

THE ORTHODOX POST

February 2012

Volume VIII, Issue 2



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

by Fr. Nathan Preston

Every culture has a code: a system of rules, whether stated or implied, in which its inhabitants dwell. It guides them in their treatment of each other. Its violation is cause for social upset. Each of us lives within a number of these codes. They are the unspoken rules of office etiquette, the chains of command, duties and obligations at home, our roles, and even the order in which it is our turn (or our child's) to use the swing while at the playground. A whole host of expectations, an invisible web of contract, surrounds us at all times. And we sometimes become uncomfortable entering a new place or group, for inevitably, there is the clash of cultures as we struggle to accommodate, to learn, to accept and be accepted.

Now, in my second season of house blessings, I have become familiar with a new code. I know that, when I enter a home, there is no haste; it is time to sit and chat. The gliko will come out first, whether a piece of chocolate or a spoon of fruit and syrup. Then the raki, the cups filled and refilled with dangerous generosity. Meze and fruit arrive. Coffee is brought at the end to relish, lingering for a while longer in conversation. It is a ritual I have come to love, but one that I had first to learn. So, too, I have found while visiting at dinner that, if I do as

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my parents pounded well into my head and wait for the lady of the house to take her first bite before picking up my fork, I cause a dining standoff—everyone waiting on everyone else to begin. With coffee and raki, meals and blessings, I have had to relearn how to be a guest in this new and different way.

Like me at dinner, we often think little of these tiny bonds and negotiations until something goes awry. Who is served first, who eats first, who does the serving, and who speaks, all of these things express our diverse

Continued on Page 6

President's Message

by Bill Peters

First, a sincere "Thank You" to all of you who supported our annual Icon Auction on January 8th. Your generous donations resulted in raising more than \$7,000 which is very much needed for operating the Church. Also, a sincere "Thank You" is extended to Anastasia Pamela Barksdale, a Missionary in Albania for visiting our Church and providing a presentation on the work of the Church in Albania.

Looking ahead to the Pascha season, Great Lent begins on Monday, February 27th with Pascha being April 15th. Fr. Nathan will conduct Lenten Prayers on Monday night, February 27th at 7:00 p.m. Also, during Great Lent, he will conduct Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings followed by Adult Study. Plan on being there!!!

The next few months will be very busy. In addition to Lent Holy Week and other Pascha season activities, we will be involved with the following:

1. *Pledge Program* – Each Parishioner's financial commitment for 2012 is needed so the Church can continue serving the community. If you haven't done so, Please turn-in your pledge card with your best possible pledge.

2. *Valentine's Day Dance* – On Saturday Night, February 11th, the Church will sponsor a Dance and Party in our new, expanded Fellowship Hall. It will be a fun event with a DJ and serve as a fundraiser for the Church. Buy your tickets in advance, since capacity is limited and tickets will not be sold at the door. See Ad on page 3.

3. Ads from Merchants Supporting the Church – Businesses friendly to the Church have placed Ads in the Post to help financially support St. Nicholas. Look at the Ads on pages 8 & 9 and if you can, shop at these stores and tell them you saw their Ad in the Church Newsletter.

SEE YOU IN CHURCH!!!

DAUGHTERS' CORNER

by Linda Foundos

Morning Motivation

When I woke up this morning lying in bed, I was asking myself;

What are some of the secrets of success in life?

I found the answer right there,

In my very room

The Fan said	Be cool
The Roof said	Aim high
The Window said	See the world
The Clock said	Every minute is precious
The Mirror said	Reflect before you act
The Calendar said	Be up-to-date
The Door said	Push hard for your goals

Interesting Anecdotes

The banana cannot reproduce itself. It can be propagated only by the hand of man.

Strawberries are the only fruits whose seeds grow on the outside.

The Earth gets 100 tons heavier every day due to falling space dust.

In ancient Greece, tossing an apple to a girl was a traditional proposal of marriage. Catching it meant she accepted.

In ancient times, strangers shook hands to show that they were unarmed.

Soldiers do not march in step when going across bridges because they could set up a vibration which could be sufficient to knock the bridge down.

In the next issue of the Orthodox Post, we'll share with you our election results and future plans discussed at our January 29th meeting.

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

Shkurt, 2012

Këtë muaj po japim një pjesë nga libri i June Hunt mbi komunikimin dhe si e sheh Zoti atë.

