

# THE ORTHODOX POST

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## Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

Several years ago, not too long after I had become a priest, a friend asked me what it was like to read the sermon of St. John Chrysostom at Pascha. Truth be told, I didn't have much of a response. That first year of learning just how to serve the services on my own, how to "do Church", had left me with not too much time or energy to ponder what being a priest was really like. More than the insecurities of a novice than the real self-reflection of someone who can both serve and still somehow pray while serving. However, I have to say that, though I have long loved this sermon, it has come to mean more and more to me each year and at each opportunity I have the privilege of delivering it as your priest. The words of St. John speak freedom; they encapsulate so perfectly the joy and gravity of what we do in Church and what this Feast of feasts means. I offer them to you here for your reflection because I know that sometimes the demands of Pascha, the distractions of celebration, make it so that not everyone gets to hear them. As we sometimes say to each other with a sly wink: the Church is half empty after the Paschal procession, after the fire so many go home. Take a look at them now because Holy Pascha is something we celebrate officially for most of this month of May.

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The Resurrection is always timely, and these words always fitting for us to review.

### Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with

Continued on Page 5

## President's Message

by Jim Liolin

Things you should know...

An internal committee was established to review the financial status of the operating funds, our budget and the portfolio accounts. This was done to better understand where we could save costs and optimize the investments and strengthen our parish life overall. Subsequent to the financial review a permanent committee was set up to monitor and coordinate with the investment management company. Committee members are: Comptroller Bill Peters and two members appointed by the council: Phil Foundos and Nick Filis.

We are actively involved in getting a management program up and running called Power Church. This will consolidate the administrative efforts utilizing a single software program making it easier to manage the church activities. This program is recommended and has been financially supported by the Diocese. Lou Foundos, Nick Filis and Bill Peters are leading the project.

A new website for the church is currently being revised with today's technology. Soon there will be a new look and more information available that will increase communications among our extended community. Damian Peters, Fr. Nathan and Joanne Heiser are working on this project.

During the year we had several repairs done: the lift needed repairs. Changes in the building regulations required us to meet new codes with the emergency lighting within the church costing \$5000; the window wells around the outside of the church needed new iron gratings for safety; the AC needed to be repaired. As the building approaches 45 years old more updates will be needed. The Council has approved a 1-3-5 year building structure review to stay ahead and avoid major repair surprises. Tomi Beno will lead this review project.

The Orthodox Post is available in the Albanian language. It is available in the Church fellowship hall. If you have not seen it please let me know.... we will be happy to get you a copy. John Jance, Bill Peters, and translators Tina Korra, and Tomi Beno have been doing a great job.

I can go on but it will fill too many pages. So in future messages I will update you on what is happening. If you want to help in the areas mentioned above contact a person on that project. Please stay in touch by coming to church and reading The Orthodox POST.

Look at the calendar – Mother's Day May 11. Come to Church with Mom.

Looking to June – St. Nicholas Picnic on Fathers' Day June 15<sup>th</sup>.

## KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



by A. Llupa

Maj, 2014

Këtë muaj po japim disa fjalë të urta nga libri i Salomonit, birit të Davidit, mbret i Izraelit.

**Qëllimi i fjalëve të urta**

I urti do të dëgjojë dhe do të rritë diturinë e tij; njeriu i zgjuar do të përvetesoje këshilla të urta për të kuptuar një fjalë dhe një enigmë, fjalët e të urtëve dhe thëniet e tyre. Frika e Zotit është fillimi i njohjes, por njerzit e pamënd përçmojnë diturinë dhe arsimin. Nxjitje që u drejtohen të rinjve:

**Bindju prindërve**

Dëgjo, o biri im mësimet e atit tënd dhe mos i lër pas dore mësimet e nënës sate, sepse janë një nur që zbkuron kokën tënde dhe një stoli në qafën tënde.

**Shmangu nga shoqëria e keqe**

Biri im, në qoftë se mëkatarët duan të të mashtrojnë, mos prano; në qoftë se thonë: "Eja me ne, kemi ngritur një pritë për të derdhur gjak; i ngritëm gracka të pafajmit pa ndonjë shkak, le t'i kapërdimë të gjallë ashtu si Sheoli, tërësisht si ata që zbrasin në gropë; ne do gjejmë lloj-lloj pasurish të çmueshme; do t'i mbushim shtëpitë tona me plaçka; ti do t'a hedhësh në short pjesën tënde me ne, dhe të gjithë ne do të kemi një qese të vetme", biri im, mos shko me ta në po atë rrugë, ndale hapin nga shtegu i tyre, sepse këmbët e tyre turren drejt së keqes dhe ata nxitojnë të derdhen gjak. Shtrihet më kot rrjeta përpara çdo lloj zogu, këta kurdisin prita kundër gjakut të vet dhe ngrenë kurthe kundër vetë jetës së tyre. Të tilla janë rrugët e çdo njeriu të etur për pasuri; ajo ia heq jetën atyre që e kanë.

