

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

Dear friends,

Below is a pastoral letter from which we can benefit from another of our priests, Fr. Stephen Siniari at SS Peter and Paul in Philadelphia:

Kreshma e Madhe ~~ Great Lent 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Here are some things for us to contemplate together as a family in Jesus Christ:

1. Saint Seraphim of Sarov said very plainly: "He who does not observe Lent is not a Christian, regardless of who he considers himself to be, or whatever he calls himself."

2. Great Lent is about to begin. So, let's start at the end with some thoughts from the Diary of a Russian Priest, by Father Alexander Elchaninov: I bid a sad farewell to the end of Lent.

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In Lent:

How much good is accomplished with greater ease

How much evil loses its power and fades away

What joy there is in observing those who pray, fast, approach the Holy Chalice with devotion.

However frequent the disappointments and vexations during Confession,

However great the number of lazy, indifferent souls blinded by sins and passions...

Please see Pastor's Message on page 6

President's Message

By Bill Peters

During this time of year, many special things are going on in our Parish Community. Most important are the activities dealing with Lent and Pascha, our Building Expansion Project and our Annual General Parish Meeting.

Thanks to the Reader Nathan, instruction is underway to expand and improve our singing for both current and new singers. Nathan's article on page 3 describes in more detail the Sunday morning and Wednesday evening singing practices, music teaching and reader training. Also, beginning March 12th on Wednesday evenings Fr. David will celebrate Presanctified Liturgies followed by pot-luck Lenten food and religion lessons.

Join Us!!!! Try to attend these sessions.

Your Building Expansion Committee and Parish Council is very busy working with architects and contractors to develop the best way to add Sunday School classrooms, an elevator, a balcony with additional seating, new heating and air conditioning systems, kitchen renovations and other building improvements. Much progress is being made. However, to make these major improvements to our Church possible, your financial support of the Building Project Fundraising is critical. When contacted by the Committee, please make the best financial commitment that you can in order to benefit our Church Community, for years to come.

Finally, The Annual General Parish Meeting on Sunday, April 6th after Liturgy will provide important information on the Building Expansion as well as other activities and business matters of the Church.

It is important that you attend!!!!

Daughters' Corner

By Linda Foundos

Very soon Lent will begin and end with our celebration of Pascha. There are preparations to be made spiritually and practically. Spiritually, we should all take time out from this busy world of ours to reflect on the meaning of Pascha and to prepare ourselves. The Daughters will be meeting soon to make arrangements for our responsibilities to be fulfilled. Please plan to participate in any number of ways.

It is truly flu season. We wish all those well that have been afflicted. It's not so easy to get over; it just seems to linger. There are always those helpful hints that we hear.....wash your hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes, stay well rested, hot tea with lemon, chicken soup, etc. A little shot of "raki" seems to help too!!

We are very fortunate to have located some beautiful Holy Water Vessels to grace your home. The ceramic vessel comes in 2 sizes and will be available for sale in church.

Please see Christina Liolin or Linda Foundos for more information and to buy one or more.

HOLY WATER VESSELS



See Christina or Linda

KENDI SHQIP (The Albanian Corner)



By A. Llupa

Mars 2008

Këtë muaj po japim përsëri dicka për lutjen dhe një pjesë nga një vjershë e Nolit;

....Një teolog i madh i Krishtërit të hershëm ka shkruar: " Kur u luta, u ripërtëriva, por kur pushova së luturi, u plaka". Lutja do të thotë të kesh marëdhënje të gjallë me Perëndinë. Lutja është fuqi, rifreskim dhe gëzim. Nëpërmjet Hirit të Perëndisë dhe përpjekjeve tona të disiplinuar, lutja na ngre nga izolimi në një bashkim të dashur dhe të ndërgjegjshëm me Perëndinë ku cdo gjë jetohet nën një dritë të re.

