

THE ORTHODOX POST

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Special Article – “My Pilgrimage in the Holyland”

by Al Foundos

Introduction by Fr. Hiermonk Nikodhim: I hope you enjoy this account of Al's trip to the Holy Land as much as I did. It seems appropriate, in this season of the Nativity, that his remembrances should find a place here in our parish newsletter. As we seek to draw near to Christ, finding Him humble in Bethlehem, we count ourselves as pilgrims too. As the angels and the shepherds and the far-from-home wise men do, so we draw near to see and praise that God Who, in His love, has chosen to be with us. Whether our wanderings are with our feet or our minds, via airplanes or hymns, our destination remains the same: beholding God with us inviting us to remain with Him.



Jesus Tomb

I have many things to be thankful for, but I am very blessed to have been able to visit the Holy Land November 1-12, with an exceptional tour group with Bishop Ilia of Boston and Archbishop Nikoforos of Athens. There were 35 of us and a local guide who was exceptional as well.

We started in Tel Aviv where we had a day to see the sights and it is a true city on the Mediterranean with many beaches and high rises and interesting sites. On Saturday November 3 we loaded on the bus and visited Jaffa next door to Tel Aviv the gateway to Jerusalem in old days and relating to the Bible stories of Jonah and the raising of Tebitha. Then to St. George's monastery in Lydda where his relics are found and he is revered as a protector and many churches are named after him in the Holy Land. From there we headed up north the coast line to Caesarea a major port built by Herod in 22 BC. Onwards to Mt. Tabor where the Transfiguration took place, God revealing to the Apostle's that this is my son, and then to Nazareth where the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary took place where she was told that she would give birth to Jesus and later the place where Jesus grew up. WE visited nearby Canna where Jesus performed the first miracle changing water into wine at a wedding.

On Sunday we attended Divine Liturgy in a monastery chapel and then to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus spent a lot of time and picked his first Apostles Peter and James. Nearby was the location where Jesus fed the 5000 starting with five loaves and two fishes. Then to the Mountain of the Beatitudes where he preached the Beatitudes. The highlight of the day was taking a boat ride on a boat similar to those used on those days on the Sea of Galilee where many of Jesus events took place.

President's Message

by Jim Liolin

December activity and Semi-Annual Meeting

At this years Semi- Annual Meeting in November there were several reports given including:

- Status of the Beautification of the Temple Phase I — this is almost complete but there are still some minor fixes to be done. Donations are still needed.
- New Icon Program Phase II is beginning – a letter has been sent to the pledging members explaining how this will work.
- The 2018 Budget – \$165,700 was reviewed and passed by the membership.
- The Annual Pledge Campaign – started and our goal this year is \$74,000. This is one way we can show our commitment to the church and the work that needs to be done. The pledges will be blessed on December 10th, the day we will celebrate St. Nicholas.
- A Special Year 2018 – we will celebrate the 75th Anniversary of

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our parish. There will be special Liturgies with the Archbishop and Invited guests. More details will follow. The main celebration is scheduled for Oct 20 and 21. Save the date.

Going forward please return your ICONS by Christmas day as we have the ICON presentation on January 7, 2018

Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas Season and Happy New Year.

Please read your letter from the church as it has the schedule of services.

SEE YOU IN CHURCH

Coffee List

Daughters' Corner
by Linda Foundos

Dear Ladies,

Below is the schedule for coffee for the next 2 months. If your name is listed, please be sure to put it on your calendar. If you need to change the date, please advise Christina Liolin or Adriana Topore.

It is very important to remember that on the day you are scheduled for coffee, **please arrive at church by 10 a.m.** so that preparations can be made.

What to bring:

- Cake for 50-60 people
- Cookies for the children
- 1 gallon of milk

December 03 Eli Troja / Alma Vesho
10 St. Nicholas Luncheon
17 Pageant/Pancake Breakfast
24 Open
31 Open

January 07 Barbara Papalexis/Barbara Filis
14 Donna Oswald/Viola Kallinikos
21 Adelina Llupa
28 Open

**THE DAUGHTERS'
THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

&

WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND A

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!



COME & JOIN US!!!!

ST. NICHOLAS DAY LUNCH

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH,
AFTER LITURGY**

Adults \$30 Children Free



Christmas is soon to be here, but amidst all our preparations let us remember those who will be struggling just to keep warm this winter. Bring your lightly used adult and children's winter coats to Church this year. We will collect these, bundle them, and deliver them to our local police precinct, firehouse, or public library. Afterward, these will be distributed to the needy throughout the city.

Make someone's winter a little warmer; make someone's Christmas a little bit brighter.

Please bring your Clean and Usable Coats to St. Nicholas through Christmas Day



As we enter into this season of giving thanks for God's blessings, it is good and right that we remember those who have less. To care for them is a holy task, given by Christ to His people. Through the coming month, we will be collecting donations to go to an area food bank. A list of most needed items follows below. Please be generous in doing good, for in serving those in need, we serve our God.

