

# THE ORTHODOX POST

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St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church, 181-14 Midland Parkway, Jamaica Estates, New York, NY 11432

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## Pastor's Message

By Father David Fox

### ***On God becoming Human***

Dear friends,

I knew a person one night out on the streets trying to talk these guys into going to a shelter. He could not understand why the youth would rather literally walk around all night, ride the trains, sleep behind an apartment complex rather than going to a shelter. "Have you ever stayed overnight in a shelter?" They asked the man. He had been in many of the shelters but never stayed in one myself. "No," he had to confess. They responded, "If you had stayed in a shelter yourself you would understand why we would rather be out here." He paused for a few moments: "Okay, pick a night and I will stay out with you." They were shocked: "you would stay a whole night out with us, out here?" He told them he would and everything changed. They were happy, open to what he had to say, and they just spent some time talking on the sidewalk. In just a few moments these street kids really helped the man understand from experience the heart of what we Christians celebrate at Christmas: that in the birth of Jesus Christ, God

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became one of us. Astounding. Impossible! Blasphemous! Yes this is our faith. But is it so crazy after all? Before the birth of Christ humans, and in all other religions still, humans could and can say, "It is easy for you, God: you live in heaven! You don't have to worry about where you are going to live, or a job or getting sick or dying!" (See the Book of Job) Before the Birth of Christ, we humans were like those kids on the street wondering how God could really relate to us. But at Christmas what we celebrate is that God has acted, not by giving us words, or commandments, or advice, but by simply becoming one of us: "The Word became flesh" (Jn.1).

Blessed Nativity to all. Your friend, +Fr. David

## President's Message

By Bill Peters

As the end of this year draws near, we are all busily involved in the preparations for the Christmas Holiday Season. At St. Nicholas, December is a time of much celebrating - the St. Nicholas Feast Day Luncheon, the Sunday School Christmas Pageant, the Pancake Breakfast and, of course, the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

In addition, this December is a time to look at some of the very special projects we have started for the near-term and long-term future benefit of the Parish and all parishioners. These important projects

will continue and need both our personal effort and financial support to succeed. They include:

- The Pledge Program providing financial support so we can pay for the costs of operating the Church.

- The Building Expansion Project providing space for additional Sunday School classrooms, church loft for more seating, and elevator for those having difficulty climbing stairs and additional building improvements.

- The Building Fundraising Program needed to get the money to make possible the building expansion to serve the parish community for many years to come.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!**

## Daughters' Corner

By Linda Foundos

We hope you have all enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday. Although we may from time to time focus on the negative, we certainly do have much for which to be thankful. It is good to keep a positive attitude, keep the faith, surround yourself with loving family and friends and find the good in each day. The Daughters of St. Nicholas extend to you a very blessed Christmas and Happy New Year. All the best in 2008.

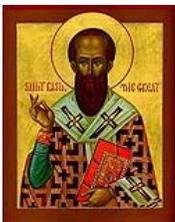
This has been a very busy year for baptisms, weddings and babies. We would like to extend once again to them all many blessings and congratulations to the entire family. To all our friends that have undergone surgery or illness, we send our love and well wishes. You are missed.

The Daughters held a meeting in mid November to make plans for the St. Nicholas Luncheon on December 9<sup>th</sup> and the annual Christmas Pancake Breakfast on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Many thanks to those that stepped up to volunteer to shop, cook, set up, serve, clean up and more. Our Pancake Breakfast Master Chef, Tina Peters, will be our leader once again. Don't miss the fabulous Christmas Pageant by our Sunday School followed by Tina's good home cookin'. Details to follow in next issue.

The Daughters annual Flea Market/Bake sale provided us a \$4,200 profit which is being donated to the church with \$3,000 to be earmarked for the new building fund, and \$1,200 for general operations. The weekend went smoothly with many volunteers, including some of the youth, each doing their part in the various departments.....Snack Bar, Bake Table, Clothing, Shoes, Household Items, Books, Toys, Linens, and Jewelry. Others helped with shopping, cooking, putting up flyers in the neighborhoods, putting up the flags, music, security and even helping customers carry their purchases to their cars! (We provide first class service with a smile!!) I think I could speak for all those involved to say that they enjoyed working together and had fun in the process. We even have many customers that come back year after year because we treat them so well, and the prices are right!!! Much thanks to all of you for making this another successful event.

