

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,

As we celebrate Theophany another year and have our Icon Presentation, it may be helpful to consider what a powerful thing it is that happened in the Baptism of the Lord and is happening through the Great Blessing of the Waters in the Church, and in our veneration of icons: the sanctification of matter itself. I have included an excerpt from our new Metropolitan, Jonah's writing on this great mystery in Christ, taken from his reflections on the 25th Anniversary of the Falling Asleep of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann:

We celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy, but it needs to be a real celebration of the integrity of the Gospel message. The triumph over iconoclasm has an essential point of faith: by His Incarnation, Jesus Christ sanctified matter. We can paint a picture of God Incarnate, and experience His Presence in and through venerating the icon. We can partake of His life by eating the bread and wine of His Body and Blood; we are immersed into His life in Baptism, anointed with the Holy Spirit in Chrismation, and made part of His Body. The world itself, matter, is sanctified by Christ's Coming, and becomes a means of communion with God. And we ourselves, in this body, in this life, here and now, are sanctified and

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made holy, partakers of the life of God. Salvation is about life here and now, not "fire insurance" for after death! In Christ, all things are made new. "For He has brought us up to heaven, and endowed us with His Kingdom which is to come." This is Good News!...

So what do we need to do? We need to focus on this life-giving message of the Gospel, which is what the Church, its life and services, are about anyway. We need to surrender to Christ, and put aside our self-serving agendas. Only then can we come together to do the work of Christ: to draw all people to Him. We need to learn the Scripture, so that we can live it. We need to serve the poor and those in need without regard to who they are or whether they are "ours." In short, we need to love our neighbor as our self. In other words, it is time that we accepted the responsibility to incarnate the message of Christ at all costs. It is time we grew up.

President's Message

By Bill Peters

December was a month with many memorable activities. But this year, the visit of His Grace, Bishop Nikon on December 7th to celebrate the St. Nicholas Feast Day with us made it extra special. Both the services in church and the luncheon at a nearby restaurant were attended by overflowing crowds.

As we start the new year, we will celebrate

services for St. Basil's Feast Day (January 1st) and the Feast of Theophany, the Baptism of the Lord & the Great Blessing of the Waters (January 5th). On Sunday, January 11th, after Liturgy, we will hold our annual Icon Presentation/Auction. It is an opportunity to venerate the Icons and help the Church through your donations. We look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of the Parish Council and myself, we wish you all, **a Very Happy New Year!!!!!!**

Daughters' Corner

By Linda Foundos

! Ho! Ho! It was a stormy day, but our annual Christmas Pancake Breakfast took place anyway with a good crowd. Many thanks again, to Tina Peters who delighted us with the fluffiest pancakes. Thanks to many others that helped as well. . . . Kerri, Hurley, Max, Paris & Niko Fox, Vasken Gjika, Christina Liolin, Irma Mile, Mark Papalexis, Albana Pavlo and all those that helped with the clean up afterwards. Teamwork makes everything easier and more fun! The Sunday School Christmas Pageant was once again a Hollywood production! Great performances all around and lovely caroling to celebrate this special event of the birth of Christ. Everyone enjoyed the very cheerful visit from Santa who had treats for everyone. Thank you everyone!

Our warmest wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your families. It's time again to turn the page to a new chapter, 2009. We pray for brighter days in this complicated world of ours. We must never lose sight of, and always be thankful for all the beautiful, positive things in our lives, although all the negativity can from time to time certainly overwhelm us. Let's try to keep the faith and be optimistic.

All the best to you and your families in 2009!!

House Blessings Begin in January !!!



*Please call Fr. David at 201-841-7590
to schedule*

Thurs. Jan. 8th: New Hyde Park
 Tues. Jan. 13th: Long Island North Shore
 Thurs. Jan. 15th: Long Island South Shore
 Tues. Jan. 20th: Bronx
 Thurs. Jan. 22nd: Brooklyn
 Tues. Jan. 27th: Staten Island
 Thurs. Jan. 29th: Manhattan & New Jersey

KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



By A. Llupa

Janar 2009

Këtë muaj po japim përsëri një pjesë nga "Libri i Lukës" dhe një lutje Barinjtë dhe engjëjt

(Është koha kur Jezu Krishti ka lindur dhe Maria dhe Xhozefi janë me femijën)

...Kur engjëjt u larguan prej tyre për në qiell, barinjtë i thanë njeri tjetrit: "Ejani të shkojmë në Betlehem e të shikojmë c'ndodhi dhe cfarë na ka shpallur Zoti!"

