



# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sunday, November 28th, 2021: 23rd Sunday after Holy Pentecost, Monastic Martyr and Confessor Stephen the New



## Hymns for Today

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

Trained in asceticism on the mountain, with the weapon of the Cross thou didst destroy the spiritual assaults of the hostile powers, O all-blessed one. Again thou didst bravely prepare for combat and didst slay Copronymus with the sword of faith; for both struggles thou hast been crowned by God, monk-martyr Stephen of eternal memory.

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Lovers of the feasts, from the heart with hymns let us praise in faith God-like Stephen, the lover of the Trinity,

for he honored the fair icon of the Master and of His Mother. Now let us rejoice together and cry out to him with love: "Rejoice, ever-glorious Father!"

## Epistle Reading - Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 13:10-17

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound – think of it – for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

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**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!*

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## *This Week's Schedule*

### **THIS WEEKEND**

**SAT, Nov 27th:** Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions  
**SUN, Nov 28th:** Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour, Yolka Practice, Special Parish Meeting for Budget Approval

### **THIS WEEK**

#### **Nativity Fast Continues**

**WED, Dec 1st:** Funeral for Rosalie Bagenski @ 10 AM  
**WED, Dec 1st:** Private Prayer 11 AM-1:30 PM  
**WED, Dec 1st:** Daily Vespers @ 6 PM, Study @ 6:30 PM  
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### **NEXT WEEKEND**

**SAT, Dec 4th:** Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions  
**SUN, Dec 5th:** Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour, Yolka Practice, Parastas, Vespers for St. Nicholas Following Coffee Hour

#### **SUN December 5th - Parastas**

**In Memory of William & Julia Talpash**  
*Offered by Marie Talpash*

**In Memory of the Conklin/ Kennedy Family**  
Adam, Bert, Demetrius, Demetrius Jr., Mary, Alexander, June, Helen, Irene, Robert, Raymond, Sean  
*Offered by Alexanne Conklin*

**MON, Dec 6th:** Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas the Wonderworker @ 9 AM

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## **Upcoming Parish Events & Announcements**

**MEMORY ETERNAL:** Remember in your prayers the newly departed servants of God, Rosalie Bagenski and Helen Gudaitis who fell asleep in the Lord on Thanksgiving. The funeral for Rosalie will be Dec 1st at 10AM here at Holy Trinity. Viewing will be 9AM at Yeosock's. Funeral details for Helen to be announced.

**DEC 1, THIS WEEK: Vespers & Study Continues -** Our Wednesday Night Vespers and Study from 6:00PM-7:30PM will continue this week. The evening will begin with a Daily Vespers that will last about 25

minutes followed by a 1-hour study on the topic of **Freedom & Sin**. What kind of freedom does our faith offer us vs. the freedom of the world? This question is foundational to our understanding of both the purpose of the church and our purpose as humans. Come and explore with us!

### **2021-2022 Stewardship / Pledge Forms**

The HTOC Finance Committee recently sent letters to parish members concerning an annual financial pledge / commitment for the 2021-2022 Church year. If you have not yet done so, please review the materials therein and prayerfully discern a pledge to the Parish. The form can be completed and left in an envelope at the candle stand or returned via mail. If you have not yet received this letter you can pick one up at the candle stand.

**TODAY: Special Parish Meeting** - (2022 Budget discussion & vote) - Sun, Nov 28th following Coffee Hour

### **ENDS NEXT WEEKEND: Food and Winter Clothing Drive for Kutztown University Students:**

We are beginning our annual drive to help Kutztown University Students in need. They need Hats, gloves, coats (new or used) / Personal care items such as soap, bodywash, toothpaste / canned soups, mac and cheese, cereals, granola bars, pasta and sauce. Anything that college kids eat. Items can be left in the Narthex (Vestibule). Last date to donate will be Sunday, December 5.

**BRING A SOCCER BALL COLLECTION:** Help in a local collection to give soccer balls to refugee children recently brought to the US through the war in Afghanistan. A soccer ball from each family in the Parish would make a big difference. The deadline is December 12th. See Paula Holoviak if you have any questions.

### **NEXT WEEKEND: A Walk in the Margins: SAT, Dec 4th at 9:00 AM**

all are welcome to gather here at Holy Trinity for a briefing and prayer, followed by a "walk in the margins" in downtown Wilkes Barre. Our purpose is to encounter the person of Christ in the poor, needy and homeless as we take our walk, engaging them with a loving heart, warmth and friendly conversation. We plan to be finished by 10:30 AM. All are welcome. A sign-up sheet is in the Vestibule.

**NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS - \$15:** As customary, our Nativity Poinsettia Donations will purchase flowers to adorn the Church for the Feast of the

Nativity. Your donations may be made in remembrance of, or for the health of, your family and loved ones. The names you provide at the time of your donation will appear in the Church Bulletin for the Feast of the Nativity. Please see the signup sheet in the vestibule and give your donation to Mary Ann Kudey. Many thanks and may God Bless You for your donation!

