

THE PUBLICANS' PRAYER GROUP

Mission of the Society of Publicans

Over the past quarter century our Church has grown and matured in many areas. We received a bishop, doubled the number of our parishes, established a seminary, monastery and convent, developed programs and publications, and deepened our awareness of our rightful spiritual heritage. All these are good, but too often our growth remains on the physical or intellectual level. For growth in the spirit, our church must depend on the Lord and approach Him eagerly in prayer. Without this foundation of dependence on the Lord in prayer, no spiritual work can hope to succeed. *"unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."* (PS 127:1)

In the conviction that prayer is essential to the spiritual renewal of our communities, the Society of Publicans was established in 1982. This prayer movement takes its name from the Lord's story of the Pharisee and the Publican (Lk 18:9-14) in which the Publican is the example of true prayer. This "society" is a loosely knit fellowship of people in parishes throughout the diocese who have committed themselves to pray on a daily basis for the spiritual renewal of our parishes and the entire eparchy.

Levels of Commitment

There are three levels of commitment in the Society of Publicans. In the first, people commit themselves as individuals to daily prayer for the spiritual renewal of our Church. The calendar printed on this page is our guide. It lists all the parishes and institutions in the diocese, each assigned to a particular day. Members are asked to remember each community in a special way on the day assigned so that every day there are people all over the country praying for the needs of the parish(es) of the day.

On the day people pray for their own parish, we also ask that they remember the administration of the diocese as well. One may participate on only this level or, if one has the time and interest, become involved on one of the other levels.

No one particular prayer is necessary to participate in this prayer ministry: only the commitment to pray the best way you know how. Some people pray the *Jesus Prayer*, others use the spontaneous prayer or other forms with which they are comfortable. Still others incorporate these intentions into their regular intercessions. At the request of many people in the Society, the Prayers of Intercession are offered to provide a form of intercession harmonious with our Eastern prayer tradition.

Praying Together in the Parish

In the second level of commitment, Publicans in the parish may gather regularly for communal prayer to intercede for the intentions of the Society as well as for any needs people may have in mind in the parish. In some parishes people meet weekly or biweekly for the Divine Liturgy, the Paraclisis, or an Intercession Service. In other places, the group meets *ad hoc* when a special intention is presented. In several of our parishes members of the Society have formed a prayer line in which intentions are brought to the members' attention by a local coordinator as soon as that person learns of them. Still other parishes remember the prayer intentions of the society in their regularly scheduled services every Sunday or daily.

In some parishes we have only one person committed to this call for prayer. In some parishes there are many and they participate in telephone prayer chains as well. People call one another to ask for prayer, even long distance. In other parishes, people meet for common worship and prayer. And so, however members of individual communities pray, we know that their service has borne fruit.

You may participate on only the first level (daily personal prayer), or on the second level (attending community prayer services or participating in a prayer chain), or on the third level (serving as coordinator for your parish, enlisting others to pray daily and communicating intentions received).

Serving as a Coordinator

In some parishes members have accepted the third level of commitment: agreeing to serve as local coordinators, receiving intentions from the diocese or from other parishioners and making these intentions known to other Publicans.

Here at St. Basil's we are officially celebrating today the TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY of our Prayer Line. Our designated day is the 8th of each month. A phone call to ALICE HINDY at (401) 353-5593 will set the wheels in motion.

MAY GOD GRANT OUR PRAYER LINE PARTNERS MANY BLESSED YEARS OF CONTINUED SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITY!!!

Let us pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, protection, forgiveness, and remission of sins for the servants of God who belong to this parish, those who bear offerings, to those who do good works in this holy and most venerable church, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people who await from You great and abundant mercy.