Ata u nisën menjëhere, shkuan atje dhe gjetën Marinë dhe Jozefin me foshnjën e venë në grazhd. Pasi e panë, ata treguan se ç'u kishte thënë engjëlli për foshnjën. Të gjithë të pranishmit u çuditën për atë që u treguan barinjtë. Por Maria i ruante të gjitha për vete këto dhe mendohej vazhdimisht për to. Barinjtë u kthyen në kopetë e tyre duke lavdëruar dhe falenderuar Perëndinë për gjithshka që dëgjuan dhe panë. Gjithshka u bë pikërisht sic u kishte thënë engjëlli...

Pas një jave erdhi koha për të bërë synet foshnjën dhe ata ia vunë emrin Jezuz-pikërisht sipas urdhërit të dhënë nga engjëlli para shtatzënisë së Marisë.

...në atë kohë në Jeruzalem jetonte një njeri me emrin Shimon. Ai ishte i përsqiptar dhe zbatonte me besnikëri Ligjin e Zotit, duke pritur shpëtimin e Izraelit. Ishte i mbushur me Shpirtin e Zotit, i cili ia kishte shpallur se nuk do të vdiste para se të shihte Mesinë e Zotit. Shimoni ndoqi intuitën e Shpirtit dhe hyri në Tempull. Kur prindërit po e sillnin Jezusin atje dhe kishin ndër mend t'ia kushtonin Zotit sipas zakonit të Ligjit, Shimoni e mori foshnjën ndër krah, e lavdëroi Perëndinë dhe tha: "Tani o Zot, mund të vdes në paqe, sepse ti e ke mbajtur premtimin tënd, sepse me sytë e mi pashë Mesinë që ti e ke caktuar për shpëtimin e të gjithë popujve. Ai është drita nëpërmjet të cilës ti do t'u zbulohesh joçifutëve dhe prania jote madhështore ndër popullin tënd, Izraelin."

...Shimoni i bekoi prindërit dhe i tha Marisë, nënës së Jezusit: "Kjo foshnjë është caktuar për rënjen dhe ngritjen e shumë vetave në Izrael. ...por përsa të përket ty, pikëllimi për fëmijën tënd, si shpata, do të ta lëndojë zemrën."

Lutje e zakonshme para hyrjes në kishë;

...Do të hyjë në shtëpinë tënde dhe do jem në mëshirën tënde; dhe me frikën tënde do të falem në tempullin e shenjtë. Me tregu udhën, o Zot, drejt drejtësisë, larg kundërshtarëve të mi; m'a bëj rrugën të drejtë, që me mëndje të kthjellët të të lartësoj Ty përjetë, një Fuqi e mbinatyrshme i paraqitur në tre persona, Zoti, i Biri dhe Fryma e Shenjtë... Amin.

Christmas Pageant

On Sunday, December 21st, the children of the Sunday School did a wonderful job performing this year's Christmas Pageant. Congratulations to all of them, especially the teachers who worked very hard to organize and coach the students. The Pageant was followed by our Pancake Breakfast and a Visit from Santa.

A Good Time Was Had By All!!!!