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## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

**December Birthdays:** David Clark (12/1), Helen Gudaitus (12/5), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratick (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21), Kellie Ann DiBattista (12/27), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31)

**This Week's Birthdays:** Candice Dutko (11/30), David Clark (12/1)

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**PARISH PRAYER LIST Living:** Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Rose Marie, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Betty Serafin, Matushka Elizabeth, Karen Maier, John Metz, Tim, Jeri Basarab, Fr. Theodore Orzolek, Bernie Elko, Delores Voda, Mary Ann Lepa, Melanie Bishop, Eric, Lynn Bankos, Mat. Delores Donlick, Archpriest Michael Lepa, Archpriest Vladimir Fetchko  
**Departed:** Antonette Terry, Rosalie Bagenski, Helen Gudaitis

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## **UPCOMING FEAST DAYS SERVICE SCHEDULE**

### **St. Nicholas the Wonderworker**

**SUN, Dec 5:** Great Vespers following Coffee hour  
**MON, Dec 6:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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### **Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ**

**FRI, Dec 24:** 6:30 PM Compline & Matins w/ Litya  
**SAT, Dec 25:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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### **Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God**

**SUN, Dec 26:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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### **St. Basil the Great / Circumcision of Our Lord**

**FRI, Dec 31:** 6:30 PM Great Vespers w/ Litya

**SAT, Jan 1:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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### **Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ**

**WED, Jan 5:** 6:30 PM Great Vespers w/ Litya

**THURS, Jan 6:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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## **How can I deal with my sinful condition?**

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

So often we ask ourselves and one another a very tormenting question: How can I deal with my sinful condition? What can I do? I cannot avoid committing sins, Christ alone is sinless. I cannot, for lack of determination, or courage, or ability truly repent when I do commit a sin, or in general, of my sinful condition. What is left to me? I am tormented, I fight like one drowning, and I see no solution.

And there is a word which was spoken once by a Russian staretz, one of the last elders of Optina. He said to a visitor of his: No one can live without sin, few know how to repent in such a way that their sins are washed as white as fleece. But there is one thing which we all can do: when we can neither avoid sin, nor repent truly, we can then bear the burden of sin, bear it patiently, bear it with pain, bear it without doing anything to avoid the pain and the agony of it, bear it as one would bear a cross, — not Christ's cross, not the cross of true discipleship, but the cross of the thief who was crucified next to Him. Didn't the thief say to his companion who was blaspheming the Lord: We are enduring because we have committed crimes; He endures sinlessly... And it is to him, because he had accepted the punishment, the pain, the agony, the consequences indeed of evil he had committed, of being the man he was, that Christ said, 'Thou shalt be with Me today in Paradise...'

I remember the life of one of the divines, the story of one who had come to him and have said that he had led all his life a life that was evil, impure, unworthy both of God and of himself; and then he had repented, he has rejected all evil he had done; and yet, he was in the power of the

same evil. And the divine said to him: There was a time when you lapped up all this filth with delight; now you perceive it as filth and you feel that you are drowning in it with horror, with disgust. Take this to be your reward for your past, and endure...

This is something which all of us can do: to endure the consequences, to endure the enslavement which is our patiently, humbly, with a broken heart; not with indifference, not with a sense that as we are abandoned to it by God, then, why not sin? But taking it as a healing perception of what sin is, of what it does to us, of the horror of it. And if we patiently endure, a day will come when our inner rejection of sin will bear fruit, and when freedom will be given us.

So, if we can, in all the ways we can, let us avoid sin in all its forms, even those sins which seem to be so unimportant, because the slightest crack in a dam sooner or later leads to its bursting. If we can — let us truly repent, that is turn away from our past in a heroic, determined act; but if we can do neither of them — let us carry humbly and patiently all the pain and all the consequences. And this will also be accounted one day by the Lord Who in a folkloric life of Moses, in response to His angels saying, ‘How long shall you endure their sins’ — the sins of the Jews in the wilderness, answered: ‘I will reject them when the measure of their sins will exceed the measure of their suffering’.

Let us therefore accept the pain as a redeeming pain, even if we cannot offer it as pain pure of stain. Amen.

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## Why Fast Before Nativity?

*Taken from oca.org*

### Question

I was wondering why we fast before Nativity. The Lenten fast seems more obvious. Also, from what foods do we normally fast from during the Nativity fast?

### Answer

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord’s birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we “shift our focus” from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor.

[We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food!] While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we “ruin our appetite” we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently.

If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a “must.”

In Matthew Christ says, “WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites,” not “IF you fast” or “IF YOU CHOOSE to fast.”

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society—a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products—fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace—and pay large sums of money for—his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at “no cost”] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible.