

**ST. NICHOLAS BULLETIN**

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Tone 5. Epistle, Heb., 11:24-26, 32-12:2; Gospel, John 1:43-51

Martyr Conon of Isauria / Martyr Onesimus

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**SERVICES**

SATURDAY 6:00 p.m. VESPERS

(Holy Resurrection Church, Belle Vernon)

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COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOUR will be held today following the Divine Liturgy.

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SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS will be held today, at 4:30 p.m., at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral (3400 Dawson St., Pittsburgh, PA). His Eminence Metropolitan Savas will deliver the sermon.

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SOUTHWEST DEANERY MISSION SERVICE will be held next Sunday, 4:30 p.m., at Holy Resurrection Church in Belle Vernon.

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**VIGIL OFFERINGS – Sunday, March 5, 2023**

MARY BEHANNA (Virgin Mary Kiot) – In memory of parents, Andy and Petrina Gernat (2)

SANDY KLIZAS – In memory of Stephen and Helen Drake / In memory of Frank and June Drake / Birthday blessings for daughter, Sarah / Birthday blessings for grandson, Orion

SANDY CARROLL – For health of family / In memory of parents, Mae and Pete Ruev

KEN BEHANNA – For health and welfare of our church

PROTODEACON RODION and MAT. SANDY – For health of Protodeacon Rodion, Nicholas, and Christina / For health of Laura / For peace on earth

VLAD KASH – In memory of Fr. Igor

TOM and ELAINE BACKSTROM – Special intentions / In memory of mom and dad / God's healing hand be upon sister, Michele / For health of Gilbert Salotti / God's blessings upon grandchildren, Sydney, Luke, Freddy, and Madison / For health of family

MIKE HORAN – In memory of my loving wife, Rebecca / For health of Cindy / For health of sister-in-law, Lori / For health of cousin, Linda / In memory of newly departed cousin, Scott Watson

DR. DIMITRI PETRO – For health of wife, Pauline

DR. DIMITRI and PAULINE PETRO – For health of son, Tom / For health of Christine and Alexandra (2) / For health of Ted and Joceline (2) / Safe travel for Natalie and Rob (2) / For health of Giada / Safe travel for Kyra, Adam, Luke, Noah, and Will (5)  
JIM and VERA HAYS – For health of Tom Petro / For health of all parishioners / God's blessings on St. Nicholas Church  
MARK SOROKA – In blessed memory of mother, Mat. Irene / In blessed memory of father, Fr. Igor

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**The Meaning of Fasting**

The practice of fasting is rich with meaning. Many of the Holy Fathers throughout the history of the Church have written about the significance of fasting. Saint Basil, for example, tells us that fasting is not simply abstaining from food; it is, more importantly, the avoidance of sin. The Church in her hymnology describes fasting as the mother of chastity and prudence, as the accuser of sin and as the advocate of repentance, the life worthy of angels and the salvation of humans. Fasting becomes all of these when observed in the proper spirit.

In its most basic sense, fasting is abstinence from food. But it is far more than that. Through a very natural process created by God, we consume food for sustenance, energy, and life. However, we can be inclined to take more than we need or to be so controlled by our physical desire that we focus only on what we eat, neglecting our relationships and our spiritual needs, and even endangering our well-being.

By subordinating the desires of the body, fasting helps us reestablish a proper order in our lives as Christians. It helps us to open our minds and souls to the guidance of the Spirit and to break away from our captivity to bodily appetites and selfish desires.

Through fasting we overcome the burdens and pressures of physical gratification that are placed upon us in our world, and through our faith in Christ we are renewed and transformed into the holy people God created us to be. In addition, through fasting we move away from an entanglement and conformity to sinful passions and desires, into a blessed life filled with the presence, power, and grace of God.

In the practice of fasting it is important to remember that we are not fasting simply for the sake of fasting. Our observance of the fasting days and periods of the Church is for our spiritual growth and greater communion with God. It is not to be a superficial practice aimed at obtaining the praise of others. Fasting is also not intended to be so all-consuming that we become fixated by how we can design methods and recipes to experience enjoyable food without breaking the "rules." No matter how austere our fast or how much in accordance our fast may be with purely technical "rules," it is void of faith and grace if we are not also committed to prayer and worship, study, and growth in our knowledge of our Faith, and philanthropic and charitable acts.

As Orthodox Christians, let us cherish fasting as a vital part of our spiritual lives and practice. Let us experience the great joys that come through fasting as it contributes to a life of repentance and prayer.