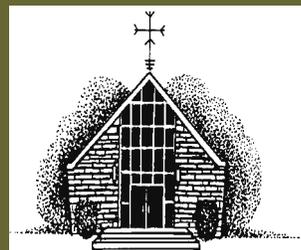


THE ORTHODOX POST

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St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church, 181-14 Midland Parkway, Jamaica Estates, New York, NY 11432
Web site: www.stnicholasalbanian.org E-mail: snickny@aol.com Tel: 718 380-5684

Pastor's Message

By Father David Fox

Dear Friends,

The Olympic athletes are amazing aren't they? We see them once every four years and are reminded of the years of training it takes to prepare for a few minutes on skis or on skates. St. Paul compares the effort it takes to know God to the effort of an athlete who trains for a prize:

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now, they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we, for an imperishable one. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty, not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. 1 Cor. 9:24-27

In other words, if we want to know God, we have to "train" ourselves to receive Him.

President's Message

By Lou Foundos

After a very warm January, we had a record snowstorm in early February. Father and I made the decision on that Saturday evening not have services on Sunday. This happen infrequently, but we did not want anyone getting hurt trying to get to Church during what turned out to be a blizzard.

We had a successful Valentine's Day Party on

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Physically, this means having "temperance;" in other words, it means not having our bodies control us, but our controlling our bodies.

There is an account of an Albanian man who was dying in the hospital. He was enduring a lot of physical pain. The nurses remarked, "I don't know how he does it." When the priest went to see the man, he asked him, "how do you endure so much and not become discouraged?" The man replied, "I kept the fast." The man had kept the Great Fast every year before Pascha. Keeping the fast, training his body, had prepared this man for the final "Pascha" in his life, the "Passover" from this life to the next.

Please see *Pastor's Message* on page 4

Saturday, February 18th. The music was great, the food tasty and the company priceless. This was a real dancing crowd, and it looked like the people that attended really enjoyed themselves. In addition to your generous pledges, fund raising is essential to support the church. Therefore, I am happy to report that the dance was also a financial success.

Please see *President's Message* on page 4

Daughters' Corner

By Christina Liolin, President

On February 26th, the Daughters held a meeting. Many topics were discussed including the Pancake Breakfast, preparations for Easter, fund raising ideas, etc. At this meeting it was decided to invite the ladies to come for Meshe lessons on Sunday, March 19th. The Meshe is the holy bread used as an offering in Communion. It is round in shape and in two layers, symbolizing the two natures of Christ, heavenly and earthly. Anyone interested in learning how to make the Mesha should be in Church at 9 a.m. on this Sunday – before mass – to mix the ingredients. The ingredients will be provided by the Daughters. After Mass, we will complete preparing the breads and bake them. If you have a Meshe seal at home, please bring to Church with you. This should be an enjoyable learning experience for all.

Please Come and Join Us!!!!!!!

Community News

By Linda Foundos

Can You Help the Children???

Recently, we were pleased to have John Joseph of Boston visit with us for Liturgy and a slide presentation in which he shared with us his past summer's trip to Albania through various towns. One of his stops was the *Children's Home of Hope in Durrës*. Great work is being done there to care for homeless and abused children. Your help is needed to continue with this care. It takes the caring of many to keep good works going. Any donation you can make is greatly appreciated. Please make your check payable to St. Nicholas. We will collect and forward all the funds to the Children's Home in Albania.

Valentine's Day Party

Saturday, February 18, 2006

By Linda Foundos

What a night...the music, the dance, the dinner, the fellowship and the fun was all great ! DJ Tico played such a great music selection which later in the evening led to some top notch singing entertainment from a few of our guests. This was in addition to the very talented dancers on the floor, even better than Dancing With The Stars ! A huge "Thank You" is due to our Planning Committee: **Agathia Luka, Albana Pavlo, Irma Mile and Adelina Llupa**, as well as their husbands who also helped, especially **Nasi Pavlo** who handled all the cooking, and **Thea Pavlo** who helped with the set up. We were delighted to see so many happy faces enjoying the evening, and we even made a nice little profit for St. Nicholas. Thanks to all of you who attended, and we look forward to the next time !

Congratulations: Happy, Happy 90th Birthday to a very special lady, **GEORGINA LIGOR!!** She has been a dedicated, key member of the St. Nicholas family for all her years. To know her is to love her. There is no one quite like her!! Her family had a wonderful celebration party for her; and she does love a party!! Per shume vjet!!

