

**SAINT STEPHEN
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
90 BETHEL ROAD
NORTH HUNTINGDON, PA. 15642**

Christ is Risen!

Dear Members of St Stephen Parish Family,

Well, with the grace of God and the help of a lot of other patient people in our households, we have made it through another week of this COVID-19 sheltering in place and virtual lockdown of most facilities. My heart goes out to those of you who have been furloughed from work and who may be struggling to get through day-by-day. And, if you, or if you now someone who is truly in need at this time, please be free to contact me. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Here at the parish I am grateful to our cantors, Dan Vasko and Kurt Novotnak, along with Ron Balta for organizing the live-streaming of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings. We will continue to live-stream the **Divine Liturgy each Sunday at 10:30 am** during this lockdown.

It has been encouraging to hear from a number of parishioners what this means to them. A number of folks have said that, although it is fine to watch the Liturgy from various parishes, it is totally different to see it from our own parish. As one person said to me: "I can't just sit there and *watch* it. I must stand and sit at the proper times; I must sing along, make the sign of the cross when appropriate and truly *participate*. It is my church and I must be a part of it!" That's the spirit!!!

Even though we all would like to see our churches, as well as other important parts of our lives, opened as soon as possible, I am firmly convinced that we should remain in place for as long as it takes to safely re-open our country. It would be tragic to try to open too soon and then fall into a recurrence of the virus.

Updates

Our heating system, although it continues to work well (even though it is turned down during this time that the church is empty) is showing some of its age. Over the course of the past few months, a number of the expansion joints in the Educational Wing have sprung leaks and needed to be repaired. This has been done, and we are now in the process of gradually replacing all the expansion joints in that area. We will also have the entire church building checked to see what other preventive measures need to be taken.

When you came for the drive-bys on Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Pascha, you may not have had the opportunity to notice that the sidewalk alongside the church that leads from the parking lot to the side sacristy entrance, has been replaced. Additionally, a walkway from the steps near the rectory garage up to the front of the church has been installed, thus completing all the concrete

work around the church that has been envisioned. These two projects were agreed upon by the Parish Advisory Council and completed before the corona virus epidemic and consequent lockdown.

Right now the Council is being very judicious in initiating new projects until such time as we see how our financial situation unfolds.

Our Tithes to our Parish

Our parishioners have continued to be faithful in contributing their regular donations during this time. Some are mailing them via USPS and others are dropping them off at the rectory. Since Pascha, we have received the following:

\$3,536.00 Church Donations

\$ 125.00 Donations in Memory of +Ruth Seech

I am very grateful to all of you who are taking your responsibility to our parish seriously, and I will pledge to continue to offer whatever services that I may during this time. Together we will stay strong as a parish, support each other and those around us and do our best to stay healthy ourselves. Once again, if I may be of service to you, or if you just want to talk, you know how to reach me. I may be, as we all are, in self-isolation, but I am readily contactable (except for the virus!!!).

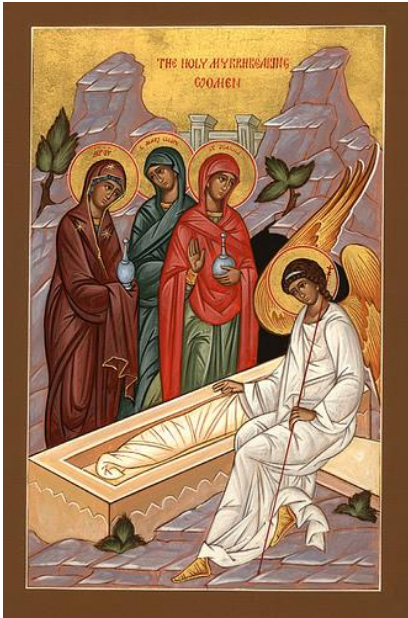
Our Apologies



We were remiss in offering our prayers and congratulations to all those who bear the name **GEORGE** and celebrated their feastday this past Thursday. This includes all the Georgettes, Georgenes, and other derivatives, including Jorge, the Spanish baptismal name of Pope Francis. Of course, we must also remember and pray for our dear friend, Archbishop George Gallaro, who also celebrated his feastday this week. He sends his greetings to all our parish. I was able to speak with him on his feastday as he is still in his native Sicily since all of Italy is under lockdown and he is not able to move to Rome at this time. You will remember that he has been promoted to an important position in the Vatican, raised to the title of Archbishop and will eventually reside in Rome. To all of them we wish a blessed feastday, health and happiness for many years!

Mnohaja L'ita!!!

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN



*Mary Magdalen and the other Mary
came to the tomb seeking the Lord
and saw an angel as radiant as light
sitting upon the stone.*

He said to them:

*Why do you seek the Living One among the dead?
He is risen as He said ...*

Why do you seek the Living One among the dead ...?

This is a good question for all of us ... because we spend so much of our lives looking ... and so often in the wrong places!!!

For example, we find ourselves in a situation that does not seem very life-giving ... pressures at work or with family ... a job that is not very rewarding ... a task that seems never-ending ... a burden from which we do not seem able to escape ... the inability to find a good job ... locked into our homes without work ... seemingly dead-ends wherever we look.

Often we are like Mary Magdalen and the others ... we look for a solution ... but we look in the wrong places!

Our God is a God of the *living* ... not of the dead! He does not dwell in the tomb ... He is alive and wants to share life with us.

This means that we need to turn away from the situations that drag us down ... we need to look up towards the light ... and find life. Often it means that we simply need to break out of the confines of our situation (even if we can only do it mentally or through our imagination during these days) ... and look to the people and events that give us life.

Who are the people who help you to feel alive???

What are the events and situations that fill you with life???

This is where we must turn ... for this is where we find the living God.

God be with you!

Fr John