

THE ORTHODOX POST

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Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

O God our Savior, the True Light, Who was baptized in the Jordan by John to renew all men by the waters of regeneration, and Who condescended to enter under the roof of Zacchaeus, bringing salvation to him and to all his house: As the same Lord, also keep safe from harm those who dwell herein; grant to them Thy blessing, purification, and health of body; grant all their petitions that are for their salvation and eternal life; for Thou art blessed, together with Thine eternal Father and Thy Most-holy, Good, and Life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

With these words, sharing them with you in your home, I look forward to the feast of Theophany. The prayer above is said every year in the homes of Orthodox Christians throughout the world. Bringing the fresh Holy Water that was blessed and sprinkled already throughout the Church, the priest brings this same blessing into the homes of the faithful. By this, Christians show that God dwells in their homes and in their regular lives as He does in the Church on Sundays. They receive this little water as a reminder that every home is called to be a Church and every Christian is called to be a saint because God is there with them on Monday and Tuesday and all the way through the

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week. No blessing is just for "good luck". To bless is to pray, and to pray is to enter into and share the life of God. This sounds high and grand, unattainable even, but it is our Christian challenge. To live with God can actually a simple thing. It is like living with each other but without vacation, absence, or loss. God is always there. So when we know and we say that He is everywhere present and filling all things, we must remember to act in accordance with our words and beliefs. When we take a bottle of Holy Water, when we ask the priest come into our homes for the blessing, this prayer for safety and health is part of

Continued on Page 6

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 Vespertal Liturgy on Wednesday evening, January 5th at 7pm. Fr. Nathan will start visiting Parishioners for Home Blessings. Make your appointments with him as soon as possible.

On Sunday, January 8th, 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 15th, 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.

We need your help to complete the 2012 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 2012.

Finally, look at the Ads on pages 8 & 9!!! They are from merchants who are friends of the Church and who provide financial support to St. Nicholas Parish. We ask you all to support them by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible. More information is provided on page 3.

DAUGHTERS' CORNER

by Linda Foundos

December activities were great! Our St. Nicholas luncheon was delicious and very enjoyable. We thank all those that worked so hard to make it such a success....from the meal, to the wall plaque presentation, to the fun raffle and lots of friendship.

The Church School Christmas Pageant was precious! The children were filled with excitement as they participated in the pageant. Perhaps the parents were even a little bit more excited as they clicked away taking pictures! Following the pageant, our Pancake Breakfast was super as usual! Master Chef Tina Peters does an outstanding job. Thanks so much to all those that helped with the shopping, serving, selling St. Nicholas magnets & clean-up, Always a big hit was a visit from Santa Claus! The children were so excited to sit upon his lap and receive their treats; and what a great photo op! All in all, a great time was had by all.

A Daughters meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22nd following services. Please plan to attend and bring a friend. Elections will be held and plans for 2012. Come join us!

We wish you and your family a Blessed Christmas and a very Happy New Year. May 2012 bring you good health and joy.

COMMUNITY NEWS

If you have news you would like to share with the Parish Community, such as a birth, a wedding, engagement, special anniversary, vacation, new house, new job, major accomplishment or academic honor, etc

Please contact Linda Foundos,
ggsutter@aol.com or 516-671-8071.

KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



by A. Llupa

Janar, 2012

GËZUAR VITIN E RI!

Le t'a fillojmë këtë Vit me një mendim. Po të na lejojë koha, të përpiqemi t'i sjellim fëmijet më shpesh në kishë.

Këtë muaj po japim një pjesë nga vëllimi i parë "Doktrina" i Tomas Hopko.

...Titulli i parë që iu dha Jezusit nga populli, është titulli RABAI, që do të thotë MËSUES. Pasuesit e Tij u quajtën dishepuj, që do të thotë NXËNËS.

Pikësëpari, Jezusi erdhi tek njerzit si Mësuesi i dërguar nga Perëndia. Ai u mëson atyre vullnetin e Perëndisë dhe e bën Perëndinë të njohur tek ata.

Ardhja e Jezusit si mësues është një aspektet i të qënurit të tij Krisht, Mesia. Fjala KRISHT është përkthimi në greqisht i fjalës hebraike MESIA, që do të thotë I Lyeri i Perëndisë. Ishte parathënë, se kur të vijë Mesia, njerzit "do të mësoheshin nga Perëndia" (Isaia 54:13; John 6:45).

Jezusi erdhi tek njerzit si mësuesi hyjnor. Ai thotë në shumë raste, që fjalët e tij janë të Perëndisë. Ai foli si "një që ka autoritet", jo si mësuesit e zakonshëm hebrej. Ai akuzon ata që nuk pranojnë mësimin e tij, sikur nuk pranojnë Perëndinë vetë.

