

# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 4 No. 7.1 & 7.2

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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*Special Double Edition!*

July 5, 2015 – 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

July 12, 2015 – 6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF PENTECOST &  
FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

## PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., July 5 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. Martyred Bishop Eusebius.

9:30 AM Deacon's Service with Fr. Deacon Philip Harendza. – Tone 4, pp. 90–92.

Tue., July 7 *Birth of St. John the Baptist.*

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy at St. George in Taylor.

Sun., July 12 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostles Peter & Paul.

9:30 AM Deacon's Service with Fr. Deacon Philip Harendza. – Special Sheets.

*Men's Club regular meeting scheduled.*

Sun., July 19 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. Monk Sisoës the Great.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Tone 6, pp. 96–98.

*Parish Board's regular monthly meeting scheduled.*

**Confessions:** Before Divine Liturgy

## FASTING AND FEASTING

**Apostles' Fast** began June 8 and goes until the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul on July 12.

The traditional fasting regulations state that red meat, poultry, and dairy products are not allowed during the entire fasting period on all weekdays, Monday through Friday. Also, Fish, wine, and oil are allowed on all days except on Wednesdays and Fridays. The diocesan rules merely require the usual Wednesday/Friday fast. All are encouraged to do more than the minimum.

## Upcoming Feasts:

*Birth of St. John the Baptist* (June 24/July 7). Since Fr. Nik will be away, all are encouraged to celebrate Divine Liturgy at St. George at 9:00 AM.

*Holy Apostles Peter and Paul* (June 29/12). This feast happens to fall on Sunday and so all will be able to celebrate the day.

## PEOPLE STUFF

*Please remember in your prayers:*

*Living:* Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek. Stephanie Bonk. Gloria Bracey. Tim & Christina Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert & Eddie Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Dawn & Warren Kieffer. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Theresa

Niester. Margie Pecuch. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Eric Reese. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Connie Lou Slater. Faye Snell. Marion Sosnowski. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue. Gary Wassel. Julia Worobey.

*At Home:* Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. George & Anna Senich.

*Assisted Living Homes:* Julie Kovacs. Julie Roberts. Kathryn Stocoski.

*Commemorations:*

*For 7/5:* none.

*For 7/12:*

*Altar Vigils:* Memory of John Sakulich by Carol, Amy, John B and families.

*Eternal Light:* Memory of John Sakulich by Carol, Amy, John B and families.

*Congratulations & God Bless!* Rylee Mary Kieffer was born at 2:12 am on Saturday, June 27. Many years! To Rylee Mary, her parents Warren and Dawn (Bentler), and brothers Colten and Noah!

### PARISH STUFF

**Fr. Nik** is on vacation from June 30 through July 17.

- Fr. Deacon Philip Harendza of St. John's Ukrainian Church, Johnson City, NY, will be celebrating the Deacon's Service on Sunday, July 5 & Sunday, July 12. Please welcome Deacon Philip to our parish.
- *Feast of the Birth of St. John the Baptist* on July 7: There will be no services here, so all are encouraged to go to St. George in Taylor for Liturgy. Check schedule above for service times.
- In case of an emergency, please contact Fr. Mark Leasure at 570-562-1170.

**Bulletin notice:** Also, any information that does not get into the July 5 issue will be published when I return, in the July 19 issue.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**FOOD COLLECTION CONTINUES!** It was good to see a lot of donations in the hall this past week, so soon after the last batch was taken to the Food Bank. Please remember to bring in non-perishable food items to help out with the Food Bank. Your generosity is appreciated by all those you serve!

## YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH

June 28, 2015

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| \$ 663.00        | General Collection |
| \$ 84.00         | 7 Day Light        |
| \$ 4.00          | Holy Days          |
| \$ 184.00        | Church Dues        |
| \$ 12.00         | Taper Candles      |
| \$ 10.00         | Vigil Lights       |
| <b>\$ 957.00</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>       |

*Thanks & God Bless!* We have received to date \$950 in donations toward our recent expenses for church repairs. Your concern for your parish is certainly blessed!

### Recent major expenditures include:

- \$1900 Church interior repairs & paint.
- \$ 900 New Photocopier machine

## FROM THE DIOCESE

### & OTHER STUFF

#### From the Diocese, re Amazon:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

We have been asked to forward to your attention the following information:

The on-line shopping store, *Amazon.com* will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the USA whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

Simply go to the home page of our Diocesan website <http://www.acrod.org> and click on the Amazon Smiles button in the far left column and then shop as usual.