Sipas Shën Vasilit të Madh, lutja jonë duhet të ketë katër karakteristika: lavdërim, falenderim, rrëfim dhe kërkesa për shpëtimin tonë. Lutjet tona mund t'i drejtohen Perëndisë, jo vetëm për veten tonë, por edhe për të tjerët, madje edhe për ata që kanë vdekur, jeta e të cilëve mbi tokë ka mbaruar, si edhe për të gjithë botën që na rrethon. " Të bëhen lutje, falje, kërkesa, falenderime, për të gjithë njerzit" (1 Timotheu 2:1).

Anës Lumenjve

Fan S. Noli

....Dhe një zë vëngon nga lumi,
Më bucet, më zgjon nga gjumi,
Se mileti po gatitet,
Se tirani lebetitet,
Se pëlçet, kërcet furtuna,
Fryhet Vjosa, derdhet Buna,
Skuqet Semani dhe Drini,
Dridhet beu dhe zengjini,
Se pas vdekjes ndriti jeta,
Dhe kudo gjëmon trumpeta;
Ngrihuni dhe bjeruni,
Korrini dhe shtypini,
Katundar' e punëtore,
Që nga Shkodra gjer në Vlorë!

Ky ilac e ky kushtrim
Më bën djal' e më bën trim,
Më jep forc' e më jep shpresë
Anës Elbes, anës Spree-se,
Se pas dimrit vjen një verë,
Që do kthehemi një herë
Pranë vatrës, pranë punës,
Anës Vjosës, anës Bunës!
Arratisur, syrgjynosur,
Raskapitur e katosur,
Brohorit me bes' me shpresë
Anës Elbës, anës Spree-se.

A LETTER TO THE PARISH FROM THE READER NATHAN

Dear Friends,

As you may know, during this last Nativity season, the choir has worked diligently in an effort to enhance not only our Sunday worship but also the festal hymns that contributed so greatly to our celebrations of Christmas, Theophany, and our own St. Nicholas' Day. The zealous momentum of these preparations continues even now as we look forward to Great and Holy Pascha and the long yet bright passage through Lent. Anticipating already the joy of these holy seasons, even more opportunities for ministering and blessing your church and your fellow church-goers await.

In the Church, little is ever sudden. We come to each service to hear and celebrate the day, the saints of the day, and the memory of our past. But we should also come to each service expecting a tap on the shoulder—a reminder of those forthcoming blessings that are already ours. Feasts do not simply happen; they are proclaimed in advance in our hymns and our readings so that we may truly possess them, own their meanings, when they do arrive. We do not live from feast to feast ignorant or apart from our Church. We live in preparation for these, in celebration of these, and in anticipation of the dawn of that feast which will know no dusk. The real work of serving and singing in our humble parish cannot be severed from this noble task of preparing ourselves for Christ. Please do not deny yourself the opportunity to bless others in this pursuit.

In past years, the Presanctified Liturgy followed by a shared meal and group study has occupied the Wednesdays of Great Lent. So it will this year. But why wait till Lent? The faithful choir has marched so confidently through these last months, why discourage its measured tread? More and greater things are on the horizon. And that we may facilitate these things to the best of our talent and the best of our diligence, let us stride on.

Choir will continue to meet. Wednesdays have been suggested as ideally suited for our rehearsals, since these could of Presanctified, when those days do arrive. Further, readers of the Holy Scriptures are needed to meet the abundance of God's Word meted out to us during Lent and Pascha. More singers are needed to announce in our church the coming of Christ, His holy Passion, and His triumphant Resurrection. These are holy charges, holy challenges. And these are our challenges and charges—responsibilities that are not too great for us, with God's help.