Very Speedy Recovery Wishes: to **Mitch Thomas** who recently underwent triple bypass surgery. He is very fortunate to have been in such good physical condition and to catch the problem before it became even more serious. Mitch has many well-wishers that send a "shout out" to him.

Get Well Wishes: to **Sophia Heuser**, the baby daughter of Alexis (Peters) and Stefan Heuser, who recently underwent surgery. The doctors are pleased and a full recovery is expected. What wonderful news for Tina and Bill Peters and the rest of the Peters family.

ARCHDIOCESE AND OCA NEWS

His Grace, Bishop Nikon's Report Archdiocesan Council ~ February 17, 2006 Natick, Massachusetts

New England Election

As you know, I was elected ruling hierarch of the Diocese of New England by the Holy Synod of Bishops. Formal installation and enthronement services took place at Holy Trinity Cathedral, which is my other cathedral in Boston, on December 17th and 18th. It was good to see so many of our parishioners and clergy also participate in this event, with their brothers and sisters in the NE diocese, although it was a very busy time of year..

Visitations and Representations

I continue to follow a schedule of visitation to all of our parishes. Following a discussion with Metropolitan Joan of Korce this past week, I anticipate a visit to the church in Albania some time in May of this year. This is intended to foster even greater communication with the Church in Albania.

In late January I traveled to Edmonton, Alberta Canada at the invitation of the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada. It was a special celebration honoring His Grace, Bishop Serafim.

Although I represented both dioceses at this event, I traveled at my own expense since I did not feel that it fell within the parameters of Episcopal responsibilities. The celebration, banquet and Liturgy, attended by most of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Canada as well as local Bulgarian and Patriarchal Russian hierarchs were present. It was the occasion of Bishop Serafim's 60th birthday. Thus, my presence there gave further exposure to our diocese as well.

My visits to our parishes are always a joy for me and for the most part a joy for the respective community. Only a few parishes, thus far, have set some time aside for the parishioners to truly interact with their hierarch. A time for questions and answers should be part of my Archpastoral visitations.

These can be most fruitful and sometimes detrimental when it degenerates. On one occasion instead of questions

and answers it became a time when parishioners decided to tell me all of the negatives of their pastor. Why wait a year or so to inform me of the differences in perception or the opposing avenues the parish will take to achieve their goals?

Membership & Communication

Inaccurate census from our parishes, not only inhibits our communication, it stifles the work of spreading the good news of the Gospel and cripples our ability to fulfill the directives given to us at our assemblies.

A fine way to communicate with the members of our Archdiocese at large would be via e-mail. How simple and inexpensive it would to inform our membership at large about, news releases, up to date information. This is already done by several of our parishes and ought to be expanded at the diocesan level. This system is employed by a number of dioceses today and it is working very well.

MISSIONS:

Last year, I spoke extensively on the subject of "missions," but we really never got off the ground on formulating a policy for our archdiocese. I would like to assemble a committee to better define what can be done. The chair of this committee should be chosen from our Archdiocesan Council members. And it would be most beneficial if individuals are recommended by their pastors to be contacted in order to serve on this committee. As new business perhaps we may find volunteers to serve on this advisory and study committee.

Centennial Celebration

I especially wish to thank Bill Poist for his tireless efforts in our Archdiocese as well as all of you who offer your time talent and personal recourses. Your dedication is valued by the church at large and I look forward to working with all of you as we prepare for our centennial celebration in 2008. Perhaps a committee for this celebration should be formed, either tonight or at the latest our next meeting in May.

President's Message from page 1

Please save May 7th on your calendar since we will be having a Spring Dance at the New Hyde Park Inn that Sunday night. Plan on not only coming but bringing your family and friends. More information will follow soon.

We will be having our Annual General Meeting on Sunday, March 19th after liturgy. This is your opportunity to hear about the activities and life of St. Nicholas and also for you to ask questions and express your opinion.

Pastor's Message from page 1

But we are just babes, really. In this parish, we need to begin with something small, simple. Here is a suggestion: whether or not at home we are eating meat or butter or butter on meat during this Fast, in Church, let us keep the Fast. Let us give up having cream with coffee during coffee fellowship, butter or cream cheese on our bagels, and all alcoholic drinks. Can we do this? If not in Church, how can we expect even to begin keeping the Fast at home?

Pray for me.
Your friend,
+Fr. David

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.

