
The St. Panteleimon OCO Gazette

A monthly publication of
St. Panteleimon Orthodox Christian Outreach
20545 Center Ridge Rd. Suite 202
Rocky River, OH 44116
Phone: 440-941-4850
Website: www.stpanteleimon.com

December 2011



For as often as you did it
to one of the least of these,
My brethren, you did it to me.

Matthew 25:40

Agents of Wholeness

By Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky

Those who visit the sick, suffering or afflicted bring with them the spiritual unguent of wholeness. They are healers even when they can claim no apparent cure of the one they have visited. They are healers because they make a person whole by their prayers. The opposite of wholeness is separation, fragmentation and apartness. These are the symptoms of somebody who is not in touch with herself. Her body is not well, her mind is aware of it, and her soul is incapable of enjoying the presence of the Lord. The divine energy that flows through a believer at normal times is clogged up by the presence of illness.

How do we, or better stated how does God reintegrate the assorted parts of the whole person? He chooses to use the agents of grace who come in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They go with God. They appear at the bedside of the afflicted one to pray through Christ's power, which is the energy of the Holy Spirit. Their faith has made a difference. Even if nothing else happens—no change in the vital signs, no lowering of temperature or blood count, perhaps the pain is still there; however, their presence makes visible Christ's invisible presence, and the patient is comforted by the "Comforter and Spirit of life, who is present everywhere and fills everything."

Who doesn't know the difference between survival and the fullness of life? Who has never experienced the powerful energy of life at its fullest—the thrill of skiing on newly fallen snow, or the exuberance of the child running wild through the rain, or the joy of greeting a loved one after a long absence? The one lying dormant in sick bed saying she wants to be left alone doesn't mean it, but says it because her zest for life has become stale and stretched out. The agents of wholeness must not be dissuaded, even when asked to leave. They can stand in the vestibule or corridor and continue calling on the ever-present Lord of love to touch the heart of the inert one, inspire her or him to remember happy times, and to open that shut chamber where the soul resides. Praise the Lord for everything He does, and praise Him three times because in His wisdom He prefers to act divinely using very human means.

Statistics for November 2011

Facilities with Orthodox contacts: 35

Parishes represented: 13-15

(Unable to determine membership for some residents)

One-on-one visits: 82

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From the Executive Director

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend I had a chance to think about all the people who have contributed to the ministry of St. Panteleimon Orthodox Christian Outreach in 2011. The Board of Directors and I would like to speak on behalf of the residents we serve and say "Thank you" to everyone who donated time, talents and resources to our effort.

First of all, we wish to thank Fr. Dennis Kristof of *St. Nicholas* in Lakewood, for his spiritual guidance. We would also like to acknowledge Igumen Gregory (Valentine) of *Holy Ghost Orthodox Church* in Sterling Heights, Michigan, for donating prayer cards and a metallic Cross. The Cross is used at every one of our prayer services.

The following Orthodox parishes and organizations have made financial contributions to the ministry this year:

- Eastern Orthodox Women's Guild
- Holy Ghost Orthodox Church -- Sterling Heights, MI
- St. Paul Ladies Philoptochos -- North Royalton
- Ss Peter and Paul -- Lakewood

Ms. Torry Tustan of *Torry's Threads* (13739 Madison Ave; 216-526-3022) recently prepared and donated two altar covers for use at our prayer services.

Many thanks go out to Khourie Bonnie Harmon for organizing the variety show this past February at Brighton Gardens, which is one of the facilities served by the St. Panteleimon ministry. The residents were very appreciative of the entertainment that was provided. We hope to have more programs like this in the future. Let us know if you have an interest in participating, or if you know of a senior living facility at which we may perform.

Last but not least, we would like to thank *Yorktown Lanes* for hosting our first annual bowling tournament back in June. A good time was had by all, and we raised some much-needed funds for the ministry. We had over 90 bowlers participate, including several priests and deacons. Watch for information in the spring about the 2012 event. Be sure to get in on the fun; you'll be glad you did!

The Board and I wish you and yours a joyous Nativity celebration and a healthy, happy, and spiritually profitable New Year. We look forward to serving the Orthodox community and Northeastern Ohio as a whole again in 2012.