Please include this information in your parish bulletin.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Sincerely,

The Diocesan Chancery Staff

Diocesan Apostolate for Information Technology and Communications, American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA

**Slavic Festival** at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 320 Mifflin Ave., Scranton, Pa. on Fri. Aug. 14 (4-10pm); Sat. Aug. 15 (3-10pm); Sun. Aug. 16 (12-5pm). There will be Live Entertainment Friday, (Joe Stanky), Saturday, Doubleshot and Sunday, (D.J. Sara). Featuring Homemade Ethnic Foods, Carnival Foods, Clams, Homemade Soups, Beer Tent, Games, Raffles, White Elephant Sale and More!!!

**International Dinner Club** at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 310 Mifflin Ave., Scranton, Pa. on Thursday July 9, 2015 at the Church Center. The theme this month is "God Bless America" and Chef Robert Olecki is preparing a real treat. To start we have a Watermelon Gazpacho (Fresh summer melon, cucumber, sea salt lime juice and fresh summer vegetables with the Entree of Blueberry Bar-B-Que Ribs, slow roasted with a topping of fresh blueberry Bar-B-Que Sauce and Patriotic Potato Salad with purple potatoes, new red potatoes and baby white potatoes, celery, scallion and cider mustard vinaigrette. Dessert will be a Berry Stack, summer berries stacked with fresh cake and layered with sweet cream. Coffee, Tea, Water or Soda are included and a Cash Bar is available. This wonderful meal is only \$20.00 per person so call 570-343-5151 and make your reservation by July 6!!!

## A NOTE ON MARRIAGE

by Fr Jonathan Tobias

*Note: Fr. Jonathan is a professor of theology at Christ the Saviour Seminary, and teaches the Marriage Course to our seminarians.*

On Friday, June 26, 2015 – on a day that the news should have focused entirely on the funeral of +Rev Clementa Pinckney (attended by His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios) – the Supreme Court thought it appropriate to announce its decision on the case *Obergefell v. Hodges*: the Court determined that there is now a federally-protected right of same-sex couples to be married under civil law.

What does this mean? And what does this mean for us? Historically speaking (that is, outside the Church), this is something new. In general, cultures across the world made marriage a “legal” thing between a man and a woman for the purposes of bearing children (i.e., “procreation”) and owning property. That is why

society in general has always been so interested in marriage, and it has – across the board – legislated various laws to regulate and to support marriage.

This is what is called “civil marriage.”

We should remember that one of the main reasons why society upheld marriage by law was for the purpose of procreation. That is why marriage has been limited, historically and even outside Christianity, to a relationship between a man and a woman.

As far as the Orthodox (and Roman Catholic) Church is concerned, marriage goes far beyond the legalized “civil union” that society or the State is interested in upholding. Marriage, in Holy Tradition, is a “sacrament.” It is one of the seven primary “means of grace” that God has given us for the sake of our salvation. We say confidently that we can be “saved” through marriage.

For the first few centuries of the Church (until about 800 AD), when early Christians got married, they first went to the city magistrate (kind of like our “Justice of the Peace”) and entered into a “civil union.” Then, soon afterward, they had their marriage blessed in Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning.

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony – or, better, the “Holy Mystery of Nuptial Union” – goes far beyond the interests of society. Marriage, in the Holy Tradition of Orthodoxy, is an eternal union of a man and a woman (just like Adam and Eve, and – more profoundly – Christ and His Bride the Church). Every sacramental marriage is a part and a beginning of the cosmic reconciliation of Christ returning all of Creation to the Father in universal transfiguration. Marriage includes the possibility of children, but it extends into love and joy in every moment between the husband and wife.

We Orthodox have deep and eternal view of marriage. And because of that, we venerate and protect it – not just as a civil institution, or as a “contract” that will cease at the end of life (as marriage is understood in the Roman and Protestant communities). Marriage, for us, is forever, always initiating a return to Paradise, always transforming a home into a “Garden of Eden.”

So what do we do when the Supreme Court, in a very poorly written, poorly argued and irresponsible opinion, has changed the legal definition of marriage? (The gaping holes in this opinion, written by Reagan-appointee Anthony Kennedy, are egregious.

One unanswered question in this statement -- as if it didn't matter -- is whether religious institutions who choose not to perform such will receive adequate legal protection.)

First of all, we need to remain "courageously peaceful" and remember that while this decision is huge for civil law, it does nothing to the Orthodox definition of marriage.

I doubt that the Church will ever be forced, by law, to perform same-sex marriages. Such a thing has not happened once in Massachusetts, which has legalized such marriages since 2004.