..Ai që beson tek une, nuk me beson mua, por atë që më dërgoi mua. Edhe ai që më sheh, sheh atë që më dërgoi. Kam ardhur si drita për botën... sepse nuk fola prej vetes, por Ati që më dërgoi më dha porosi çfarë të them. Ajo që them është ajo që Ati më ka udhëzuar. (Xhon 12:44-50)

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House Blessings Begin



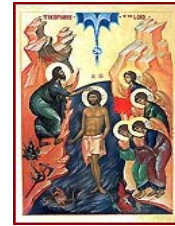
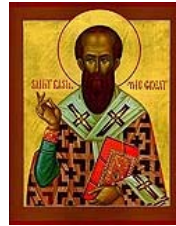
Avoid the rush!

**Speak to Fr. Nathan now about coming to
bless your home.
Appointments may be made for any time
after January 5.**

**Church: 718-380-5684,
Cell: 208-818-3372**

ICON AUCTION

Sunday, January 8th - After Liturgy



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

[ICON RETURN](#)

**Bring in your Icons
from last year's Icon Auction,
as soon as possible!!!**

**We need them to prepare for
the next Icon Auction.**

Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church Published in The Orthodox Post (See Pages 8 & 9)

Starting with this issue, advertisements (Ads) promoting businesses that support our Church will be displayed in The Orthodox Post on a monthly basis. These Ads are on pages 8 and 9. They will help to financially support our St. Nicholas Church. Therefore, we ask that Parishioners look at the Ads and support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

Also, to help this advertising Program grow, we ask you to identify merchants that would be willing to place an Ad in The Orthodox Post. It is hoped that income from these Ads will cover the cost of publishing and distributing the Post which runs about \$3,000 per year.

The standard Ad is the size of a business card. Larger Ads, the size of 2 or more standard size Ads, are also available. Ads will be placed in each monthly issue of the Post for a whole year. The cost of the standard size Ad for the whole year is only \$200. The larger Ads will cost proportionally more, based on the space used. People can view these Ads in the Post by the mailings, emails and access to the St. Nicholas web site on the Internet.

Once you have identified a merchant who might be willing to place an Ad, **please contact Tomi Beno at (917 952-9252)**. He will provide you with additional information and the Ad form.

Help the Church by getting an Ad!!!

Pledge Program for 2012 – Please Return your Pledge Cards

Pledge Program letters have been mailed to parishioners. As we look into planning for 2012 we begin, once again, with you. We appreciate your continued generosity and it is with your spiritual, physical, and monetary support that maintains St. Nicholas here for us to gather together as one community.

Pledging is the financial commitment each of us makes to pay for all that we do. Giving from our own abundance, sustains the work and mission of the church in ways that benefit us directly, benefit other members of our church and our community. We also reap the spiritual benefits of a life founded on generosity and giving, in gratitude for all that we have received. Nothing is possible without that first commitment from each of you, and we urge you to think about all that St. Nicholas means in your life as you make your Pledge.

We ask you to consider increasing your Pledge over last year's amount. If you can't, at least meet last year's amount. The Pledges you make and fulfill cover only about one-half of the costs to operate the Church and serve parishioners. Your generous Pledge will help close that gap. If you need a Pledge Card, get one at Church.

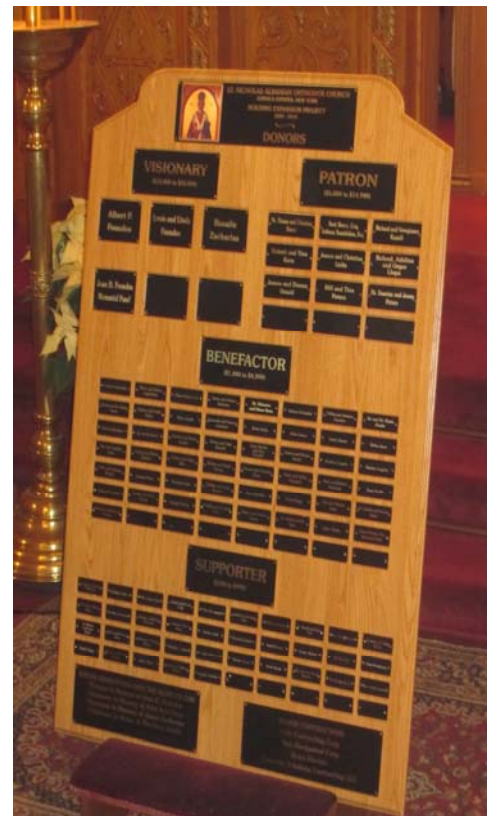
Please complete your Pledge Card and return it to the church office. Your help will enable the Parish Council to determine the 2012 budget.

