

THE ORTHODOX POST

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Pastor's Message

By Father David Fox

Dear Friends,

On the Resurrection of Christ

St. Paul reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just *part* of the Christian faith: everything we believe, every good wish for our children, every one of our hopes, all of it depends upon the answer to this one question: Did Jesus the Christ truly, physically rise from the dead? St. Paul writes, "If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also in vain." In fact, St. Paul states that this Christian belief cannot be just one form of religion among many: if Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead, then Christians are actually misrepresenting God! Whether or not Christ has been raised from the dead makes all the difference in the world: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1 Cor. 15: 14-19).

But how can we know if we were not one of those who saw the resurrected Christ?

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St. Athanasios, in his great *On The Incarnation of the Word*, carefully lists all the "evidence" for this Christian claim: the prophecies given to the Jews, the miraculous nature of Jesus' life, the conversion of pagans to the faith of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, the presence of miracles in the life of contemporary Christians, the 'science' of prayer, fasting, and worship found in the Church, the lack of fear of death in the martyrs. A Jewish scholar friend of mine admitted to me once, "I do not know whether Jesus was truly raised from the dead; but what I do know is that the Apostles, nearly all of whom went to excruciating deaths declaring His resurrection, truly believed that Jesus had risen from the dead."

Thankfully, we Orthodox Christians have even

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President's Message

By Lou Foundos

Since Lent began in March, we are now in the middle of the Lenten season. During this period, we started Adult Education sessions again and are continuing with the book, "The Mountain of Silence." As usual, we share a pot luck meal which we enjoy during our discussion group. Please make an effort to attend since these

discussions are lively and informative. It is not essential that you attended any of the other session to get something from the new one. So why not make an attempt to join us?

As Pascha approaches, it provides an opportunity for all of us to learn more about our religion and fasting appropriately. Lent is a journey that ends with the Paschal service and

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Daughters' Corner

By Christina Liolin, President

The Daughters' meeting on February 26th was very well attended and several items were discussed. Fr. David joined the ladies to discuss the book of names that are read on Memorial Saturdays. He asked if we could form a committee to review the names and eliminate duplication. Tina Peters, Helen Pillary, Linda Foundos, Irma Mile and Christina Liolin volunteered to work on the book.

Because we need more people to make Meshe for Sunday liturgy, the ladies decided to have a lesson on March 19th. Six ladies attended: Tina Peters, Helen Panajoti, Christina Liolin, Rosalie Zacharias, Linda Foundos and Kerri Fox, as well as Paris Fox who made her own "mini" Meshe. The lesson was fun and very successful resulting in six big, beautiful loaves of bread for Sunday Liturgy. We would like to do this again in the next few months and perhaps some more people (men are invited!) will join us.

At the St. Nicholas Dinner Dance on May 7th, the Daughters will be raffling off several baskets of items which we will be asking volunteers to donate. Some ideas for basket themes are: baby items, health and beauty aids, wine, fruit, ethnic foods, kitchen items. Please speak to Christina Liolin, Linda Foundos or Kerri Fox if you would like to help out in this fundraising effort.

The next Daughters' meeting is scheduled for April 9th. We would love to see you there!

Community News

By Linda Foundos

- Congratulations to Christine & Thoma Beno on the birth of their daughter, Daniela Elizabeth, on Tuesday, March 7th weighing in at 7 lbs. 9 oz. Jamie is delighted to have a baby sister. All the best to the entire family including the proud grandparents Joan & Al Foundos and Diana & Dhmitir Beno.
- **Spring Fest** will be held on **Sunday, May 7th** at the **Inn at New Hyde Park**. Call your friends and come on and join this fun-filled evening with a delicious dinner, live music, entertainment and dancing. See flyer enclosed for details.
- Our next Soul Saturday service is scheduled for Saturday, June 10th. Contact Fr. David if you have not yet completed a form listing the names of your deceased loved ones that you would like remembered. It is a good feeling to participate in this service specifically in memory of those dear to you.
- St. Vladimir's Seminary is hosting a Lenten Retreat on Saturday, April 8th. For those interested in participating in this enriching experience, please see Fr. David for details.
- This year because of the number of Orthodox churches in our community, St. Nicholas will not be hosting a Vesper Service during lent. Please ask Father David or visit the OCA website for the schedule of the hosting churches. We have enjoyed hosting in the past and look forward to doing so again. It is a beautiful service and provides a wonderful opportunity to get to know our fellow parishes.
- A spring clean up is being planned for St. Nicholas before Easter. Please see Lou Foundos.