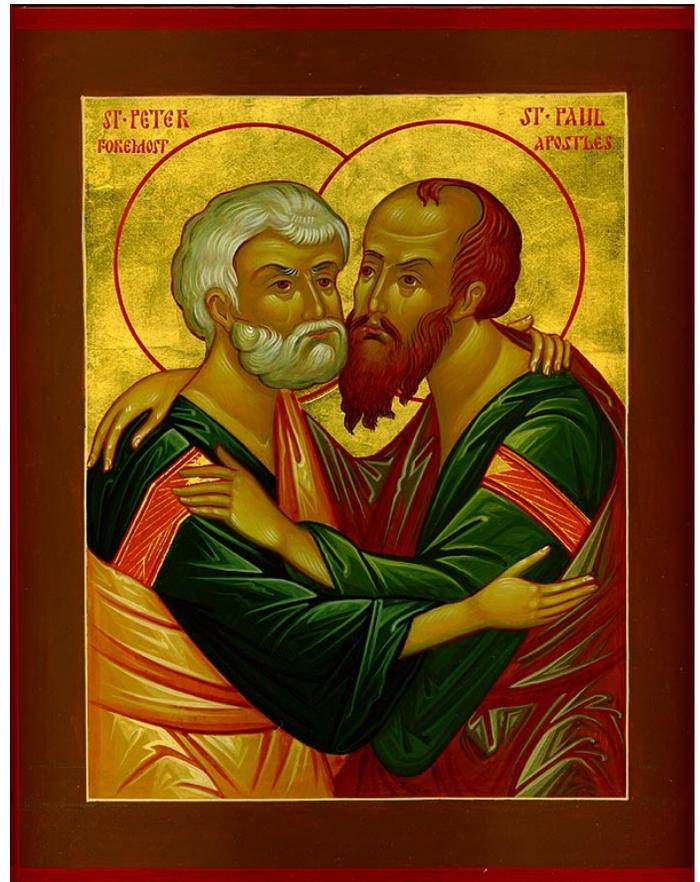
But in the event that everyone who performs the "civil marriage" within the church ceremony -- which I and every other clergy do for the State in a wedding -- might be required by law to perform a same-sex marriage ... then I -- and every other traditional priest -- will stop performing the civil part (i.e., I would no longer sign the marriage license). I do not think this is a very big deal in itself. The "marriage license" was always a government function, starting around 800 AD.

Historically, I think that any entanglement with the State has turned out to be a huge mistake. We need to remember that there have been, for a long time, many "civil marriages" that the Church does not recognize as "sacramental": "same sex union" is not the only impediment to Church-blessed sacramental marriage (there are other "impediments"): marriage between too close of blood relations is prohibited; so also is habitual adultery and criminality.

We need to also keep in mind that not only does the Church warn against homosexual activity, but it warns -- just as strongly -- against all sexual behavior outside of sacramental marriage (like adultery) and also all instances of lustful or fetishizing sex (even within marriage). The Church warns, too, against childbearing attempts that takes place outside sacramental marriage: e.g., sperm or egg donation; in vitro fertilization; surrogate motherhood; and any and all manipulations of human life, including DNA modification.

But most importantly, we need to consider that these warnings are for the conservation of formal human life and culture, and for the beautification of human existence for eternity: so the Church warns against all destructive passions -- not only sexuality outside Holy Tradition, but also greed, anger, gluttony, pride and despair.

The best thing to do is this: We need to understand and reveal the truth of Orthodox Marriage. Our homes need to be islands of the joy and peace of the Risen Christ. Our marriages need to reveal the possibilities of Trinitarian love in our time. Our marriages need to be deeply pious and faithful, even more rooted in Orthodoxy. And we need to be able to talk freely, peacefully and courageously, about what our marriages mean in Orthodoxy.



## THE HOLY GLORIOUS LEADERS OF THE APOSTLES, PETER AND PAUL

June 29/July 12

*from [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)*

**by Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo**

Today the Holy Church piously remembers the sufferings of the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Apostles Peter and Paul.

St. Peter, the fervent follower of Jesus Christ, for the profound confession of His Divinity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," was deemed worthy

by the Savior to hear in answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon ... I tell thee, that thou art Peter [Petrus], and on this stone [petra] I build My Church" (Mt.16:16-18). On "this stone" [petra], is on that which thou sayest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" it is on this thy confession I build My Church. Wherefore the "thou art Peter": it is from the "stone" [petra] that Peter [Petrus] is, and not from Peter [Petrus] that the "stone" [petra] is, just as the Christian is from Christ, and not Christ from the Christian. Do you want to know, from what sort of "rock" [petra] the Apostle Peter [Petrus] was named? Hear the Apostle Paul: "Brethren, I do not want ye to be ignorant," says the Apostle of Christ, "how all our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor.10: 1-4). Here is the from whence the "Rock" is Peter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt.10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him, preferentially, after the confession: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt.16: 19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these "keys" and the right "to bind and loosen." And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" and further after this, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, are retained" (John 20: 22-23); or: "whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven" (Mt.18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the

loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore "Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains of his own sins," says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. "Simon of John" -- says the Lord to Peter -- "lovest thou Me?" -- and the Apostle answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and a second time it was thus asked, and a second time he thus answered; being asked a third time, seeing that as it were not believed, he was saddened. But how is it possible for him not to believe That One, Who knew his heart? And wherefore then Peter answered: "Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "And sayeth Jesus to him" all three times "Feed My sheep" (John 20:15-17).

