life of a serious, committed Orthodox

Christian. This is who you are. You can make your life a mission to seek, teach and save others. You may stay where you are, but pour yourself into the parish, deanery, or diocesan activities. As a young person, practice expressing your convictions among your peers, in your schools, and activities. If you are housebound, believe so much in the healing power of prayer that you make a constant habit of praying by name all whom you know about who are lonely, suffering, mourning or despondent. Get into the habit of practicing your love commitment, because even when your body is tired and retired, you will be called on to practice praising and singing the glory of the Lord for all eternity.



## ORTHODOX GLAD TO CLAIM POLAMALU AS ONE OF THEIR OWN

By Ann Rodgers, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Most NFL fans are familiar with the sight of Steelers safety Troy Polamalu crossing himself during games, but one subset of fans is gleefully aware that he crosses himself from right to left, rather than left to right.

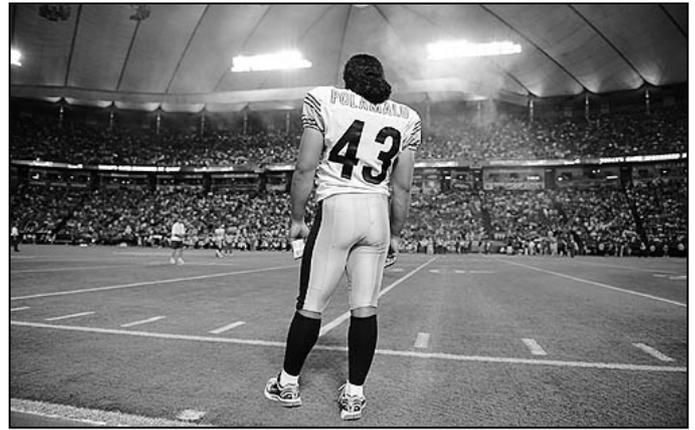
"Each time there is an important play, he makes his cross the Orthodox way. Nobody else does this, and it is a beautiful thing," said Metropolitan Maximos, of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, who officiated at the wedding of Troy and Theodora Polamalu four years ago.

Mr. Polamalu, an ethnic Samoan, long has had a strong Christian faith, but was non-denominational until he joined his wife's Greek Orthodox church. The metropolitan is quick to note that Orthodox enthusiasm for Mr. Polamalu isn't intended to denigrate any other branch of Christianity. "I'm very proud of him. But, to be honest, I don't care if his background is Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox or any of the Protestant communities, as long as the guy is a faithful person. And Polamalu is that, and his wife is as well," he said.

When football doesn't allow the Polamaluses to worship together on Sundays, they make weekday visits to the Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Saxonburg. Their infant son was baptized there. But the nuns won't be watching him play in the Super Bowl, Metropolitan Maximos said, because they don't watch anything on television that isn't religious.

Orthodoxy and Catholicism -- which split in 1054 over issues of church authority -- have a different ethos. The monks of Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, the Catholic monastery on the college campus where the Steelers practice, are unabashed fans. One monk, now deceased, went into earlier playoffs with a gold "7" on his black habit and called himself "Big Benedictine." Saint Vincent Archabbot Douglas Nowicki said Mr. Polamalu prays in their basilica during training camp and is close to the monks. "He's Orthodox, but I think he embodies that spirit of selflessness and humility, and is so well-grounded in who he is, that people of every faith relate to him. There is something deeply spiritual about him that all of us experience in being with him," he said.

But for the Orthodox, he's something special, said Damian George, the youth director at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland. When



teens attend national Orthodox conferences, "the kids from Pittsburgh kind of brag about Troy, not only that he's a Steeler, but that he's Orthodox. And even the kids from Philly and New York get excited about it. He gives them a good role model because he's able to play at a high level and keep his faith at an equally high level," he said.

Orthodoxy has no tradition of celebrities who testify to their faith, said the Rev. Thomas Soroka, pastor of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, McKees Rocks. There are lists of celebrities who have belonged to the church, including Tina Fey and Tom Hanks. But none are considered exemplars of Orthodox spirituality. Current online discussions of an Orthodox celebrity that don't involve Mr. Polamalu tend to bewail the conduct of Rod Blagojevich, who was removed as Illinois governor last week after a four-day impeachment trial.