Do you have any
GRADUATES IN YOUR FAMILY ?

(Elementary, Middle and
High School, College)



Send us their names, and we will list all
of St. Nicholas Parish's honorees in the June
issue of The Orthodox Post.

Adult Study

Every Wednesday night during Great Lent, after the Presanctified Liturgy, we have been studying chapter 11 of *The Mountain of Silence*, "Escape from Hell." This topic of life after death has generated much discussion. Nearly all of the participants have said that they have been surprised at the teaching of the Church. They had been wrong about what "hell" was. Also, we have read accounts to show how the Memorial services we hold for the departed truly do something and help these people, and that the Church has the power to bring people out of hell. We are continuing with this topic and invite all to come who wish to learn the book's uplifting discussion of life after death. The Presanctified Liturgy is one of the most beautiful and deep of the year, a combination of Vespers and Divine Liturgy. The class discussion is informal, over a Pot Luck supper.



Priest's Office Hours During the Great Fast

If you would like to speak with Fr. David, please call him at (201) 841-7590 Sun-Friday. He will also be available at the Church Office from 5-7 on Wednesdays.

Priest's additional Phone Hours during the Fast

In addition to the weekday hours of availability, if you would like to speak with Fr. David, he will be available Tuesday evenings 8-10 p.m.

The Great Fast

Presanctified Liturgies during the Great Fast, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.

Every Wednesday from March 8-April 12th, there will be Presanctified Liturgy. This means that the part of the Meshe, the Lamb, will be consecrated on Sunday and received on Wednesday night. The Church provides us this extra Gift to help us keep the fast. This Liturgy is a mixture of Vespers and a Liturgy, and is beautiful and deep. Everyone should attempt to attend at least one Presanctified Liturgy during Lent.

Important Dates for Services and Holy Week

The Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos:
Saturday, Mar. 25th at 10 a.m.

Lazarus Saturday: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.,
April 15th

Palm Sunday/Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.
Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m., April 16th.

Holy Tuesday, April 18th, Bridegroom Matins,
7:30 p.m.

Holy Wednesday, April 19th: Holy Unction Service,
7:30 p.m.

Holy Thursday, April 20th: Institution Divine Liturgy,
10 a.m.

7:30 p.m. – 12 Passion Gospel Readings

Holy Friday: The Taking Down of the Body of Christ,
1 p.m.

7:30 p.m. The Praises next to the Tomb of Christ.

Holy Saturday: Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great,
9:30 a.m.

Paschal Service: 11:30 Matins, followed by Divine Liturgy at midnight

Holy Pascha: begins midnight on Sunday morning with Blessing of Baskets afterward.

Agape Vespers: Sunday, April 23rd at noon.

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the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let's try to make this journey more meaningful this year and at the same time educate the children.

As the church building ages, it requires a bit more maintenance. We have a major project in redoing all the sidewalks in front of the church and on the back side as well. In addition, the retaining wall has rotted and must be replaced as part of addressing the water problem that usually occurs in the spring. We are also planning a spring cleanup day to do some clean up and minor repairs in the church and fellowship hall. **WE NEED YOUR HELP FOR A FEW HOURS.** Please see me about giving your time to save us some expenses.

Save the date—Our annual picnic will be on June 18th at Hempstead Lake State Park. We had our annual Parish meeting on March 19th. I will cover this in another article and provide you with some of the highlights.

Pastor's Message from page 1

more on which to base this faith in the resurrection of Christ: the real presence of Christ in the Church. I invite all of you to come to the services of Holy Week, where I pray, through our preparation during Lent, we will experience together the reality of Christ's death and resurrection.

Pray for me. Your friend,
+Fr. David

Pizza with the Girls

After last Fall's pizza party for the altar boys, some of the girls asked Fr. David, "when do we get our pizza party?" On the Sunday before Lent began, about twelve of our girls had a pizza party with Fr. David after the Liturgy. We had to chase the boys out a couple of times (and had to clean up some apple juice), but it was great to hear about the girls' lives, the future fashion merchandiser, the concert violinist, the dancer, the dog trainer, and the social planners. Do you know one of our young women was recently quoted in a newspaper?