Besides this, the triple appealing of the Savior to Peter and the triple confession of Peter before the Lord had a particular beneficial purpose for the Apostle. That one, to whom was given "the keys of the kingdom" and the right "to bind and to loose," bound himself thrice by fear and cowardice (Mt.26:69-75), and the Lord thrice loosens him by His appeal and in turn by his confession of strong love. And to shepherd literally the flock of Christ was acquired by all the Apostles and their successors. "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock," the Apostle Paul urges church presbyters, "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28); and the Apostle Peter to the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when is appeared the Prince of pastors, ye will receive unfading crowns of glory" (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

It is remarkable that Christ, having said to Peter:

“Feed My sheep,” did not say: “Feed thy sheep,” but rather to feed, good servant, the sheep of the Lord. “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor.1:13). “Feed My sheep”. Wherefore “wolfish robbers, wolfish oppressors, deceitful teachers and mercenaries, not being concerned about the flock” (Mt.7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Pet 2:1; John 10:12), having plundered a strange flock and making of the spoils as though it be of their own particular gain, they think that they feed their flock. Such are not good pastors, as pastors of the Lord. “The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11), entrusted to Him by the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Pet 5:4). And the Apostle Peter, true to his calling, gave his soul for the very flock of Christ, having sealed his apostleship by a martyr’s death, is now glorified throughout all the world.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, was changed from a robbing wolf into a meek lamb. Formerly he was an enemy of the Church, then is manifest as an Apostle. Formerly he stalked it, then preached it. Having received from the high priests the authority at large to throw all Christians in chains for execution, he was already on the way, he breathed out “threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1), he thirsted for blood, but “He that dwells in the Heavens shall laugh him to scorn” (Ps 2:4). When he, “having persecuted and vexed” in such manner “the Church of God” (1Cor.15:9; Acts 8:5), he came near Damascus, and the Lord from Heaven called to him: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” and I am here, and I am there, I am everywhere: here is My head; there is My body. There becomes nothing of a surprise in this; we ourselves are members of the Body of Christ. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad” (Acts 9:4-5). Saul, however, “trembling and frightened”, cried out: “Who art Thou, Lord?” The Lord answered him, “I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest.”

And Saul suddenly undergoes a change: “What wantest Thou me to do?” -- he cries out. And suddenly for him there is the Voice: “Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). Here the Lord sends Ananias: “Arise and go into the street” to a man, “by the name of Saul,” and baptize him, “for this one is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9: 11, 15, 18). This vessel

must be filled with My Grace. “Ananias, however, answered: Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy Name” (Acts 9:13-14). But the Lord urgently commands Ananias: “Search for and fetch him, for this vessel is chosen by Me: for I shall show him what great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:11, 15-16).

And actually the Lord did show the Apostle Paul what things he had to suffer for His Name. He instructed him the deeds; He did not stop at the chains, the fetters, the prisons and shipwrecks; He Himself felt for him in his sufferings, He Himself guided him towards this day. On a single day the memory of the sufferings of both these Apostles is celebrated, though they suffered on separate days, but by the spirit and the closeness of their suffering they constitute one. Peter went first, and Paul followed soon after him. Formerly called Saul, and then Paul, having transformed his pride into humility. His very name (Paulus), meaning “small, little, less,” demonstrates this. What is the Apostle Paul after this? Ask him, and he himself gives answer to this: “I am,” says he, “the least of the Apostles... but I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me” (1 Cor.15:9-10).

And so, brethren, celebrating now the memory of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, remembering their venerable sufferings, we esteem their true faith and holy life, we esteem the innocence of their sufferings and pure confession. Loving in them the sublime quality and imitating them by great exploits, “in which to be likened to them” (2 Thess 3: 5-9), and we shall attain to that eternal bliss which is prepared for all the saints. The path of our life before was more grievous, thornier, harder, but “we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12: 1), having passed by along it, made now for us easier, and lighter, and more readily passable. First there passed along it “the author and finisher of our faith,” our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb 12: 2); His daring Apostles followed after Him; then the martyrs, children, women, virgins and a great multitude of witnesses. Who acted in them and helped them on this path? He Who said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15: 5).