Free music lessons will be and are being offered to all. Please speak to me, if you are interested. These may encompass a variety of needs, from introductory singing to chanting to music theory and note reading. Wherever you are and to whatever you aspire, every effort will be made to accommodate your needs. But remember you are needed! Instruction may be given individually or in groups, to young and to old (and everyone in between). I will be at church every Wednesday evening from five to seven. I am at church already every Sunday for an hour before the Liturgy begins. Choir rehearsal for current members, past members, and potential members begin at seven on Wednesdays and another more brief practice immediately follows the service on Sunday mornings. Please come. I look forward to your input and the revelation of your talents and devotion as we watch Christ's own ministry unfold and blossom in our midst.

Yours,
Nathan

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY & GREAT LENT

Beginning on Wednesday, March 12th, we will have Presanctified Liturgies every Wednesday night during Great Lent beginning at 7 p.m. These Liturgies are a combination of Vespers and Divine Liturgy and are beautiful and profound. Everyone should try to come to at least one of these during Lent.

After the Liturgy, we will share Lenten dishes (each of us brings one) and while we are eating, we will hold Basics of our Faith Classes for everyone, especially those who have not ever learned anything about Christianity or religion. Fr. David will teach the first class and be present throughout other people leading other classes.

**Beginning Sunday, March 16th, Fr. David
will be available immediately after the
Liturgy to hear Confessions.**

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Linda Foundos

- Home sweet home is now at a new address for the Luka family. We wish Agathia, Ilia and their family many years of joy in their new home. Congratulations. All the best!
- A little fun in the sun was on schedule for the Gjeka family. Anna, Kenny and Crissien enjoyed some warm, relaxing days in Naples, Florida. It was even more enjoyable since their cousins, the Beno family were there too. Christine, Tomi, Jamie and Daniela had a great time. They worked on some major engineering projects on the beach. There was a lot of digging in the sand going on!! Daniela even got brave enough to start jumping the waves!!
- On Sunday, March 30th, there will be a One Year Memorial Service for Joan Foundos. May her Memory Be Eternal.



St Valentine's Day Party

Valentine's Day was celebrated with a fun-filled, memorable party. Everyone enjoyed a great time and a very generous profit was raised for the Church Building Fund. This was all made possible by the efforts of many and was coordinated by Agathia & Ilia Luka. Also, a special thanks to Roland Celo, Nasi Pavlo, Adelina & Roland Llupa, Aida & Alfredo Bode, Evelyn & Foti Meta, Vasil Guna, Adrianna & Andrea Topore and others for all their help. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo! It's always good to take time out for some fun!!



Kosovo Declares Independence

Congratulations to the newly independent Kosovo, home to 2 million ethnic Albanians!!!

On February 17, 2008, lawmakers pronounced their territory the Republic of Kosovo and pledged to make it a "democratic, multi-ethnic state."

May peace, prosperity and joy be in their future.



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181-14 Midland Parkway, Jamaica Estates, NY 11432

INFORMATION SEMINAR SERIES

Presents

Internet Marketing Seminar

given by:

Elisa Balabram
of Brooklyn Enterprise Center

Date: Saturday, March 1, 2008

Time: 4:00–6:00 PM

Learn the basics of website layout and content, affordable strategies to promote your website online and offline, basics of email marketing campaigns and additional income for your business.

Presents

Critical Disease Seminar

given by:

Dr. Ivi Kacimati, Medical Doctor
Dr. Damian Peters, Doctor of Pharmacy

Date: Saturday, April 12, 2008

Time: 4:00–6:00 PM

Learn the basics of 3 Critical Diseases that affect a large number of people in our Community. These Diseases are:

High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol & Diabetes

FREE ADMISSION, PLEASE RSVP!

For RSVP, Travel and other inquiries, please call:

Pastor's Message**Continued from Page 1**

There are yet many who possess a keenly sensitive conscience, who are merciless towards themselves, who love God and thirst for purification. Every Confession is also a lesson and spiritual gain. Every Confession is also a lesson and spiritual gain for the Priest who hears it.

3. Why struggle and for what? "But the body is glorious, the body is holy, so holy that God Himself became flesh. Salvation and repentance then are not contempt for the body or neglect of it, but restoration of the body to its real function as the expression and the life of the spirit, as the temple of the priceless human soul. Christian asceticism is a fight, not against the body, but for the body.

--Fr. Alexander Schmemmann/*Great Lent*

4. Final thought to begin our Lenten journey together as a community in Christ: "If you want your sins to be 'covered' (Psalm 32:1) by the Lord, do not display your virtues to others. For whatever we do with our virtues, God will also do with our sins."

--St. Mark the Ascetic in the *Philokalia*

Free Dental Check-up & Cleaning

Services provided by Students and Staff at
Hostos Community College's
Dental Hygiene Clinic
500 Grand Concourse (149th Street)
Room B-124, Bronx, NY,

Monday and Wednesday Mornings

For More Information and Scheduling
Contact Loreta Qifija at (347) 740-1461

Albanian Archdiocese Centennial Year Liturgy Celebration

In 2008, the Albanian Archdiocese will celebrate its 100 year anniversary with several major events.

On Forgiveness Sunday, March 9, there will be a Hierarchical Liturgy at Saint George Cathedral in Boston.

This represents the actual date closest to the Centennial, 100th year anniversary.

A Banquet Luncheon with speakers shall take place at Anthony's Pier 4 following liturgy. Luncheon is \$65 per person.

In addition, an exhibit and reception will be held in the Athanas Auditorium at the Cathedral.

Parishioners who join us that day are most welcome and encouraged to attend.

Contact Bill Peters for more information, (516) 248-8462.

Job Opportunities

Positions with Chemistry & Microbiology Experience are available at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx.

If interested, contact Dr. Petrika Troja
(718) 364-5539

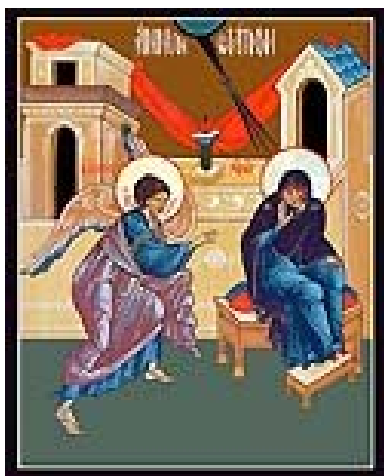
Annual General Meeting

Sunday, April 6th, after Liturgy

Come to our Meeting!!!!

Important business of the St. Nicholas Parish will be discussed.

This includes our Building Expansion Project, Religious Education, Church Finances, Social Activities, Daughters of St. Nicholas and the Election of New Council Members.



The Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

- Commemorated on March 25

The Feast of the Annunciation is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century. The Greek and Slavonic names for the Feast may be translated as "good tidings." This, of course, refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation He brings. The background of the Annunciation is found in the Gospel of St Luke (1:26-38). The troparion describes this as the "beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the eternal mystery," for on this day the Son of God became the Son of Man.

There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God's promise to send a Redeemer: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel." The Fathers of the Church understand "her seed" to refer to Christ. The prophets hinted at His coming, which they saw dimly, but the Archangel Gabriel now proclaims that the promise is about to be fulfilled.

We see this echoed in the Liturgy of St Basil, as well: "When man disobeyed Thee, the only true God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself."

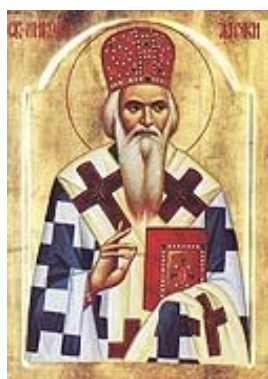
The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth in Galilee. There he spoke to the undefiled Virgin who was betrothed to St Joseph: "Hail, thou who art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." The Virgin did not immediately accept the Angel's message. In her humility, she did not think she was deserving of such words, but was actually troubled by them. The fact that she asked for an explanation reveals her sobriety and prudence. She did not disbelieve the words of the angel, but could not understand how they would be fulfilled, for they spoke of something which was beyond nature. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.' And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her".