The NYC Food Bank suggests donations of these things:

- bottled water
- peanut butter
- shelf-stable milk
- proteins (canned tuna, chicken, salmon, sardines, ham, sausages, etc.)
- cereal and granola/breakfast bars
- juice boxes
- dried fruit
- crackers
- personal hygiene products (soap, toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)
- diapers

**Christmas Pageant
Holiday Breakfast
Santa's Visit**



Sunday, December 17th



St. Nicholas Beautification Project

The construction work beautifying the Temple of St. Nicholas Church has made great progress over the Summer months. The work associated with Phase 1 of the Beautification Project is almost complete!!!

Your Pledges and Donations are still needed!!! Project and Fundraising materials including a green pledge/donation card have been mailed to Parishioners and Friends of St. Nicholas. Please review this information and make a Pledge/Donation by turning-in your green card, If you need a copy of this material, please contact Fr. Nathan, Jim Liolin , Lou Foundos or the Church Office.

To date, Pledges amounting to \$80,000 have been submitted. The cost for Phase 1 is \$150,000. There is still a great need for more donations. Everyone is urged to seriously consider the importance of St. Nicholas Church in their lives and then make a generous Pledge to support this Beautification of our Temple.

Your support is very much appreciated!!!



2018 PLEDGE PROGRAM BEGINS

This Annual Pledge Program to finance basic Church operations and services to the community began in November. Letters were mailed to Parishioners asking them to make a financial Pledge to be paid off during 2018.

Since this is a major way to support St. Nicholas Church activities, all Parishioners are asked to think about how important the Church is in our lives. Then, make the best possible Pledge that we can and return the Pledge Card to Church.

If you did not Pledge last year, please make a special effort to Pledge for 2018. Typically, yearly Pledges range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. In 2017, the average Pledge per family was \$700.

If you need a Pledge Card or more information, talk to Fr. Nikodhim or Jim Liolin.

RETURN YOUR PLEDGE CARD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!!

DECEMBER NAME DAYS



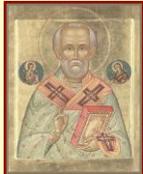
4 — Greatmartyr Barbara at Heliopolios St. Barbara
Barbara Filis, Barbara Papalexis, Barbara Duggan



5 - St. Diogenes
Dhiogjen Prifti



5 - Venerable Sava the Sanctified
Emil Bakalli, Savvas Diacosavvas



6 - St. Nicholas The Wonderworker and Archbishop of Myra in Lycia
Nicholas Foundos, Nicholas Brehl, Nikolin Petro, Nikollaq Vozhilla



12 - St. Spyridon (Piro)
Spiro Gjika, Piro Rehova



16 - St. Iphigenia of Ethiopia
Efigjeni Qeramixhi



17 - Prophet Daniel
Daniel Oswald, Daniella Beno, Daniel



21 - St. Juliana
Zekthi Xhuljeta Muho, Jenny Peters



21 – Themistokli
Them Mertiri, Themistokli Dajko



22—St. Anastasia
Anastasia Terova



23 - St. Naum
Naum Prifti



25 - Christmas (Manoli, Kristi)
Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary

Kristaq Panariti, Manoli Diacosavvas, Chrissien Gjika, Chris Gjoka, Chris Kirka, Kris Kutali, Christe Preftes, Christian Preftes, Christianna Sera, Chris Andreas



26 - St. Joseph the Betrothed
Joseph DiTullio



27 - St. Stephen
Stefan Baltadori, Steven Foundos, Stephen
Kildunne, Steven Meta, Stefan Prela



31 - St. Melania
Melina Filipi

My Pilgrimage in the Holyland – continued

Next day we started from the town of Tiberia on the Sea of Gallilee to the monastery of Prophet EliJah where is located the Sycamore tree where the tax collector had climbed to see Jesus. Then to the Mount of Temptation where Jesus was tempted and denied Satan and then to the Site of the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized. We had an opportunity for many to step in the River Jordan for followed by a short service with the Bishops as we did on most stops. The visits to all these holy sites made me feel a closeness to the Lord seeing what the Gospels teach us and witnessing the sites where He preached and performed the miracles.

We had an opportunity on a one day trip to visit Petra in Jordan a town carved on stone one of the Seven Wonders of the World and the next day a visit to the Dead Sea where the water has 30% salt so you literally float you can't sink.

The next four days we spent in the Jerusalem area starting with visiting Bethany monastery where Lazarus was raised from the dead and they also honor the sisters Mary and Martha. Then to Bethlehem to the birthplace of our Lord the Church of the Nativity where there were great crowds lined up. The Bishops made a difference we were escorted promptly to the Manger where Christ was born and venerating the star was a very emotional experience followed by a brief service singing the hymns.