As always, St. Nicholas appreciates all your generosity.

St. Nicholas Day Celebration a Success

On Sunday, December 11th, Parishioners gathered to celebrate our church's Patron Saint's Day. Special prayers were made at the Liturgy and our traditional fish dinner was enjoyed by all. Our newly expanded Fellowship Hall enabled us to enjoy a very fine dinner and the companionship of many friends. The Daughters of St. Nicholas presented the Church with a generous donation of \$ 3,000 for the Building Expansion Fund. In addition, they held raffles which provided fun to all as the winners were announced and prizes were distributed by our young people.

Also, a major feature of the Celebration was the presentation of a Donor's Plaque acknowledging those people who made donations to the Building Expansion Fund. Fr. Nathan said prayers blessing the donors and all those who worked to make this Building Expansion possible. Approximately \$300,000 was donated. The remainder of the costs for the Project, \$100,000, was covered by a loan. Fundraising efforts will continue over the next one to two years aimed at paying off this loan.



Christmas Pageant, Pancake Breakfast and Santa's Visit

On Sunday, December 18th, 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. 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!!!



COMMUNITY NEWS

by Linda Foundos

- Baby blue for Regina & Bill Peters for the third time around!! Little Jackson was born on December 7th weighing 8 lbs., 5 oz. His brothers Will, 7 years old, and Daniel, almost 2 years old will have a new playmate. Tina & Bill Peters are so proud and thrilled once again. This is their 5th grandchild. May God bless them all!
- Baby pink for the Terova family! On November 22nd, Drs. Sotiraq & Eriola were blessed with little Katherine. She weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. Her big brother Aleks has someone new in his life to love. Congratulations! We wish Katherine a very long, healthy and happy life! All the best!
- Joyous news at the Slane house.....Jennifer and Jack Wollocko are engaged. Congratulations to the happy couple, Jenn's mom Tina and her grandmother Viola Kallinikos. Jenn & Jack met at Skidmore College and are planning a 2012 wedding. Jack is working in his family business. Jenn is completing her residency at Winthrop Hospital. Both Jenn's and Jack's family are thrilled with the union. Many blessings!
- Kudos to Kris Kutali on being accepted for an internship for the winter-spring semester at a public relations company located in Times Square called 42 West. What a wonderful opportunity for Kris. Her parents, Silvana & Andrea, and family are very proud of her as are we all. Good luck! We're sure that you will shine on the job.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE (continued from Page 1)

the life of God. In it, we ask also for the fulfillment of our wishes and needs in the coming year, but, more than this, we ask to be included in the story of salvation. If our health and our strength and success bring us to God, remind us to be with Him in thought and action, they live this story, making salvation real for us. Where "good luck" means to bring only those things we desire, God's blessing means to commit ourselves to what He desires. With many words, we repeat those few: "Thy will be done."

In the prayer above, as in all our prayers, we recognize stories. First we hear of John the Baptist who leads Jesus into the water, leading but knowing that, in his heart, he must follow this man who is also God. Our own baptisms must be the same: the water has covered us; our hearts must follow. Second we hear of Zacchaeus, the short man and corrupt official, who so badly wanted just to see Jesus that he put away the pride of his position. Like a child or a beggar, without rank and forgetful of dignity, he climbed a tree to see the Lord pass by, and this humble yearning was rewarded by Christ. Jesus said to him, as He says to all of us, "I want to be with you. Take me to your home; take me to your life." These stories of the saints, mentioned and abbreviated in this prayer, remind us that our task is to see the same things as they did—Christ at the center of our lives. Our task is to become part of the story of God, to make our lives its plot and our selves characters in this greatest narrative.

May this story be ours. May this blessing be yours throughout all of the new year.

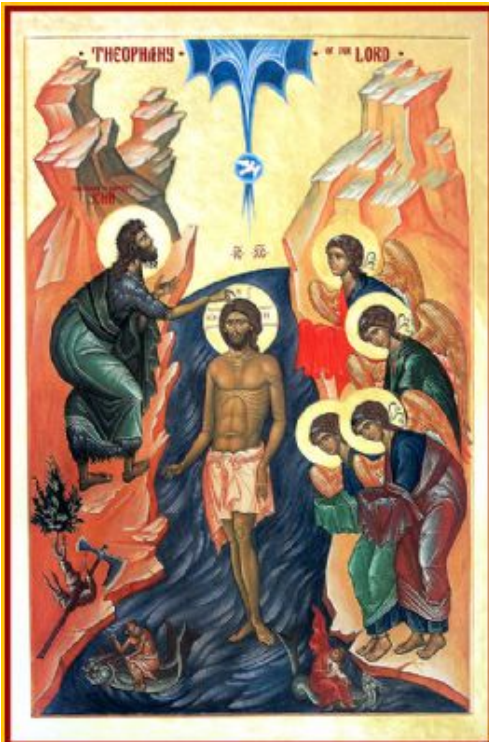
KENDI SHQIP (continued from Page 2)