“A ke ndaluar ndonjëherë të vlerësosh ndikimin e mënyrës tënde të komunikimit? Një fjalë e kujdesshme, inkurajuese, një koment i bërë prerazi, një vështrim i dhemshur...ose një koment i pakujdesshëm, një vërejtje e pasjellshme, njengërdheshje sarkastike...cfarë u komunikojnë këto në të vërtetë atyre që janë më afër teje? Fjalët e tua kanë potencialin për t'i dhënë jetë ose vdekje zemrës së tjetrit. Fjalët e tua, bashkë me qëndrimet e nënkuptuara, do t'i ndërtojnë të tjerët ose do t'i rrënojnë, do t'i forcojnë në Zotin ose do t'ua dobësojnë besimin.

“Vdekja dhe jeta janë nën pushtetin e gjuhës; ata që e duan do të hanë frytet e saj.” (Fjalët e **Urta 18:21**)

Komunikimi i mirë në marrëdhënie ka këto tre karakteristika bazë: NGROHTËSI, VËRTETËSI, NJËJTËSIM.

Ngrohtësia thotë “ Ti je i rëndësishëm për mua. Je i vlefshëm për mua. Nuk do përpiqem të të bëj kopje të dytë të vetes sime, përkundrazi, dëshiroj që të realizosh potencialin tënd të plotë.”

Vërtetësia thotë: “Nuk përpiqem të të manipuloj dhe as të të nënshtrij ndaj vullnetit tim. Dua që të krijosh një zonë të sigurt, që ti të komunikosh dhe të besosh se do të jem i sinqertë me ty.”

Njëjtësimi thotë : “Ndonëse mund të mos e di saktësisht se cfarë po kalon, po përpiqem të kuptoj ndjenjat dhe sfidat që po përball. Do të përpiqem të të kuptoj unë, në vënd që të pres që ti të më kuptosh mua.”

“Dhjetë Urdhërimet” e komunikimit të Perëndishëm

Fjalët e tua duhet të jenë të Sinqerta, Të Kenaqshme Për Perëndinë, Të Japin Jetë, Inkurajuese, Të Hirshme, Të Urta, Të Pakta, Në Kohën e Duhur, Investim, Të Dashura.



Valentine's Party

Saturday, February 11, 2012

7:00 p.m. til 12:00 a.m.

Buffet Dinner & Drinks D.J. Dancing

St. Nicholas Albanian Church
Fellowship Hall
181-14 Midland Parkway
Jamaica Estates, New York



Don't miss all the fun!!!

Donation: \$50 adults \$20 children 12 & under

Capacity is limited, so tickets will be sold in advance and NOT at the door.

To purchase your tickets, please contact:

Agathia Luka (718) 456-6582 Tina Korra (201) 338-2002

Irma Mile (516) 470-0030

TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT THE DOOR -DEADLINE DATE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8th

Please make your check payable to St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church.

(Please cut here & return your completed form with your check.)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Number of Adults _____ @ \$50 each = \$ _____

Number of Children _____ @ \$20 each = \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

House Blessings Have Begun



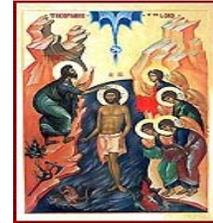
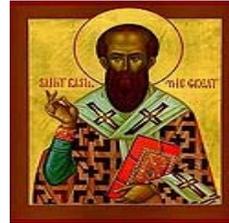
Avoid the rush!

Speak to Fr. Nathan now about coming to bless your home. Appointments may be made for any time in February.

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

ICON AUCTION A SUCCESS !

A popular tradition continued *Sunday, January 8th* when St. Nicholas held its annual Icon Auction after Liturgy. The Church was SRO with parishioners who put in bids for their favorite icons. This popular fund-raising event raised a record \$7,000 for our Parish.



Thank you to everyone who made this a success !

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

In this issue there are advertisements (Ads) promoting businesses that support our Church which 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.

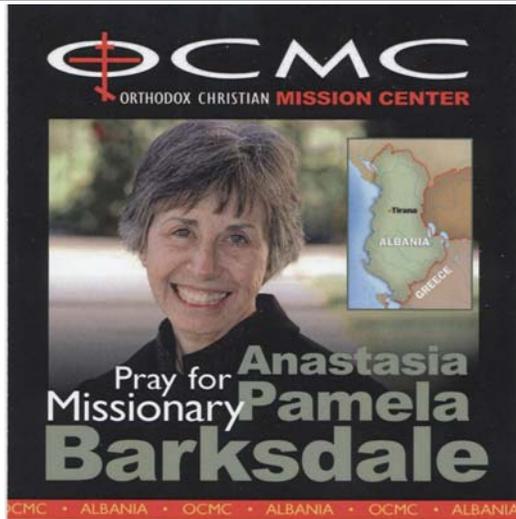
Also, to help this advertising Program grow, we ask you to identify merchants that would be willing to place an Ad in The Orthodox Post. It is hoped that income from these Ads will cover the cost of publishing and distributing the Post which runs about \$3,000 per year.