COMMUNITY NEWS

By Linda Foundos

- Welcome home to Rosalie Zacharias at last.....after months in a rehab center recovering from a injury sustained in a fall at home. We're so happy for you and look forward to your return. We miss your smiling face.
- Boy oh boy.....it's another boy for Jana and Phil Foundos, Matthew, Christina and Andrew too. Congratulations to the proud grandparents, Al Foundos and Marian & Nick Adams. Nicholas Albert was born on Saturday, December 13th weighing in at 7 lbs. 14 ozs.
The birth came so quickly that Jana and Phil didn't even have time to do a couple errands on the way to the hospital (ha ha, little joke). We wish Nicholas a very long, healthy and happy life.
- What a wonderful reunion for the Rehova family. Thoma and Stravaq have been living in the United States with their families for many years. Two weeks ago they were joined by their older brother Kosta and his wife Violeta who will be living with family in New Jersey. It will be an extra special Christmas celebration for the Rehova family. We wish you all the best.
- The Troja family is excited about special visitors this month. Eli's sister Rosa (Proгри) DiBenedatto and her husband Ruggiero will be spending the holidays with Eli, Petrika and family. What a joyous reunion! There will surely be lots of reminiscing, sharing stories, laughter and, of course, eating!
- Our deepest sympathy to Tina Korra on the falling asleep of her grandmother in Albania. Tina is very blessed to have had such an endearing, close relationship with her. She fills a large part of Tina's heart. May her memorial be eternal.
- Well, well, well.....kudos to George Beno who will be starting a project after New Years to collect school supplies for less fortunate children overseas. Please give him your support so he can make it a truly successful and fulfilling project. His family is very proud of him. Bravo, George!
- Well, well, well.....kudos to Enea Topore who has a start-up company called, Pacific Outfitters. Enea has created a website to sell custom T-shirts with a story. The site is www.storytees.com. What an enterprising young man! His family is very proud and supportive of him. Good luck to you!
- Tina & Bill Peters decided to Christmas gift themselves a holiday trip to Switzerland to visit their daughter, Alexis and her family, husband Stefan, and grand-daughters Skyler and Sophia. What a great idea! There will be many happy memories created. Skyler and Sophia will love being spoiled by their grandparents from America.
- Lou, Linda, Steve & Lauren were delighted with a visit from their son/brother and grandson/nephew James from San Diego, California. James, who just turned 2 years old, always has quite a lot to say, and actually, you want to listen because his mature comments always surprise and entertain you. Mark enjoyed reconnecting with family and friends. Mark's wife, Amy, is expecting their second child in early February and was not able to fly. What a special treat to have them with us.
- A heartfelt thanks to Agathia & Ilia Luka for their efforts in organizing such a great St. Nicholas Dinner. Everyone enjoyed the celebration and visiting with our honored guest, His Grace Bishop Nikon. Thanks also to Jim Liolin for such an entertaining running of our raffle. He really manages to keep the suspense going, and going, and going....for lots of fun.

MAJOR FEAST DAYS

**Feast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Commemorated on January 6th**



Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord. God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by the St John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine "those who sat in darkness," and "in the region of the shadow of death", and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind. The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions. From the second century we have the testimony of St Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the vigil before this Feast.

There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and St Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. St

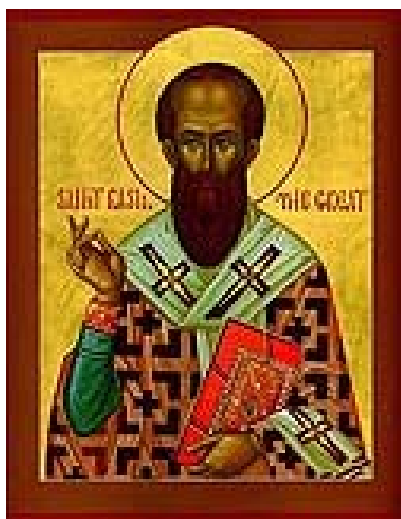
John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but "to bury human sin by water," to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify "the nature of water" and to offer us the form and example of Baptism.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Indivisible. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms.

The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ".

On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

Other Major Feasts - January 1st



**St Basil the Great the Archbishop of
Caesarea, in Cappadocia**



**The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ**

Major Church Activities and Events

- Thurs, Jan 01: St. Basil's Liturgy, 10 a.m.
- Sun, Jan 04: Theophany Forefeast, Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m.
- Mon, Jan 05: Vespereal Liturgy for the Feast of the Theophany, Baptism of the Lord, Great Blessing of Waters, 7 p.m.
- Sun, Jan 11: Icon Auction following the Divine Liturgy
- Mon, Jan 12: Parish Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

House blessings in January:

- Thurs. Jan. 8th: New Hyde Park
Tues. Jan. 13th: Long Island North Shore
Thurs. Jan. 15th: Long Island South Shore
Tues. Jan. 20th: Bronx
Thurs. Jan. 22nd: Brooklyn
Tues. Jan. 27th: Staten Island
Thurs. Jan. 29th: Manhattan & New Jersey

Ushers' Schedule for Sunday Services

Lista e sherbimit te dielave ne kishe

- Jan 04: Damian Peters / Steven Foundos
- Jan 11: Bill Peters / Ken Gjika
- Jan 18: Petrika Troja / Nasi Pavllo
- Jan 25: Ilir Fundo / Stefan Baltadori
- Feb 01: Tomi Beno / Ardian Mile
- Feb 08: Andrea Kutali / John Jance
- Feb 15: Lou Foundos / Robert Korra

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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