Jezusi erdhi tek njerzit si mësuesi hyjnor. Ai thotë në shumë raste, që fjalët e tij janë të Perëndisë. Ai foli si "një që ka autoritet", jo si mësuesit e zakonshëm hebrenj. Ai akuzon ata që nuk pranojnë mësimin e tij, sikur nuk pranojnë Perëndinë vetë.

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Jezusi i mësoi njerzit, jo vetëm me fjalët e Tij, por me veprat e Tij; dhe për më tepër me vetë personin e Tij. Ai thotë, se Ai është e Vërteta dhe Drita. Ai e tregon veten e Tij, jo vetëm që flet para Perëndisë, por që ai vetë është FJALA e GJALLË e PERËNDISË në mish njerëzor, LOGOS (fjala) që është i përjetshëm dhe i pakrijuar, por që u bë njeri si Jezusi i Nazaretit për ta bërë Perëndinë të njohur në botë.

Në fillim ishte Fjala (LOGOS) dhe Fjala ishte me Perëndinë, edhe Fjala ishte Perëndia. Ajo ishte që në fillim me Perëndinë. Të gjitha u bënë me anë të saj, edhe pa Atë, nuk u bë asgjë që është bërë. Në Atë ishte jete dhe jeta ishte drita e njerzve. Edhe drita ndrit në errësirë, edhe errësira nuk e kuptoi. Ishte drita e vërtetë, që ndrit çdo njeri kur vjen në botë. Ishte në botë dhe bota u bë nga Ai, por bota nuk e njohu. Edhe fjala u bë mish dhe ndenji ndër ne (dhe pamë lavdinë e Tij, lavdi porsit të vetëmlinduri nga Ati), plot me hir e me të vërtetë. Edhe të gjithë ne morëm prej të mbushurit të atij, edhe hir mbi hir. Sepse ligji u dha me anë të Moisiut, por hiri dhe e vërteta me anë të Jezu Krishtit. Asnjë kurrë s'e ka parë Perëndinë, vec i Vetëmlinduri Bir, që është në gji të Atit. Ai na e tregoi...



**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.

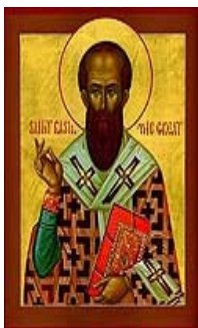
The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions. From the second century we have the testimony of St Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this feast.

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.

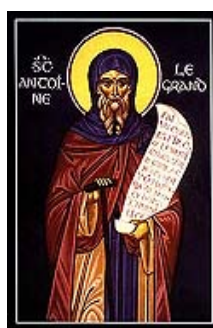
MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN JANUARY



St. Basil the Great
Jan 01



St. John the Baptist
Jan 07



St. Anthony the Great
Jan 17



Athanasius the Great and Cyril
Jan 18



Gregory the Theologian
Jan 25



The Three Holy Hierarchs
Jan 30

Major Church Activities and Events

Vespers every Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

- Sun, Jan 01: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; St. Basil the Great
- Thurs, Jan 05: Vespereal Liturgy and Great Blessing of Waters, 7:00 p.m., Holy Theophany
- Fri, Jan 06: House Blessings Begin
- Sun, Jan 08: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.;
Feast of the Theophany of our Lord
Icon Auction following Liturgy
- Mon, Jan 09: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Sun, Jan 15: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.;
Sunday School and Albanian Class Resumes
- Tues, Jan 17: Prayers for St. Anthony, 10:00 a.m.
- Sun, Jan 22: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Daughters' Meeting
after Liturgy
- Sun, Jan 29: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Zacchaeus Sunday
- Sun, Jan 29: Schmemann Lecture at St. Vladimir's Seminary,
4:00 p.m.

**Ushers' Schedule
for Sunday Services**
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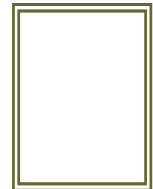
- Jan 01: Andrea Kutali / John Jance
- Jan 08: Lou Foundos / Robert Korra
- Jan 15: Roland Llupa / Edi Sera
- Jan 22: Bill Peters / ilia Luka
- Jan 29: Ken Gjika / Izzy Tsamblakos

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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Jamaica Estates, New York 11432



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