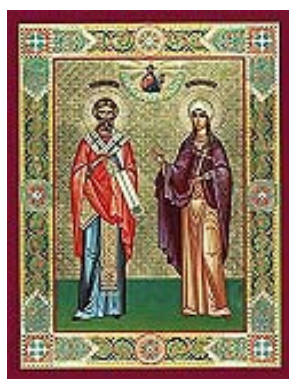
The icon of the Feast shows the Archangel with a staff in his left hand, indicating his role as a messenger. Sometimes one wing is upraised, as if to show his swift descent from heaven. His right hand is stretched toward the holy Virgin as he delivers his message. The Virgin is depicted either standing or sitting, usually holding yarn in her left hand. Sometimes she is shown holding a scroll. Her right hand may be raised to indicate her surprise at the message she is hearing. Her head is bowed, showing her consent and obedience. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon her is depicted by a ray of light issuing from a small sphere at the top of the icon, which symbolizes heaven. In a famous icon from Sinai, a white dove is shown in the ray of light.

The Annunciation falls during Lent, but it is always celebrated with great joy. The Liturgy of St Basil or St John Chrysostom is served, even on the weekdays of Lent. It is one of the two days of Great Lent on which the fast is relaxed and fish is permitted (Palm Sunday is the other).

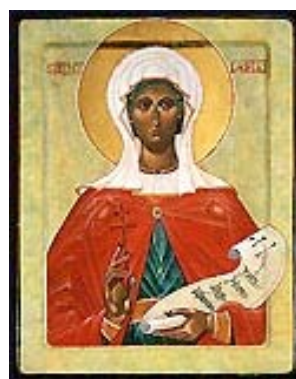
MAJOR SAINTS IN THE MONTH OF MARCH:



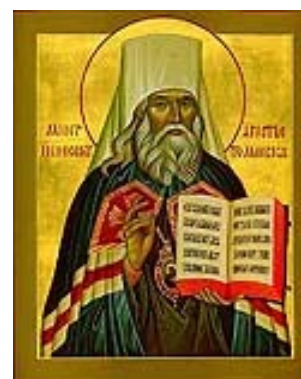
March 18
Repose of St Nicholas of Zichka



March 19
Martyr Chrysanthus and those with him at Rome



March 19
Martyr Daria and those with her at Rome



March 31
Repose of St Innocent the Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to the Americas

Major Church Activities and Events

- Sat, Mar 01: Memorial Saturday; Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m., with reading of names after
- Sun, Mar 02: Sunday of Last Judgment (Meatfare), Reader Training, Hours of Prayer, Proskimedia (9:30 a.m.)
- Tues, Mar 11: Parish Council Meeting – 7:00 pm
- Wed, Mar 05: Faith Through Music Class, 7 pm
- Sun, Mar 09: Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare)
- Mon, Mar 10: First Day of the Great Fast
- Wed, Mar 12: 1st Presanctified Liturgy, 7 p.m., Pot Luck Lenten Meal and Basics Class One: Basic Church History from Beginning to Today
- Mon, Mar 24: Vespereal Liturgy for the Annunciation of the Theotokos
- Sun, Mar 30: One Year Memorial Service for Joan Foundos
- Sun, Apr 06: Parish Annual General Meeting After Liturgy
5pm Lenten Service with Other Churches

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

- Mar 02: Roland Llupa / Edi Sera
- Mar 09: Damian Peters / Steven Foundos
- Mar 16: Bill Peters / Ilia Luka
- Mar 23: Petrika Troja / Nasi Pavllo
- Mar 30: Ilir Foundo / Stefan Baltadori
- Apr 06: Tomi Beno / Ardian Mile

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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Jamaica Estates, New York 11432



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