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!!!

Missionary to Albania Visits St. Nicholas



Braving the first snows of this odd winter, parishioners were pleased to welcome a special guest after Liturgy on January 22. Anastasia Pamela Barksdale, a missionary in Albania for nearly five years, brought her stories, prayers, and photo presentation to St. Nicholas to share the progress of the Church in Albania. As an assistant to the Archbishop and specialist in education, she was able to speak broadly on a whole range of interesting subjects of Church life there.

Ms. Barksdale highlighted in particular the investment that the Albanian Church has chosen to make in the lives of young people, from camps to parochial schools, campus centers to curriculum. Noteworthy of late are the opening of a Church-sponsored college and the great strides still underway to secure accreditation for the seminary. Additionally, she enumerated the social programs,

advances in medical care, and outreach. It was the photos of new Churches, though, that raised the most comments and appreciative “oohs and ahs” from the collected body. These living and active monuments now stand as a testament to the resurrection of the Church in Albania, and the audience was excited to see pictures of the beautiful additions to the many familiar settings of hometowns and neighborhoods.

Questions answered and eyes aglow with these wonderful sights, the audience thanked Ms. Barksdale for her efforts in Albania and for sharing these things with those in America. Though she returns to the United States only every few years, she was assured of a very warm welcome the next time she can be again in New York.

Pledge Program for 2012 – Return your Pledge Cards

To date, about one-half of the parishioners have returned their Pledge Cards for 2012. If you have not submitted a Pledge Card yet, please mail it in or bring it to Church and give it to Jim Liolin, Lou Foundos or Fr. Nathan. St. Nicholas Church needs all parishioners to make a Pledge for 2012 and submit a Pledge Card. This makes it possible to operate the Church and serve the community.

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.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE (continued from Page 1)

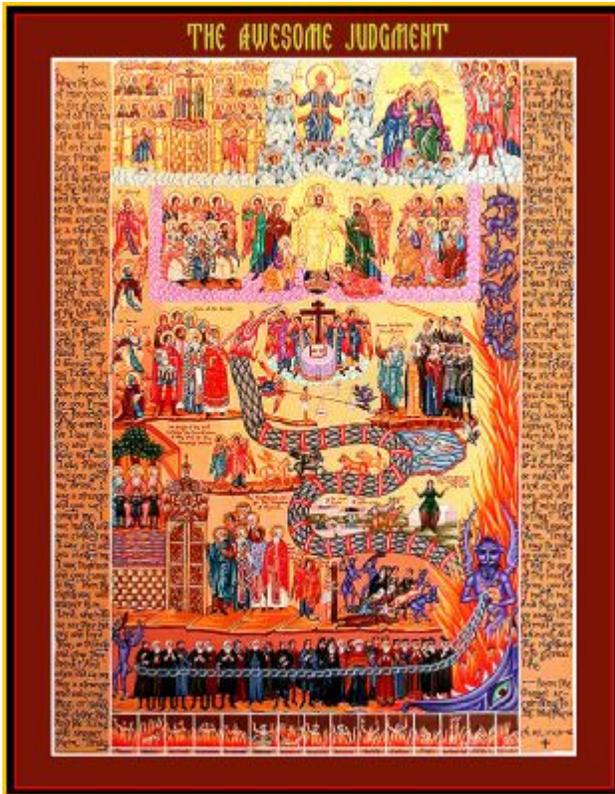
and many codes. They express our relationships one to another, our culture and care. As Christians, we are not immune from this. We state our values in our actions unthinkingly too often, or we assume that the Christian code is the same as that of family, business, hospitality, or place of extraction. Yet while our Christian code shares in many comparable elements as those things, it is not precisely the same. Our cultural codes enshrine our social standing. Whether we determine this by age, position, role of giver or receiver, guest or host, our standing in all of these categories instructs us in how to act and how to expect others to act towards us. In our faith, though, despite any other category, we must seek to be the least.

