



**Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**  
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## **CHRIST IS BAPTIZED! IN THE JORDAN!**

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yuriy's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with

cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Barbara McDougall, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Michael Pawlyshyn, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczyk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah

Dorning, Evelyn Burlack, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Bishop Athanasius Akunda of Western Kenya, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

**REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!**

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

**AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.**

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 18**

**STRICT FAST DAY**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 19**

**THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 20 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM**

**34<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; AFTERFEAST OF THEOPHANY; SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER, AND BAPTIST JOHN**

*Tone 1*

Ephesians 4:7-13; Acts 19:1-8

Matthew 4:12-17; John 1:29-34

**\*\*\*\*\*BLESSING OF WATER AFTER SERVICE—DOWNSTAIRS\*\*\*\*\***

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 27 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM**

**35<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; LEAVE-TAKING OF THEOPHANY; HOLY FATHERS SLAIN AT SINAI & RAITHU-ISAIAH, SABBAS, MOSES & HIS DISCIPLE MOSES, JEREMIAH, PAUL, ADAM, SERGIUS, DOMNUS, PROCLUS, HYPATIUS, ISAAC, MACARIUS, MARK BENJAMIN, EUSEBIUS, ELIAS, & OTHERS; VENERABLE JOSEPH ANALYTINUS OF RAITHU MONASTERY; VENERABLE THEODULUS; VENERABLE STEPHEN  
SAINT SAVA I, FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA**

*Tone 2*

Colossians 3:12-16

Luke 18:18-27

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 03 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM  
36<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; VENERABLE MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR; MARTYR NEOPHYTUS; MARTYRS EUGENE, CANDIDUS, VALERIAN, & AQUILA; VIRGIN-MARTYR AGNES; MARTYR ANASTASIUS; VENERABLE MAXIMUS THE GREEK**

*Tone 3*

1 Timothy 1:15-17

Luke 18:35-43

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Milton G. Chicka, Daniel Pysh, Sara Chicka, Nikolai Pivtroaiko, Mary Lokie, Anne Cherepko Mazock, & Roy Wyke—Fr. Bob***

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 20 JANUARY 2019**

**34<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; AFTERFEAST OF THEOPHANY; SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER, AND BAPTIST JOHN**

**\*\*\*\*\*BLESSING OF WATER AFTER SERVICE—DOWNSTAIRS\*\*\*\*\***

### **TROPARION—TONE 1**

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews;  
While the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body;  
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world.  
The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of life:  
Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom!  
Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,  
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **KONTAKION—TONE 1**

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself.  
Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished!

Adam exults, O Master!

Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee:

Thou are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!

### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 1**

**READER:** Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee.

**PEOPLE: Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee.**

READER: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!

**PEOPLE: Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee.**

READER: Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

**PEOPLE: As we have set our hope on Thee.**

### **ALLELUIA VERSES**

God gives vengeance to me, and subdues people under me.

He magnifies the salvation of the king, and deals mercifully with His Christ, with David and his seed forever!

## **SHINING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN THE DARKNESS**

Fr Luke Veronis

“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.” (Mt 4:15-16) On the Sunday after the baptism of Christ, this is how we hear St Matthew the Evangelist begin the story of Jesus’ public ministry. A Great Light has shined forth and given hope to people living in darkness!

Light versus darkness. Hope versus despair. Goodness versus evil. Love versus hatred. Life versus death.

This stark comparison highlights the Good News that Jesus brings into the world. Here lies the center of the Christian Gospel. No matter how dark and depressing the world may seem, Christ offers an opportunity to view life from a different perspective. This fallen world won’t change until the second coming of Christ ushers in the fullness of God’s Kingdom, so we can always expect darkness and evil in the world. Jesus, however, offers His followers a different way to engage the world, a new way to encounter the darkness in the world!

Keep our eyes on Christ and be filled with light. We will never despair! Invite His Holy Spirit to live in us and plant His seeds of joy in our lives!

We live with hope! Live under the reign of God and become instruments in sharing His light into the darkness. We remain optimistic. Remember how St. John the Evangelist began his gospel account, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Shining divine light in this world! Here is also our call in life.