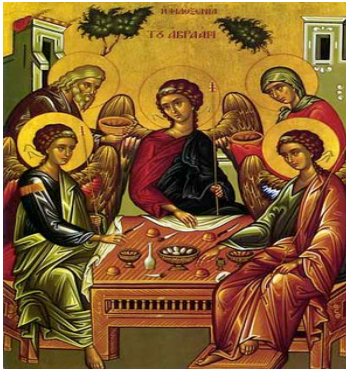
Yours in the All-Holy Trinity,
Gerald Largent

Service Schedule for December 2011

Thursday 12/1... Brighton Gardens, 10:30am
Friday 12/2... Southern Hills, 2:30pm
Saturday 12/3... Westlake Village, 11am; Crestmont North, 3:30pm
Sunday 12/4... Westlake Healthcare Center, 2pm
Tuesday 12/6... Rockport Retirement Community, 2pm
Wednesday 12/7... Greenbrier, 10:45am
Friday 12/9... Normandy Apartments, 11am
Sunday 12/11... Westlake Healthcare Center, 2pm
Tuesday 12/13... Bible Study at Rockport, 2pm
Friday 12/16... Emeritus at Medina, 9am; Samaritan Care Center, 10:30am; Emeritus at Camelot Place, 1pm; Samaritan Villa, 2:30pm
Sunday 12/18... Westlake Healthcare Center, 2pm
Tuesday 12/20... Bible Study at Rockport, 2pm
Thursday 12/22... Brighton Gardens, 10:30am
Friday 12/23... Southern Hills, 2:30pm
Saturday 12/24... Westlake Village, 1pm
Sunday 12/25... Westlake Healthcare Center, 2pm
Tuesday 12/27... Harbor Court, 11am; Rockport Retirement Community, 2pm
Wednesday 12/28... Greenbrier, 10:45am
Friday 12/30... Emeritus at Medina, 9am; Samaritan Care Center, 10:30am; Emeritus at Camelot Place, 1pm; Samaritan Villa, 2:30pm
Saturday 12/31... Crestmont North, 3:30pm

There are many ways you can help with our ministry! Some of these opportunities are listed below...

We are looking for pious Orthodox Christians to join us in praying the **Akathist to St. Panteleimon** for the ill and afflicted. Anyone may submit names of their relatives, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, etc. who are sick, and we will include them in the service. The goal is to have a different individual or family pray the service in their home each week. Participating households will receive a kit for the week that includes an icon of St. Panteleimon, copies of the service text, and the current prayer list. Let us know if you would like to join the rotation!



Announcements

Bible Drive

The St. Panteleimon Board of Directors recently began an effort to collect English language Bibles, to be used in Bible studies or to be given to our residents who request a Bible. Contact our office if you have any new or used Bibles that you would like to contribute to this effort. We will gladly make arrangements to pick up your donation. Thanks to the St. Paul Ladies Philoptochos Society for getting the Bible drive off to a good start!

Cookie Walk – Saturday, 12/10

Hosted by our friends at North Olmsted United Methodist Church – 4600 Dover Center Rd. 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Parking is available behind the church. All proceeds benefit the St. Panteleimon Ministry.

Bakers Needed

Many thanks to everyone who donated bakery for last year's St. Panteleimon cookie walk. The second annual cookie walk is quickly approaching. Please contact our office or one of the board members if you will be able to bake this year. Any contribution--whether large or small--will be greatly appreciated. We welcome both "American" bakery and your favorite ethnic recipes. Together we can make this event a success. Thank you in advance for your support!

Caroling – Sunday, 12/18

For the second year in a row we will be gathering at Westlake Health Care Center (4000 Crocker Rd) for the 2pm Orthodox prayer service. Caroling will begin at this facility at the conclusion of the service. From there we will proceed to Brighton Gardens (27819 Center Ridge Rd.) at 3:45 and Westlake Village (28550 Westlake Village Dr.) at 5:00. For more information please contact our office at 440-941-4850. All are welcome to participate!

Akathist to St. Panteleimon

"Most Holy Saint and Martyr Panteleimon-the-Healer, intercede to the Most Merciful God for ____ for the healing of his (her, their) soul(s) and body (bodies)."

Reflections on the St. Panteleimon Ministry

By Mary Grechny

Until two years ago, I gave only an occasional thought to those confined to a nursing home. Life certainly can change quickly.

My mother is a devout Orthodox Christian who attended church services regularly and had an active life in her parish. As her age advanced and she was no longer able to drive, I made sure that she attended her church every Sunday, feast days, and stayed connected to her church family. After almost nine years, this came to an abrupt end....she fell and broke her hip.

