

# THE ORTHODOX POST

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## Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

Some years ago, a Christian but not Orthodox friend of mine asked to accompany me to my parish's Pascha service. After warning him in advance to wear comfortable shoes and get plenty of rest the night before, we departed. I believe he enjoyed himself; we had, at least, a good time at the communal feast afterward. When later we were talking about Church he made a strange observation. Though he admired the icons of the Eastern Church, he noted that he could not understand why Jesus, even as an infant, looks so decidedly mannish. It was a thought that had never occurred to me, and he was right. Most of our depictions of the child Jesus show him as a little adult. He lacks those chubby cheeks and prominent eyes of real infants. Though miniature and beardless, he hardly appears the child! At the time, I had no really good explanation for this but that it was the stylistic convention.

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In seminary, studying iconography more formally, I learned something of its significance.

Even from his youth, Christ was devoted to a particular end. We know the gospel story as something linear—a narrative spread in orderly fashion from beginning to end. But even at the start of this story, the Nativity we have just celebrated, there is

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## President's Message

by Bill Peters

*Happy and Healthy New Year!!!!!!*

Now that our celebration of the Blessed Christmas Season is over, we look ahead to the many Church activities and challenges of the new year.

The Feast Day of Theophany (Blessing of the Waters) will be celebrated with a Vespereal Liturgy on Wednesday evening, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Fr. Nathan will start visiting Parishioners for Home Blessings. Make your appointments with him as soon as possible.

On Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, the Presentation of the Icons (Icon Auction) will be held after Liturgy. Come, learn about the Icons and bid/donate on your favorite Icons.

Also, Blessed Water in small bottles will be available for Parishioners to take home.

On Sunday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, both Sunday School and Albanian Class will begin again. It is important for our children to receive a good religious education, so Parents, please make arrangements to bring your Child/Children to Church every Sunday. Speak to Fr. Nathan and the Teachers for more information.

Finally, we need your help to complete the 2011 Pledge Card Program. Please fill-in the family information on your Pledge Card and submit it as soon as possible, if you have not already done so. To serve the community, the Church needs your participation, your family information and your financial Pledge for 2011.

## DAUGHTER' CORNER

by Linda Foundos

Well.....it's time to wrap up another year already! In December, the Daughters' were involved with our annual St. Nicholas Day Celebration Luncheon and our annual Christmas Pancake Breakfast following the Sunday School Pageant. Both occasions were enjoyed by many. Tina Peters once again treated us to the best pancakes in the world! And Jim Liolin certainly has a way of making a raffle so fun and entertaining. It is wonderful to see the crowd enjoying each others' company and sharing a meal. It is a comforting sense of belonging. This is such an important factor especially in today's fast-paced, fragmented world. In addition to learning about and strengthening our faith, our church community provides a solid foundation essential for everyone from infant to senior citizen. We should all make a concerted effort to solidify and strengthen this bond. A positive force in your life makes it just that much better and a great start in life for children.

Most sincere thanks to all those that helped make these events work so well. Some of those people are Christine/Tomi Beno, George Beno, Lou Foundos, Vasian Gjoka, Joanne Heiser, Larry Jance, Tina/Robert Korra, Silvana/Andrea/Kris Kutali, Christina/Jim/Elizabeth Liolin, Adelina Llupa, Pauline Logore, Agathia/Ilia Luka, Irma/Angela Mile, Kimberly Oswald, Barbara/Mark Papalexis, Nasi/Thea Pavllo, Tina/Bill Peters, Gloria Sawyer, Adrianna/Andrea Topore and Beti/Izzi Tsamblakos. Please forgive me if I have overlooked a name or two.

The Daughters will hold a meeting the end of January for elections and some planning for future events. Please do join us with your energy and ideas. All the best in 2011 to you and your family from the Daughters of St. Nicholas.

## KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



by A. Llupa

Janar, 2011

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 menjëherë, 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 Jezus-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 përsëritshëm 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

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## THINK WITH YOUR HEART

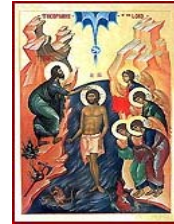
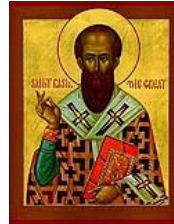


*We are blessed by God with material possessions, health, abilities, and life. Also, with intangible blessings – forgiveness, strength, courage, and ultimately eternal life. Therefore it is certainly a given that we should give back to God in return.*

**Pledging is Stewardship –  
PLEASE RETURN YOUR PLEDGE CARD  
TODAY!!!**

## ICON PRESENTATION

*Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup> - After Liturgy*



*Come and Bid in the Presentation  
or Make a Donation  
in Honor of Your Favorite ICONS*

**Bring in your Icons from last year's Icon  
Auction, as soon as possible!!!  
We need them to prepare for  
the next Icon Presentation.**



## VATRA Flag Day Celebration – Dites E Flamurit



On Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, an Albanian Flag Day – Dites E Flamurit Dinner and Dance Celebration sponsored by the VATRA organization was held at Maestro's Caterers in the Bronx.

St. Nicholas Church was one of many organizations supporting this event. Speeches were made and awards were presented. Several hundred people were in attendance. All had a wonderful time dancing and partying with friends.

Fr. Nathan Preston delivered a speech to this assembly from our Archdiocese Chancellor, Reverend Arthur Liolin. Several members of our Parish attended this Celebration. A few of them are shown above in the photo. Also at the Church's table was Iliryan Fundo who missed the photo op.

## Christmas Pageant, Pancake Breakfast and Santa's Visit

On Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, an overflow crowd of Parishioners celebrated three festive activities. First, the traditional Christmas Pageant was performed by our Sunday School and Teen Group under the direction of their Teachers. It was enjoyed by all and concluded with everyone singing a number of Christmas Carols. This was followed by our popular Pancake Breakfast led by chef Tina Peters. This year, it was provided free, as a way to say "Thank You" to all Parishioners for their participation and financial support during the past year. Finally, Santa paid us a visit. He met with the children and gave them gifts. Santa also met with many adults.

**Enjoy the photos below describing the joyful celebrations!!!**





## Pastor's Message

- Continued from Page 1

something more important at its heart. The particular end, the noteworthy aim of Christ's life is His death. For this reason, even His childhood is portrayed as something already mature. Most often even the halo encircling his face bears already the outline of the Cross. This premature maturity and reminder of His end demonstrate the heavy commitment he shouldered from the start, and rather than a child to be coddled he stands formed from the start as a teacher of this new way. "We will die," He proclaims, "but I have prepared ahead for you, if you will only start to learn how to die today." So says the little man in Mary's arms.

Pleased or displeased, obsessed or wishing to ignore this, we will die. We had best reconcile ourselves to this, lest we face an unpleasant surprise. This is sometimes why our faith seems heavy, because the athleticism it demands of us is to prepare us for this encounter. We do not pray or fast or give charity because we have a surplus of time or food that tastes too good or money enough not to notice. We do these things to prove to ourselves that we can do without. We do them in imitation of Christ. Like Him, we were born to death. Our challenge, then, is to realize this while we yet breathe and enjoy this life.

We were created to enjoy this world with each other and giving due thanks to God. Our inclination, though, is to find such things enough, to be distracted by these blessings of time and strength and means forgetful of their transience. So we must steel ourselves, mature in heart, to remember always the premature Lord of our icons, purposing ourselves to make His way ours.