What is essential for all of us to understand is that just as Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but shall walk in the light of life." (John 8:12) He also told each one of us, "YOU are the light of the world...LET YOUR LIGHT so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Mt 5:14,16)

Jesus Christ has brought light into the world, has brought light into OUR lives and changed us, SO THAT we share His light, shine His light in the world all around us! There is darkness all around us, in our everyday lives. How are WE SHINING LIGHT in that darkness? How are we shining brightly the light of Christ onto others?

I heard a beautiful analogy of a father who had just bought his son a powerful flashlight for his son's upcoming camping trip. As they walked out of the store into the daylight, the young boy wanted to try out his new flashlight and see how it worked? Being outside in the daylight, though, he couldn't see its light. He complained to his father that the flashlight didn't work and that they should return it. The father, however, explained to his son that a flashlight wasn't made to shine light in the daylight, but was made to shine light at night, when darkness is all around. Take the flashlight into dark places, the father said, and you will see its light shine.

Isn't that what we are all called to do? Think of where you see darkness in our world? It's easy to look on the internet and see such awful stories of darkness in society, in politics, in the world around us. But where do we see darkness in our daily lives? Among the people we interact with every day? The darkness of loneliness? The darkness of addiction? The darkness of depression? The darkness of despair? The darkness of illness? The darkness which comes from a broken life? The darkness of life's daily grind and struggle?

Let's pause for a moment and think about someone we know in our lives, someone with whom we have contact with regularly who is struggling with some issue. How can we bring light into their darkness, and allow Christ's light of hope to shine from us to them?

Our light is needed precisely where there is darkness. Never despair about the darkness we see all around us. Instead, try to shine the light, be

the light in the darkness and despair we see in anyone's life. We need to turn on our flashlight of faith and let it shine brightly in that darkness! Become instruments of light, shining Christ's light in the world.

I remember visiting someone who had lost their husband after taking care of him for many years. When I saw her, and asked how she was, she despairingly cried out, "I'm a dead woman. I'm alive, but living as if I'm dead. My husband is gone. I have no family. No one comes to see me. I can't get out of my house. All day long I just sit here by myself. No one calls. No one comes to see me. I'm just waiting to die." My heart felt the darkness that surrounded this woman. She was lonely. She was sad. She didn't see hope for the future. She was waiting to die.

So, I tried to turn on God's flashlight and allow His light to shine in her darkness. I realize, though, that I have to go back, visit her again, call her up from time to time, and become an ongoing light in her life. And of course, it can't just be me. That is what each of us is called to do! How can each of us become instruments in God's hands, shining His light onto others in our daily lives?

In the 60 homes that I blessed this past week, I can honestly say that 75% of them are dealing with various issues of old age, of illness, of loneliness, and other various challenges. And this in within our own church family! What are we going to do about that?

I want each of us to think about the people who cross our paths each and every day. Think hard about every person and ask yourself where the light of Christ needs to shine forth. How can YOU and I bring Christ's light—with a visit, through a phone call, simply by sitting with someone and listening to their struggles, empathizing with them and comforting them with our presence?

Don't get used to the darkness all around us and don't accept it as the norm of life. Instead, begin shining forth the light of Christ!

There's a beautiful children's song we sing from time to time in our Sunday School: "This little Christian light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (x3) Let it shine all the time let it shine."

May our light shine, or more precisely, may the light of Christ shine through us each and every day, especially in the dark places of the world. Wherever you see darkness, don't complain and don't be scared, instead, let Christ's light shine brightly from our lives!

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it." (John 1:5)

## **Church Etiquette—Proper etiquette upon entering an Orthodox temple**

From ancient times, the traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church has been to stand. Traditionally Orthodox churches have no pews, but do provide chairs or benches on the side walls reserved for the elderly and infirm. When worshiping in churches with pews, we need know it is fully acceptable to stand for the entire service. In churches with pews, it is preferable to stand closer to the back, or on the side, so we do not block other worshipers view. If we prefer to sit, it is important to remember that we should always stand during the reading of the Holy Gospel, the Little and Great Entrances, the Anaphora, the distribution of Holy Communion, whenever the priest gives a blessing, and the Dismissal.

Orthodox Christians typically light candles when coming a church, as the candles are a form of offering that accompany our prayers. It is best that we not distract other worshipers by moving about in the service, but keep our private lighting of candles, and our veneration of icons, within those few minutes that take place before the start of the liturgical services.