Next day we went to Mount of Olives the other side of Jerusalem where Jesus spend a lot of time. We started off by going to the Church of the Tomb of the Mother of Our God in a Greek Monastery. The Theotokos lived nearby and was buried here and all the Apostles returned miraculously for her funeral except Thomas who came three days later and when they opened the Tomb for Thomas she was not there she had been taken up to heaven like Elijah.

Next we walked close by to the Garden Gethsemane where Jesus used to go and meet with his disciples and was finally betrayed by Judas there. Some of the Olive trees there date over 2000 years old. Next to it is the Church of all Nations a Basilica of Gethsemane, then onwards for a long hike to the Russian monastery of Mary Magdalene. We walked over to the monastery of Men of Galilee, is the location of the Ascension of Our Lord, after he met with his eleven Apostles who thought he was a ghost so he ate a meal to confirm that he had arisen from the dead before he shone brightly before them and ascended to heaven. Nearby was a chapel of the Annunciation of the Domitian of the Theotokos which apparently I did know but she was notified that her time had come to go to rest.

After a late lunch we moved on by bus to the Wailing Wall or also known as the Western Wall. It is a holy place for Jews and Christians, but as I'm sure you may have seen photos it is a sight to behold and crowded as ever. Then we went to the hotel a little earlier than normal since we were meeting at 11 PM, in the evening to visit the most sacred location the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and attend midnight liturgy as well. We arrived around 11 PM and we were privileged to go and visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher with our two Bishops. This is the highlight of the Pilgrimage to go through the Passions of Our Jesus Christ, to venerate the Holy places and have the Bishops take us around all the Chapels with explanations and prayers.

Continued on Page 7

My Pilgrimage in the Holyland – continued

We started with the Cross, followed by the Calvary of the Crucifixion then the Tomb then the Resurrection of Our Lord followed by Divine Liturgy and Communion until 2:30AM. It is overwhelming to go through this and feel so close to being there with the Lord. I prayed for all of you, all out families and thanked the Lord for all his Blessings He has bestowed upon us.

The place was packed, Russians, Ukraine, Romania, Japanese, Philipinos literally all nationalities, a tremendous number of Christians, although it is the Greek Orthodox Church all Christians go through this awesome experience of praying in this location. This definitely is a feeling very difficult to express but a joy to be a Christian. We were told that basically every night here (365 days a year) midnight Liturgy is served so it's Pascha and we sung Christ is Risen.

The Holy Land is a place to visit and bring to life the Gospels and experience Jesus Christ life, that leaves you a with strong feelings for living a Christian life and as our Lord said

"I am the light of the world, whoever believes in me shall not in walk darkness, but in the light of the world"

BRING YOUR CHILD TO SUNDAY SCHOOL



Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church

Please look at the Ads and support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

Tell the Merchant that you are from St, Nicholas Church and saw their Ad in the Church's Monthly Newsletter!!!

For New Ads Please Contact – Tomi Beno at (917) 952-9252

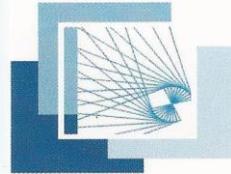
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ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Major Church Activities and Events

December:

Fri. 01 - Paraklesis is cancelled.
 Sat. 02 - Health Prayers, 5pm
 Sun. 03 - Liturgy, 10am
 Wed. 06 - Liturgy, 8am: St. Nicholas
 Fri. 08 - Paraklesis, 7pm
 Sat. 09 - Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 10 - Liturgy, 10am
 - St. Nicholas Luncheon
 Wed. 13 - Prayers, 9am: St. Herman
 Fri. 15 - Paraklesis, 7pm
 Sat. 16 - Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 17 - Liturgy, 10am
 - Pageant and Pancakes
 Fri. 22 - Royal Hours, noon
 - Paraklesis, 7pm
 Sat. 23 - Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 24 - Liturgy, 10am
 - Christmas Vigil, 7pm
 Mon. 25 - Liturgy, 10am: Nativity of the Lord
 Sat. 30 - Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 31 - Liturgy, 10am

Ushers' Schedule for Sunday Services **Lista e sherbimit te dielave ne kisha**

**DEC 03 Stefan BALTADORI / Izzy
TSAMBLAKOS**

DEC 10 Nasi PAVLLO / Ardian MILE

DEC 17 Jim OSWALD / Tomi BENO

DEC 24 Andrea KUTALI / John JANCE

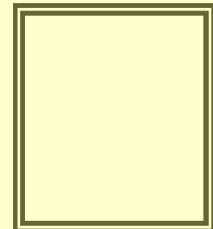
DEC 31 Robert KORRA / Lou FOUNDOS

JAN 07 Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA

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