## KENDI SHQIP - Continued from Page 2

Ligjit, Shimoni e mori foshnjën ndër krah, e lavdëroi Perëndine 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 bekoj 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 zakondshme para hyrjes në kishë;

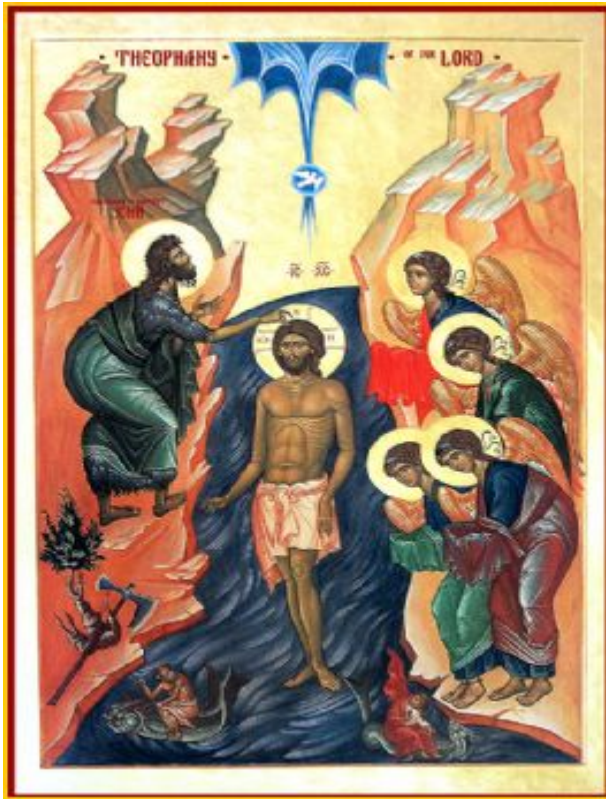
...Do të hyjë në shtëpinë tënde dhe do jem në mëshirën tënde; dhe me frikën tënde do të falem në tempullin e shenjtë. Me trego udhën, o Zot, drejt drejtësisë, larg kundërshtarëve të mi; m'a bëj rrugën të drejtë, që me mëndje të kthjellët të të lartësoj Ty përjetë, një Fuqi e mbinatyrshme i paraqitur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

## Bring Your Child to Sunday School and Albanian Class Every Sunday, Beginning January 16



Plan now to bring your child/children to Church School when it begins.

It is important to arrange for them to attend classes on a regular basis.



**Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – Commemorated on January 6<sup>th</sup>**

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. 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.

***MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN JANUARY***



**Saint Basil the Great**

January 01



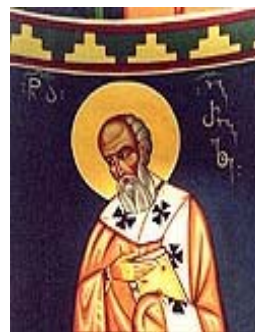
**Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John**

January 06



**St. Athanasius the Great**

January 18



**St. Gregory the Theologian**

January 25



**Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs**

January 30

### Major Church Activities and Events

- Sat, Jan 01: Naming of Our Lord / St. Basil the Great, Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
- Sun, Jan 02: Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
- Wed, Jan 05: Theophany Eve, Vesperal Divine Liturgy And Blessing of Water, 7 p.m.
- Thurs, Jan 06: Home Blessings Begin
- Sun, Jan 09: Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m., followed by Icon Presentation
- Thurs, Jan 13: Parish Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Sun, Jan 16: Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.  
Sunday School & Albanian Class Begin
- Sun, Jan 23: Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
- Sun, Jan 30: Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

### Ushers' Schedule for Sunday Services Lista e sherbimit te dielave ne kishe

- Jan 02: Ken Gjika / Izzy Tsamblakos
- Jan 09: Tomi Beno / Ardian Mile
- Jan 16: Ilir Fundo / Stefan Baltadori
- Jan 23: Petrika Troja / Nasi Pavllo
- Jan 30: Andrea Kutali / John Jance
- Feb 6: Lou Foundos / Robert Korra

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.stnicholasalbanian.org](http://www.stnicholasalbanian.org)

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