Arriving before the service is to begin, should be the norm. This modern custom of arriving late for services deprives us of the important moments we should have encountering the Lord in the momentary solitude, while in the temple, for our private prayer and preparation for the Divine Liturgy. If we do arrive late, we must be sure to enter the church quietly and respectfully, making sure we do not distract other worshipers.

Remember, should we find ourselves seated, crossing one's legs in church is considered very disrespectful. Sitting in church is a concession, and not the normative way of prayer, so if we do sit down we must keep our feet on the floor, ready to stand at attention (which is what "Let us attend" means).

Leaving the church before the Dismissal is rude, and deprives us of the final blessing. Our Orthodox worship has a beginning with the words, "Blessed is the Kingdom...", and an end, "Let us depart in peace...". To give into the temptation to leave immediately after receiving the Holy Mysteries (Holy Communion) is to treat the Sacrament like a fast food restaurant where we come and go as we please.

If a woman insists on wearing lipstick to church, she must blot her lips well before venerating a holy icons, taking Holy Communion, or kissing the cross or the priest's or bishop's hand, so as not to leave makeup on these sacred objects. It would be better for her to wait until after church to put it on, keeping in mind that God is not impressed with how attractive one looks. Church is the place to adorn ourselves with good works and piety.

Traditionally Orthodox Christian women wear modest dresses or skirts that fall below the knee. Dresses should have backs and not be cut low in the front. We will not impress the Lord with clothing, but we should honor Him with our



modesty, respect and piety. As the Holy Scripture say, "Holiness befits Thy House, O Lord, for evermore." (Psalm 93:5).

While coat and tie are not mandatory for men, shirts should have collars and be buttoned to the collar. Slacks should be cleaned and pressed, while jeans are too casual for church, especially ones with patches or holes. Shorts should never be worn in God's House.

It is traditional to eat a piece of antidoron, the bread that was left over after Holy Communion was prepared. While antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread and as such, should be eaten carefully so that crumbs don't fall on the floor. And parents should make sure their children take the antidoron carefully and respectfully.

In an age when we've become casual with just about everything, the divine services is the place where Christian piety must rule, and where our respect for God's House reflects our belief that the temple has been consecrated to the Glory of God. We must always remember that we are in church to worship the Holy Trinity Who is present. The celebrant priest's words, "With the fear of God and faith and love, draw near", must be forefront in our minds in the way we approach holy worship. This is the root of good church etiquette.

If we take our Orthodoxy seriously, proper church etiquette will reflect our wiliness to be obedience to the Holy Tradition of the Church of Christ.

With love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon

## **FOUR PILLARS OF A MEANINGFUL LIFE**

New Year's Sermon 2019 Fr Luke A Veronis

"There is more to life than being happy." How many people agree with that statement? As we prepare to begin a new year, I want to draw our attention to this challenging statement – "There is more to life than being happy." What do you think could be more important than a "happy life?" Or maybe the question should be, how do we understand what a truly happy life is?

On my drive from Boston to Lancaster this past week, I decided to listen to a number of TED Talks, and came across a great one from the best-selling author Emily Esfahani Smith. She is a journalist whose TED talk "There's more to life than being happy" has been seen six million times. In it, she detailed her research in psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy which reveal FOUR PILLARS to a MEANINGFUL LIFE. A meaningful life, she highlights, is ultimately more fulfilling than a happy life. In fact, "chasing happiness [or success] often makes people more unhappy." So, life shouldn't be about seeking out happiness, Instead, when we strive to make life meaningful, in the end, we may discover happiness! So, how do we

make life more meaningful? Well, here are her four pillars. In a meaningful life, we discover a life of:

1. BELONGING, or being a part of a community where we are valued, where we are loved, where we feel welcomed, and where we truly value, love, and welcome others.

2. PURPOSE, living life with a greater purpose than one's own little desires. Breaking away from our egocentric passions and discovering a greater calling beyond ourselves. "Purpose is less about what you WANT than what you GIVE." The deepest purpose in life is learning to live for others!

3. TRANSCENDENCE, realizing that we can connect with a higher reality, experience a reality greater than ourselves!

4. STORY TELLING. We all have a life story. And yet, what we perceive of our life story can change over time. We may retell the story of our own life. No matter what we've done wrong, how we've failed, whatever mistakes we've made, and whatever challenges we have faced, we can always reimagine and retell our story in a way that gives our life new direction and new mean. We can learn from our past, and recreate our lives in a meaningful and new way!