Mom endured sudden hospitalization, surgery, and was now confined to a skilled nursing facility. She told me that she felt like she was in jail. For almost three months, I spent many hours, every day, at the facility, keeping an eye on her medications, meals, physical therapy, and more. The staff was encouraged that someone cared and visited regularly. This gave me the opportunity to interact with both, permanent residents and those who were there for rehabilitation. Very few had visitors, even on weekends. I felt their loneliness. Thank God that Mom's priest visited her weekly and helped to lift her spirits. Other residents became curious about her faith, so she often talked with them about Orthodoxy and why her priest took the time to visit and pray with her. She explained how he made her feel loved and still connected to her church.

Weeks went by and with daily physical therapy, Mom worked hard at being able to walk again. But her biggest fear was "will I ever go to my church again?" Her heart would sink every Friday morning when she would hear volunteers knocking on residents' doors announcing that a Catholic prayer service would soon begin. And, each time that I heard this, I wondered why we "Orthodox" didn't do something like this. Well, now we do!

Almost a year and a half ago, I attended my first prayer service held by St. Panteleimon Orthodox Christian Outreach. It didn't take long for me to realize that praying with and serving the residents blessed me! So much appreciation lights up their faces through their smiles. They are so happy to share their own church backgrounds and family life. This special time helps them feel loved and connected to their church. Often, there are questions about our faith. A new Bible Study class at one of the facilities was well attended.

To continue this important work, we need your help. Please give prayerful consideration to supporting this ministry. Please help those who cannot attend their church any longer. Volunteering is easy! Come when you can. Come and visit. You can help at a service by setting up the table, icons, lights, pass out folders so that those attending can follow, join in singing, reading the epistle, and pass out the bulletins. Or most of all, just come and pray with us. Come and experience the joy of serving. We welcome all ages, all help, all talents (yes, a real "Talent Show" earlier this year entertained residents). We will gladly work around your work and school schedules. For students, we'll be happy to provide documentation for your time spent volunteering.

If you would like to learn more or have any questions, please contact me.

Thank you,
Mary Grechny (Holy Trinity Orthodox Church)
maryg@stpanteleimon.com
Board Member and Volunteer Coordinator
St. Panteleimon Ministry

Orthodox Prayer Services by Month

Jan – 12	May – 17	Sep – 18
Feb – 14	Jun – 18	Oct – 18
Mar – 15	Jul – 17	Nov – 18
Apr – 18	Aug – 19	Dec – 26 scheduled

Year to date: 184
Average per month: 16.7

WISH LIST!

We would deeply appreciate donations of the following items:

Spiritual Supplies: to be distributed to those we serve, or to be used in worship at the nursing homes

- Bibles — Orthodox Study Bibles would be ideal but other versions would also be graciously accepted
- Icons (any size)
- Orthodox Prayer books
- Prayer cards
- Prayer ropes/beads

Office Supplies

- 3-ring binders for church music
- Folders with 3 tabs — to use as service books
- Paper
- Postage stamps
- Toner for Brother DCP 7020

Other Supplies

- 7-Watt light bulbs for electric candles
- Electric candles — the kind that many people use for Christmas decorations
- Extension cords
- Picture frames — to use for printed icons
- Table cloths in various colors

Please contact our office and someone will gladly pick up your donations!

Members of St. Panteleimon Ministry

Spiritual Adviser:

Very Rev. Fr. Dennis Kristof
(St. Nicholas – Ukrainian)

Board of Directors

President/Executive Director:

Reader Gerald Largent
(St. Nicholas – Ukrainian)

Vice President:

Chris Harmon (St. Matthew – Antiochian)

Corresponding Secretary:

Angie Giallourakis (St. Demetrios – Greek)

Recording Secretary:

Natalie Walsh (St. Nicholas – Ukrainian)

Treasurer:

Joanne Hendrick (St. Nicholas – Ukrainian)

Volunteer Coordinator:

Mary Grechny (Holy Trinity – OCA)

Fundraising Coordinator:

Marie Wislocki (Holy Trinity -- OCA)

Other team members

Legal Adviser:

Mary E. Bozikis, Esq. (St. Paul – Greek)

Technical Director:

Josh Walsh

St. Panteleimon Orthodox Christian Outreach
a non-profit organization.
We operate under the umbrella of St. Nicholas
Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC of the USA –
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople).
2101 Quail St.
Lakewood, Ohio 44107

Contact Information:

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