If we take those writings of the vast number of saints seriously (and we should!), we find in their accounts that the more they believe they draw near to God, the less worthy they feel themselves to be before Him and before others. The more we contemplate the vast difference between us and God, the more we own up to our shortcomings, our failings, then we can begin to see what profound gifts are our brothers and sisters. We can see God in them. Our code as Christians is to understand the world and understand ourselves as sinners dwelling among saints. None of us come to this with ease. We are not by disposition prone to see others as better than ourselves. Though we may admit that they have a talent or a grace that we lack, it is hard for each of us to find them good where we are bad, virtuous where we are slack, Christian where we are all too human. Yet this is our code if we would grasp after Heaven: to be the least. The door to paradise is low. May we learn to stoop that we may ascend.

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Linda Foundos

- Our sincere sympathy to the family of Aleksander Stergjo (Leko) who died on December 18, 2011 in Elizabeth, New Jersey after a 10-month battle with colon cancer. He was born in Berat, Albania on January 27, 1932. Aleksander was the fourth son of Nilollaq & Elpiniqi Stergjo. He immigrated to the United States from Albania in 1995 for a better life for his children and their families. Aleksander leaves behind his lovely wife Ana (75 yrs. old), their son Oltion, their daughters Elpiniqi (Eli), Alma, Adriana, one grandson Nikolla, four granddaughters Melisa, Anastasi, Lilly & Rebecca and extended family and friends. He was a great husband, father, grandpa, friend and a very hard worker. He leaves a legacy of love and wonderful memories. He will be greatly missed by the many lives he touched. May his memory be eternal. I perjetshim kujtimi.
- Alex Oswald's gymnastics performance was amazing! In mid January he won best "All Around" at the Long Island Classic Gymnastics Meet. He placed in each of the 6 events. At the end of January, Alex participated in an east coast Gymnastics Invitational Boys Meet in Pennsylvania and won 2nd place on rings and 3rd place on the high bar. There were over 150 boys in his age group that competed. Alex's parents, Donna & Jim Oswald are proud of the hard work and dedication Alex puts into this fine sport with such a rewarding result. Bravo, Alex!



Sunday of Meatfare of the Last Judgment - Forgiveness Sunday –
 Commemorated on February 27

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31–46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live. This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, Who will render to every man according to his deeds". Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT, sin is the absence of love, it is separation and

isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ. If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ.

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN FEBRUARY



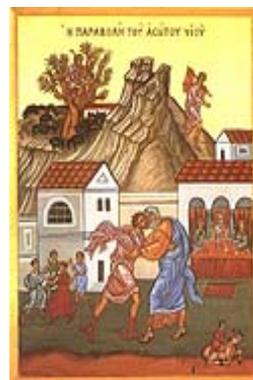
The Meeting of Our Lord In The Temple
 Feb 02



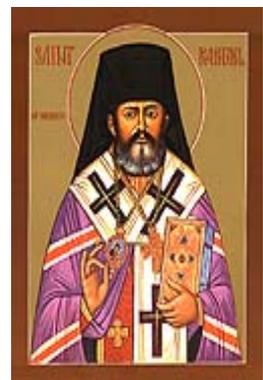
St. Photius
 Feb 06



Hieromartyr Charalampus
 Feb 10



Sunday of the Prodigal Son
 Feb 20



St. Raphael the Bishop of Brooklyn
 Feb 27

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Major Church Activities and Events

Vespers every Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

"HOUSE BLESSINGS" continue

- Wed, Feb 01: Vesperal Liturgy for Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, 7:00 p.m.
- Thurs, Feb 02: Festal Prayers, 10:00 a.m.
- Sun, Feb 05: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
- Mon, Feb 06: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Sun, Feb 12: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
- Mon, Jan 09: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Sat, Feb 18: Memorial Liturgy and Blessing of Graves, 10 a.m.
- Sun, Feb 19: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m., Meatfare Sunday
- Sun, Feb 26: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday)
- Mon, Feb 27: Beginning of Great Lent, Lenten Prayers, 7:00 p.m.
- Tues, Feb 28: Lenten Prayers, 7:00 p.m.
- Wed, Feb 29: Presanctified Liturgy and Adult Study, 7:00 p.m.

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

- Feb 05: Ilir FUNDO / Stefan BALTADORI
- Feb 12: Petrika TROJA / Nasi PAVLLO
- Feb 19: Andrea KUTALI / John JANCE
- Feb 26: Lou FOUNDOS / Robert KORRA
- Mar 04: Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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



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