Belonging, Purpose, Transcendence, and Storytelling. These are the pillars of a meaningful life!

As I reflected on these four pillars which Emily Efsahani Smith discovered through her research in psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy, it became so obvious that our Orthodox Christian faith offers not only a very similar message, but in fact, the Church offers the perfect context to discover and live out these four pillars. And these four pillars are what I want to challenge all of us to reflect on, and strive to cultivate more and more, as we enter into the New Year of 2019.

1. BELONGING: We all need to feel a part of a loving community, and first and foremost, the Church is or should be such a loving family. The Church is the Family of God which values anyone and everyone who comes into its embrace. The Church Family is a community that cherishes and respects one another, that is open and welcoming to everyone.

Unfortunately, our churches don't always live up to this pillar so well. We don't always welcome everyone and make all feel valued and cherished. If this is the case, we then need to remember, WHO IS THE CHURCH? The CHURCH is YOU and ME, each one of us! Don't look at some bishop, or some priest, but remember each one of us is the church! So, the question isn't why our churches aren't such great places of belonging, but how do

you and I make our churches better places, the perfect place for everyone to feel welcomed, cherished, and loved. Being filled with God's grace, how can YOU and I make the church a better place of belonging? This is our first challenge for the New Year, and the first step to making our lives more meaningful! FINDING A HOME, a PLACE OF BELONGING IN THE CHURCH!

2. PURPOSE: This second pillar in a meaningful life centers on breaking away from our egocentric, me-centered worldview. We have to discover a purpose greater than ourselves. How can each one of us, in the little worlds we live in each and every day, bring love, kindness, goodness to others. How can we work at helping others, loving others, serving others in a way that changes their lives? To live a PURPOSE-CENTERED LIFE we can't focus on what WE WANT, but must learn to focus on WHAT WE CAN GIVE! What is the vision of life we can carry that goes beyond ourselves? Can we get involved in a cause for justice? In a service of love? Can we become vehicles or instruments in God's hand of bringing his presence and peace and light into a divided, broken, dark world? Jesus clearly stated that "unless we deny ourselves, and take up our crosses" we can never truly follow Him. And we take this path by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, visiting those in prison and sick, caring for the marginalized and needy. Ultimate and lasting purpose in life comes when we learn to live for others!

3. TRANSCENDENCE: The third pillar goes right in line with our faith and the Church. A meaningful life is one that realizes life is not just what we see here on earth. Our secularized society tempts and deceives us to think that life is all about the here and now, a materialistic life whose focus is on what we see and have on this earth. A meaningful life, however, realizes that there is something greater than ourselves. Our finite, earthly lives can connect with eternity. Isn't that what Christmas is all about? The Infinite Creator of the Universe became a part of His finite creation. God became human so that we humans could connect with God! Living a life of transcendence, connecting with eternity. In the New Year, may we strive to connect with the transcendent each and every day. Live life with an eternal perspective, connected to our eternal God!

4. STORY TELLING. The fourth pillar is a central part of the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus Christ preached throughout his life. What is the story of our life? We all have fallen short of the life that God calls us to. We have all failed, fallen short, missed the mark and sinned. Each of us have some brokenness in our past. Yet, our failures and shortcomings aren't the full story in our lives. Christ has come to save the sinner and give new life to

those who have died. When we allow Jesus to be at the center of our lives, He changes the story of our life. He meets the thief on the Cross in his last moments of life and changes his life story. He meets a woman married five times and changes her story. He meets the traitorous tax-collector and transforms his story. The fourth pillar of a meaningful life is remembering that we can retell the story of our life. Our life is not over, so no matter where we have fallen and failed, we can start a new chapter in our life story. Let us learn to reimagine our life story in a new way – where our life is full of belonging; where our life is full of purpose and meaning; and where our life is filled with the presence of God.

May the New Year be one where we strive to re-understand what makes life happy by equating it with what makes life meaningful! And we make life meaningful by making it a life with BELONGING found in the Church, with PURPOSE greater than ourselves, with a connection with TRANSCENDENCE, and by reimaging our Life Story, sharing A NEW STORY in our lives!