**St. Nicholas General Meeting
Sunday, March 19, 2006**

Fr. David reported that he is pleased with the growth of the Sunday School. Extra classes have been added, the curriculum has grown blending materials from various sources and the teachers are doing a wonderful job. Their annual Christmas Pageant was very special with enthusiastic participation from so many children. They baked cookies and visited the shut-ins as well. One challenge has been classroom space which the Parish Council is addressing. As part of an ongoing project to beautify our worship space, we have begun using our new Gospel Book, Tabernacle and candles for the altar boys. Fr. David expressed his thanks for the generous participation of so many in various areas of the life of St. Nicholas; the teachers, the choir, the altar servers, church maintenance, the Daughters, the Parish Council, the Ushers, administrative help and all those that give of themselves so that our church can run so smoothly.

The Daughters have been active with their annual Rummage/Bake Sale, Pancake Breakfast and regular meetings. Christina Liolin said that they have made several charitable donations since the last meeting to the Home of Hope for abused children in Albania, Covenant House, Metropolitan Joan of Korce, Albania and \$1,500 to St. Nicholas. The Daughters are the right arm of the Parish Council.

The Archdiocese is struggling to replace the old "dues" system with a "fair share" system. A special meeting is to be held in Worcester to focus on this topic.

Along with an aging building come the ongoing maintenance issues. Nick Papajorgji has been overseeing and doing much of the maintenance work along with volunteers. The body assembled approved \$3,000 to renovate the men's bathroom.

The financial report speaks for itself. With pledges being less than half of what is needed to support St. Nicholas, fundraising is essential. It provides over \$20,000 to our income. Fortunately, the elders of the church had the wisdom to save some of the funds from the sale of the old church in Manhattan and invest it. That investment income helps us a great deal.

Elections were held to replace the 1/3 of the Council that stepped down as their terms ended. Congratulations to Ilia Luka, Nick Papajorgji and Bill Peters on their election to the Parish Council. Your Parish Council consists of: Lou Foundos, Christina Liolin, Jim Liolin, Roland Llupa, Ilia Luka, Nick Papajorgji, Mark Papalexis, Bill Peters and Petrika Troja.

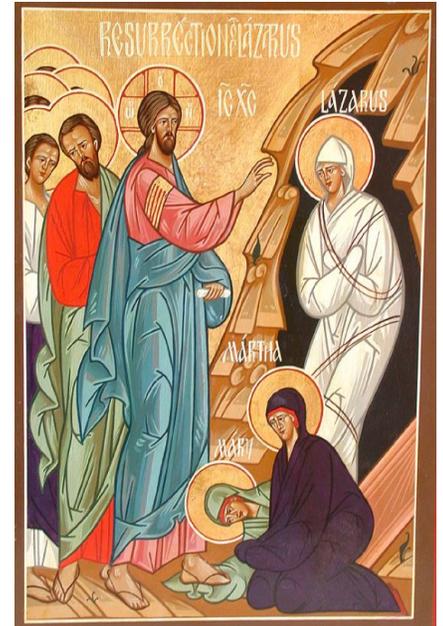
**The Raising of Lazarus
(Lazarus Saturday)
Commemorated on April 15**

In a carefully detailed narrative the Gospel relates how Christ, six days before His own death, and with particular mindfulness of the people "standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me" (John 11:42), went to His dead friend Lazarus at Bethany outside of Jerusalem. He was aware of the approaching death of Lazarus but deliberately delayed His coming, saying to His disciples at the news of His friend's death: "For your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe" (John 11:14).

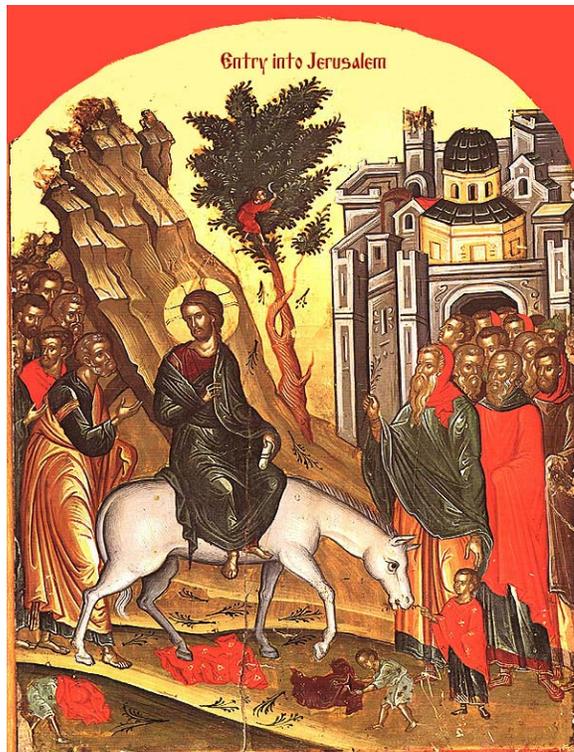
When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus was already dead four days. The four-day burial underscores the horrible reality of death. Man, created by God in His own image and likeness, is a spiritual-material being, a unity of soul and body. Death is destruction; it is the separation of soul and body. The soul without the body is a ghost, as one Orthodox theologian puts it, and the body without the soul is a decaying corpse. This "mystery" of death is the inevitable fate of man fallen from God and blinded by his own prideful pursuits.