### ICON AUCTION

*Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup> - After Liturgy*



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

## KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



By A. Llupa

Se pari, dua te kerkoj ndjese se, per arsye teknike, botimet e meparshme kane pasur gabime ortografike. Kete radhe po japim nje lutje te dites se Krishtlindjeve marre nga "Udha Orthodokse", dhe nje pjese nga "Lulet e Veres" e Naimit:

"....Nje magji e mbrekullueshme ka per te ndodhur ne kete dite; Natyra do rinohet dhe Zoti do shndrohet ne njeri; Ai ruan cilesi qe i ka pasur; C'ka i mungonte, po i ploteson vete, duke mos ndjere as konfuzion e as ndarje.

Si mund ta pershkruaj kete mister? Ai qe s'kish mish ne trup, u be me jete; Fjala u jetesua; Ai qe s'mund te shihej, behet i dukshem nga te gjithet; Mund te preket Ai qe ishte i paprekshem; Dhe tani, Ai qe nuk kish zanafille, fillon te jetoje; I biri i Zotit, behet i biri i njeriut; Jezu Krishti, i njejte dje, sot dhe per jete..."

#### Zemera

Fuqi' e Perendise	E shoheme ne qiej,
Dukete tek kudo,	Ne shi e ne re,
Se shpirti i gjithesisë	Nde hen' e neper diej
Po eshte ajo.	Esht' edhe ne dhe.

Ajo eshte gjithet c'jane,	Me teper zemren tene
Eshte ne cdo vent	Ate ka per fron,
E duket me cdo ane,	Nuk ja degjon zene,
Nje trup e ne ment.	Zemren s'e degjon?

### ICON RETURN

Bring in your Icons from last year's Icon Auction, as soon as possible!!! We need to prepare for the next Icon Auction on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>.

**THANKS TO ALL THAT MADE THIS EVENT A SUCCESS!!!!**



### Schedule of all the Services from Nativity to Holy Theophany

Wed. Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>: St. Nicholas' Day Vespersal Liturgy from 7:00-8:30 pm.

\*\* Sun. Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>: Fr. David is available to hear Confessions immediately after Liturgy.\*\*

\*\* Sun. Dec 9<sup>th</sup>: St. Nicholas Parish Feast Day, Liturgy at 10 am and Celebration Luncheon after.\*\*

Tues. Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>: Adult Study, on Prayer at 7 pm. Last Class of the Nativity Fast.

Sun. Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>: General Confession, Divine Liturgy, Christmas Caroling with youth going to shut-in's homes.

Sun. Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>: Divine Liturgy at 10 am, Sunday School Christmas Pageant and Pancake Breakfast after.

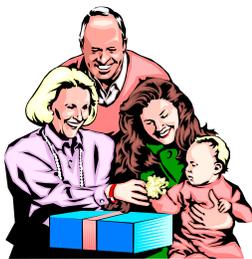
Mon. Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>: Vespersal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great at 7pm, Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Sun. Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>: No Liturgy.

Tues. Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>: Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great at 10 am, St. Basil's Feast Day.

\*\*\*Sun. Jan 6: Divine Liturgy at 10 am, Feast of the Theophany: The Baptism of our Lord, Icon Presentation \*\*\*

### HEALTHCARE INFORMATION SEMINAR



Date: Saturday, Jan. 19, 2008

Time: 4:00-5:30 PM

Place: St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church

Learn about different Healthcare Programs and which is best for you!!!

FREE ADMITANCE, PLEASE RSVP!!!