Pot-luck Supper, Adult Study, Wednesdays during the Great Fast after Presanctified Liturgy.

Immediately after the Presanctified Liturgy, there will be an adult study downstairs. While studying, we will have together a pot-luck supper. We will pick up and complete reading *The Mountain of Silence*, and consider such important issues as: how to pray; why bad things happen to good people; The Three-Fold Path to God; the Orthodox understanding of life after death. Whether or not you have attended before, all are welcome.

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., if you wish to speak with him.

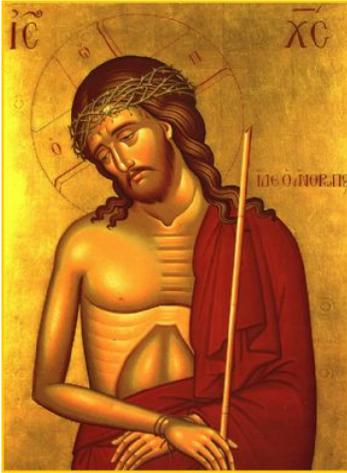
COME To The

**ANNUAL PARISH
GENERAL MEETING**

Sunday, March 19 after Liturgy

Hear about the activities, finances and life at
St. Nicholas Parish
And Vote for New Parish Council Members

This Month's Major Feast Days



March 6 Beginning of Great Lent

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent - the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated - is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ:

"If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses..." (Mark 6:14-15).

Then after Vespers, we ask forgiveness from each other, and perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? For too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a "good deed" required by God. But the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations.

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for, the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no "enemies?" To ask this question is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. The Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them - thinking that by being "polite" and "friendly" we fulfill God's commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, makes us feel that mutual "recognition" which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. And because we make this discovery - and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists - we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year "opens to us the doors of Paradise".

Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting - true fasting; our effort - true effort; our reconciliation with God - true reconciliation.

- Father Alexander Schmemmann

March 25 The Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos

The Feast of the Annunciation is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century. There is a painting of the Annunciation in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome dating from the second century. The Council of Toledo in 656 mentions the Feast, and the Council in Trullo in 692 says that the Annunciation was celebrated during Great Lent. The Greek and Slavonic names for the Feast may be translated as "good tidings." This, of course, refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation He brings. The troparion describes this as the "beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the eternal mystery," for on this day the Son of God became the Son of Man. There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God's promise to send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15):

The icon of the Feast shows the Archangel with a staff in his left hand, indicating his role as a messenger. Sometimes one wing is upraised, as if to show his swift descent from heaven. His right hand is stretched toward the holy Virgin as he delivers his message. The Virgin is depicted either standing or sitting, usually holding yarn in her left hand. Sometimes she is shown holding a scroll. Her right hand may be raised to indicate her surprise at the message she is hearing. Her head is bowed, showing her consent and obedience. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon her is depicted by a ray of light issuing from a small sphere at the top of the icon, which symbolizes heaven. In a famous icon from Sinai, a white dove is shown in the ray of light.



The Annunciation falls during Lent, but it is always celebrated with great joy. The Liturgy of St Basil or St John Chrysostom is served, even on the weekdays of Lent. It is one of the two days of Great Lent on which the fast is relaxed and fish is permitted (Palm Sunday is the other).

Major Church Activities and Events

- Sun. Mar 5th:** Cheesefare
- Mon. Mar 6th :** GREAT LENT BEGINS
- Tues. Mar 7th:** Parish Council Meeting
7:30 p.m.
- Sun. Mar 19th:** Annual General Meeting,
after Liturgy
- Sat. Mar 25:** Feast of the Annunciation,
Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
- Sun. Apr 2nd:** Youth Group after Liturgy
- Sun. Apr 16th:** Palm Sunday
- Fri. Apr 21st:** Afternoon: Taking down of
the Corpus, 7:30 p.m., Praises
- Sun. Apr 23rd:** Pascha: Midnight Liturgy,
12 noon - Agape Vespers

**Ushers' Assignment List
For Sunday Services**

- Mar 5:** Bill Peters / Nick Papajorgji
- Mar 12:** Petrika Troja / Thoma Fundo
- Mar 19:** Xhoxhi Coka / Nasi Pavllo
- Mar 26:** Lou Foundos/Robert Korra
- Apr 2:** Roland Llupa/Edi Sera
- Apr 9:** Bill Peters/Nick Papajorgji

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Jamaica Estates, New York 11432



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