With epic simplicity the Gospel records that, on coming to the scene of the horrible end of His friend, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). At this moment Lazarus, the friend of Christ, stands for all men, and Bethany is the mystical center of the world. Jesus wept as He saw the "very good" creation and its king, man, "made through Him" (John 1:3) to be filled with joy, life and light, now a burial ground in which man is sealed up in a tomb outside the city, removed from the fullness of life for which he was created, and decomposing in darkness, despair and death. Again as the Gospel says, the people were hesitant to open the tomb, for "by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days" (John 11:39).

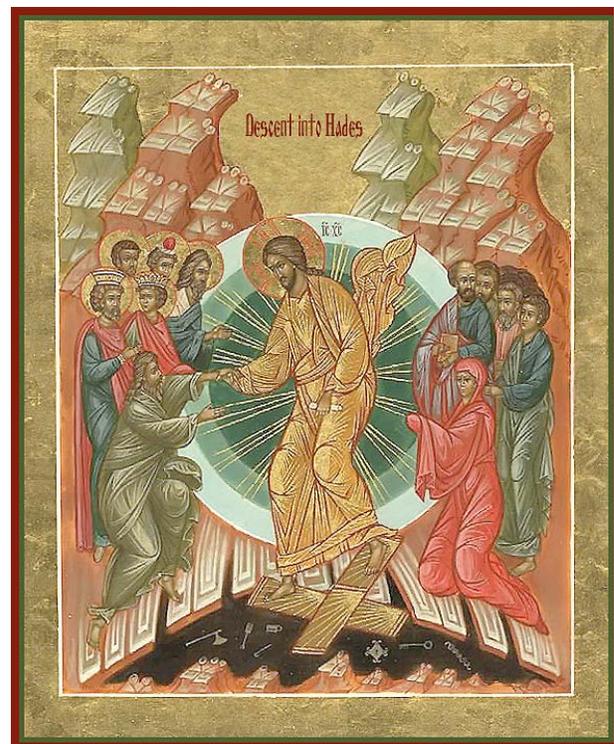
When the stone was removed from the tomb, Jesus prayed to His Father and then cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come out." The icon of the feast shows the particular moment when Lazarus appears at the entrance to the tomb. He is still wrapped in his grave clothes and his friends, who are holding their noses because of the stench of his decaying body, must unwrap him. Christ presents the world with this observable fact: on the eve of His own suffering and death He raises a man dead four days! The people were astonished. Many immediately believed on Jesus and a great crowd began to assemble around Him as the news of the raising of Lazarus spread. The regal entry into Jerusalem followed.



**Palm Sunday (April 16)
The Feast of the Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem**



**Pascha (April 23)
The Feast of Feasts: Great and Holy Pascha**



Major Church Activities and Events

- Sun. Apr 2nd:** Youth Group after Liturgy
- Sun. Apr 9th:** Daughters of St. Nicholas Meeting after Liturgy
- Tues. Apr 11th:** Parish Council Meeting, 7:30pm
- Sun. Apr 16th:** Palm Sunday Liturgy and Pancake Breakfast
- Fri. Apr 21st:** 1:00 pm: Taking Down The Body of Christ
7:30 pm: Praises
- Sat. Apr 22nd:** Pascha: 11:30 pm Matins
Midnight: Divine Liturgy
- Sun. Apr 23rd:** 12 noon: Agape Vespers
- Tues. May 9th:** Parish Council Meeting

**Ushers' Assignment List
For Sunday Services**

- Apr 02:** Lou Foundos/Robert Kora
- Apr 09:** Roland Llupa/Edi Sera
- Apr 16:** Bill Peters/Nick Papajorgji
- Apr 23:** Petrika Troja/Thoma Fundo
- Apr 30:** Xhoxhi Coka/Nasi Pavllo
- May 07:** Ardian Mile/Thoma Beno

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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