



# SS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA, DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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## December 23, 2012

### 29<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Sunday Before Nativity.

- 9:10am – 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Hour
- 9:30am – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23,32-40  
Gospel: Mt. 1:1-25
- Panikhida – in memory of:
  - Olga Stecher, on 40<sup>th</sup> day of her repose, offered by Wasilewski Family
  - Juliana & Andrew Bacsik, offered by Andrea and Russ Wyskanycz
  - Victims of the Newtown School shooting

### Schedule of Services

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 – EVE OF NATIVITY  
4:30pm – Vigil

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25 – NATIVITY OF CHRIST  
9:30am – Divine Liturgy followed by breaking of the fast in the church hall and a traditional fellowship at the Carpathian Club

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26

SYNAXIS OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS  
9:00am – Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

6:00pm – Great Vespers, Confessions

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

9:10am – Hours 9:30am – Divine Liturgy

## Looking Forward to the Mansion While Living in Tents

On December 23 the Church celebrates the memory of  
Saint Niphon, Bishop and Wonderworker.

Born in Paphlagonia, in the Asian part of modern Turkey, he had loving parents who took him to church and oversaw his education in Constantinople. The family was associated with the court of a military commander, so he knew the "proper" life of the court.

But as happens to some young men who are born with many advantages and little to strive for, Niphon was drawn to a life that was anything but proper. He indulged himself in all kinds of excess and vice. At times, when he remembered his upbringing, the ugliness of his life disgusted him. But the disgust only convinced him that he was a hopelessly lost soul. Feeling unable even to pray, he resigned himself to his vices.

A friend revealed the depth of Niphon's corruption to him in a startling way. He looked into Niphon's face for a long time with an expression of surprise and horror. When Niphon asked why he was staring so intently, the friend said, "Your face is completely changed. I have never seen it look like that before."

Niphon knew it was his sinfulness that gave his face its frightening appearance. Remembering again his early faith, he cried out to the Mother of God for help. He began to pray constantly for her intercession; sometimes he would see her smiling radiantly and other times – when he fell into sin again – he could not see her at all. But after years of struggle and prayer, he felt her guiding him toward monasticism, and was tonsured a monk.

His struggles did not end. He had visions of demons who continuously whispered, "There is no God! Why do you bother

## Intercessory Prayer

### THE LIVING:

Eva Benda, Theodore & Valentina Benda, Cathryn Christensen, Olga DeMay, Marianne Guagenti, George Hook, Peter Mazula, Walter Milk, Helen Pirniak, Stephen & Lillian Sokol, Faith Verona, Elizabeth Zuber.

### THE DEPARTED:

Olga Stecher, Michael Moroch, Peter Kalada, Benedict Benda, Georgette Saba, Matilda Skripak, Andrew Bacsik, Helen Pawlush, Mary Milk, Antonina Rotko, Helen Cotrone, June Bianchini, Marianne Benda.

to strive so, when there is no God?"

But Niphon did strive, since he now knew he had something to strive for. He worked hard to purify his thoughts and to live in repentance. He was finally granted the ability to overcome the evil spirits that tormented him, and to confront the demons that he could see troubling other people.

Niphon was consecrated Bishop of Constantia, Cyprus when he was quite old, and served for just a short while. A young deacon, who would become Saint Athanasius, visited him before he died and reported that his face, that same face once distorted by sin, had shone like the sun.

On this day we read Hebrews 11: 9 and 10, which describes Abraham looking forward to the eternal mansion of God "while living in tents" on this earth. Abraham believed God's promises when it would have been easy to conclude that God Himself had forgotten them and had left His people to wander in this earthly desert forever.

Saint Niphon, too, had to guard his faith when demons told him that no mansion awaits. His struggle and final victory, like Abraham's, remind us that the tents of the desert are not our everlasting home.

## Today's Memorial Offering



- *Candles on the Altar* – in memory of June Bianchini, on the Anniversary of her Birth – by Mom and Dad.
- *St. Nicholas Cross* – In memory of Juliana and Andrew Bacsik – by Andrea and Russ Wyskanycz.



## Announcements

❖ We are in the Nativity (St. Philip's) Fast which ends after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, this Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>. Please remember the importance of the spiritual part of the Fast as well – make proper preparations and receive private Confession and Holy Communion during this time.

❖ Monetary donations are taken at the candle desk towards the next **sandwich outreach** for homeless shelters, which will take place this **Saturday January 12, 2013** in the church hall. Anyone interested in lending a helping hand that day is welcome to join.

❖ **2013 Fundraiser** – the parish council will be sponsoring a "Tricky Tray" fundraiser in 2013. Although a date for the event is yet to be determined, we are beginning to ask for donations of new and unopened items still in the original packaging. This collection will be ongoing, and your generosity is appreciated. Consider donating any Christmas gifts that may not be your taste, a gift basket of non-perishable items that you don't mind parting with, and lastly, remember to keep your eyes open for the after-Christmas bargains!

## Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to Russ Wyskanycz and to all who celebrate their Birthdays in the month of December. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!