**Beti Beno**  
(917) 596-4738

**Anila Gjika**  
(917) 584-4604

The following is an extract from a sermon on the Nativity of Christ by **Saint Gregory Thaumaturgos, Bishop of Neo-Caesarea**. *What more to say, what shall I expound on? The new wonders do strike me with awe. The Ancient of Days is become a Child, to make people children of God. Sitting in glory in the Heavens, because of His love for mankind, He now lays in a manger of dumb beasts...On this great day now celebrated, of shattered chains, of Satan shamed, of all demons to flight, the all-destroying death is replaced by life, paradise is opened to the thief, curses be transformed into blessings, all sins forgiven and evil banished, truth is come, and they have proclaimed tidings filled with reverence and love for God, traits pure and immaculate are implanted, virtue is exalted upon the earth, Angels are come together with people, and people make bold to converse with Angels. Whence and why has all this happened? From this, that God has descended into the world and exalted mankind unto Heaven.*

### Sunday School Messages

Sunday, December 23rd

The Sunday School Christmas pageant will be after the liturgy. Please have your children attend Sunday school every Sunday. We are performing a new play this year and we will need as much practice as possible. If your child is not here during the practices he/she will not be able to be in the performance. We are really looking forward to the children performing this new pageant.

Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>

Anyone interested in caroling, please sign up downstairs during coffee time. If we have enough people wanting to go out caroling then we will do so. Thank you.

**Merry Christmas to All  
from the Sunday School teachers!!**

## This Month's Major Feast Days



### The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ Commemorated on December 25

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed. In Bethlehem they found no room at any of the city's inns. Thus, the God-Man, the Savior of the world, was born in a cave that was used as a stable.

"I behold a strange and most glorious mystery," the Church sings with awe, "Heaven, a Cave; the Virgin the Throne of the Cherubim; the Manger a room, in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain is laid". Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger". In the

stillness of midnight, the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night.

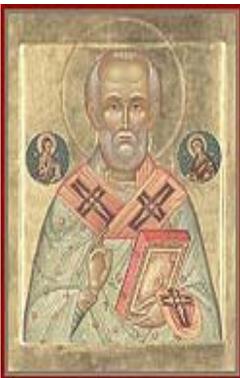
An angel of the Lord (St Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord". The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. St John Chrysostom and St Theophylactus, commenting on St Matthew's Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was "a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star." Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi "fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh".

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions it says, "Brethren, observe the feastdays; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world." In the second century St Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. The angel said to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen". Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, "for the Savior is Born!"

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him !*

## OTHER DECEMBER FEAST DAYS



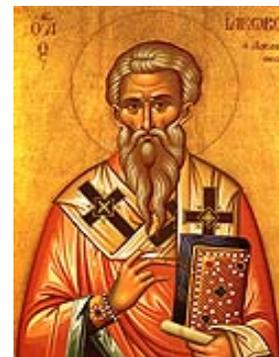
**December 6th**  
St Nicholas the  
Wonderworker and  
Archbishop of Myra  
in Lycia



**December 13th**  
Repose of the Venerable  
Herman of Alaska,  
Wonderworker of All  
America



**December 27<sup>th</sup>**  
Protomartyr and  
Archdeacon Stephen



**December 30th**  
Righteous James the  
Brother of the Lord,  
along with Joseph the  
Betrothed, and David  
the King

## Major Church Activities and Events

- Wed, Dec 5: St. Nicholas' Day Vesperal Liturgy,  
7–8:30pm, Parish Council Mtg after.
- Sun, Dec 9: St. Nicholas Parish Feast Day –  
Liturgy at 10am, Luncheon after.
- Tues, Dec 11: Adult Study, on Prayer at 7pm  
Last class of The Nativity Fast.
- Sun, Dec 23: Sunday School Christmas Pageant and  
Pancake Breakfast, after Liturgy.
- Mon, Dec 24: Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
at 7pm, Feast of the Nativity of our  
Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Tues, Dec 25: No liturgy
- Tues, Jan 1: Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m. – Feast of  
St. Basil the Great
- Sun, Jan 6: Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m. –  
Feast of the Theophany, Great  
Blessing of Water: The Baptism of  
our Lord.  
Icon Auction after.

## Ushers' Schedule for Sunday Services

- Dec 09: Ilir Fundo / Stefan Baltadori
- Dec 16: Tomi Beno / Ardian Mile
- Dec 23: Andrea Kutali / John Jance
- Dec 30: Lou Foundos / Robert Korra
- Jan 06: Roland Llupa / Edi Sera
- Jan 12: Damian Peters / Steven Foundos

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

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

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