"A lot of times when people are Orthodox, it's more of an ethnic or cultural thing. Troy stands above that by being a practicing, committed Orthodox Christian," Father Soroka said. "Orthodoxy is quite sober. It's not flashy or attractive to those who are looking for stardom. It's much more introspective, and I think Troy embodies that."

But it helps that Mr. Polamalu is cool and handsome, with Samoan warrior hair that hasn't been cut in seven years. His plays appear to defy the laws of physics. "Being faithful and devout isn't always cool. So it's great when you can point to Troy Polamalu and say, 'Look, faith isn't stupid. It's something really special,'" said James Purdie, 26, a subdeacon at St. George Cathedral. "Seeing him crossing himself after a play, or praying on the sidelines, it's a way of witnessing that your faith can be incorporated into your everyday life."

Mr. Purdie saw the Polamaluses at a lecture at Duquesne University by Orthodox theologian Bishop Kallistos Ware. "A lot of the younger folks went up

*continued on page 4...*

## **Orthodox Glad to Claim Polamalu** continued from page 3...

to him afterward and were asking him questions -- theological questions as well as football questions. His answers showed that he was knowledgeable in his faith. And it was nice to see his humility. He was very approachable," Mr. Purdie said.

One Orthodox leader who does not tell stories about the Polamalus is their pastor, the Rev. John Toulumes at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, North Side. He wants to respect the family's privacy. But he will say that Mr. Polamalu has steeped himself in the Orthodox faith. "Troy has received the faith with great dedication and great enthusiasm in his personal life. He does share it on the field with others when he believes it is his calling to do that. And he shows it through his life, through his humility and his good works," he said. "He has a particular love for the younger people and they have responded very warmly to his gentle personality, his athletic talents and his deep faith."

The Rev. Patrick Carpenter, pastor of St. Mary's Orthodox Church, South Side, joined a Troy Polamalu fan group on Facebook and took part in its "Steelers prayer wave." But he won't pray for a Steelers win. "We don't pray for victories. We don't pray for defeats. We pray for the safety of the team." Of course, Mr. Polamalu is the safety of the team.

### **CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS**

*From Various Sources*



- "Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community."
- "The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement Friday."
- "For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."
- "Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30p.m. Please use the back door."
- "The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict."



### **ABOUT THE WORD OF GOD WHICH IS MIGHTIER THAN DEATH**

*From the Prologue of Ochrid by St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

**"Whoever keeps My word will never taste death" (St. John 8:52).**

As long as a candle burns in a room, there will not be darkness as long as the candle burns and emits light. If food is seasoned with salt, it will be preserved from spoiling. If someone keeps the word of Christ in his soul, that one keeps salt and light in his soul and life will abide in him. Such a soul will not become dark in this life neither will it taste decaying death.

Whoever keeps the word of Christ in himself, the word of Christ sustains him from within and feeds him and enlightens him and enlivens him. Whether he is in the body or outside the body, he feels equally alive from the word of Christ, i.e., from the undying eternal life. The death of the body will give to his Life-bearing soul only a freer enthusiasm in embracing Christ, the Beloved Life-giver.

But, what does it mean, brethren, to keep the word of Christ within ourselves? That means; **First:** to keep the word of Christ in our mind, thinking about it; **Sec-**

**ond:** to keep the word of Christ in our heart, loving it; **Third:** to keep the word of Christ in our will, fulfilling it in deeds; **Fourth:** to keep the word of Christ on our tongue, openly confessing it when it is necessary to do so. Thus, to keep the word of Christ means to fill ourselves with it and to fulfill it. Whoever would keep the word of Christ in this manner, truly, he will never taste of death.

O our Lord, Mighty Lord, mightier than death, give us strength and understanding to keep Thy holy word to the end; that we do not taste of death and that death does not taste of us; that decay does not touch our soul. O Lord All-merciful be merciful to us.