**Ruaje zemrën tënde**

Ruaje zemrën tënde me shumë kujdes, sepse nga ajo dalin burimet e jetës. Hiq dorë nga e folura me hile dhe largo prej teje buzët e çoroditura. Sytë e tu le të shohin drejt dhe qepallat e tua të synojnë para. Sheshoje shtegun e këmbëve të tua, dhe të gjitha rrugët e tua qofshin të caktuara mirë. Mos u shmang as në të dhathtë, as në të majtë; largu nga e keqja.

Continued on Page 5

**ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH PICNIC  
FATHERS' DAY - SUNDAY, JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>**

**SAVE THE DATE!!!  
PLAN ON COMING TO THIS FUN EVENT**

## Daughters' Corner

by Linda Foundos

Our Paschal celebrations all went beautifully! The Daughters, led by Tina Peters, did a splendid job of hosting our annual Pancake Breakfast on Palm Sunday. So many volunteered to participate with shopping, cooking & serving and did a wonderful job for which we are so grateful. On Good Friday morning, the Daughters, led once again by our "crafty & artistic" Tina Peters, so beautifully decorated with love the epitaphion in preparation for the Lamentation Services.

A heartfelt thank you to Dr. Anna Kohen, President of the Albanian American Women's Organization (AAWO) & dear friend of St. Nicholas, for her most generous donation of a variety of books in Albanian on literature, history & many other subject matters and issues of Shpresa Magazine. Please do take advantage of this wonderful gift.

There will be a Daughters' meeting on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you at our annual Fathers' Day Picnic!

We wish you a HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY! Appreciate your mother; show her your love each & every day of the year because the years go by much too quickly!

**Mothers' Day Breakfast  
Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>  
Come and Celebrate**



**Come One, Come All!!!**

## Men's Club Successful Pool Event

On Friday, March 28, 2014 we had the second St. Nicholas Albanian Men's Club event and another success for the St. Nicholas Church.

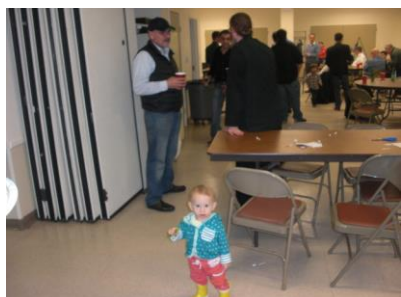
It was the first annual Pool Championship, with Leonard Ndreu and Vinny Buonincontro the first time winners of the Tournament. We had 32 players in a single game elimination event. This was our version of sweet 16 play, and sweet it was!!

Fun was had by all. We enjoyed great company, friendly but very competitive play and shared pizza and laughs. The only thing missing were the girls cheering on their teams.

Please look for the next announcement from the Men's Club announcing another exciting activity and we welcome EVERYONE to join in the excitement.

Thanks to all who attended and helped out from the St. Nicholas Albanian Men's Club.

If you would like to learn more about the Men's Club and our mission or want to become a member please contact Ilia, Edi, Berti, Nasi, Emil, Tomi, Andrea, Landi, Izzy.



## Orthodox Natural Church Development



The committee was tasked to identify two or three key opportunities for the community to work on as a “Family” and once accomplished will help bring us closer to realizing our goal of being a spiritual beacon to all of our members and the broader community we live in.

### Process:

The following is a brief review of the process we followed as outlined by the guidelines of the Orthodox Natural Church Development program approved by the Church Board.

- Through the survey questionnaire of the community we were able to identify Saint Nicholas’ key area of focus to be “Empowering Leadership. We also felt that by focusing on this critical area it would affect many of the programs and activities that we engage in as a Church on a regular basis.
- We then set up 7 focus groups and asked all the groups the same 12 questions to gain an understanding of how we as a community view our Church and leaders.
- From these focus groups the team came together to identify what the community felt were the biggest areas of opportunity and concern.
- Through listening to everyone’s comments we all realized the strong sense of love and togetherness our community had for Saint Nicholas and each other.
- From this sense of unity and focus the team was energized as we worked through the process of choosing which top two or three areas among all the action items we reviewed would be our recommendations to the board as our next steps.

### Wins along the way:

- During the 18 month period since the process began, we as a community have seen many signs of change and increased involvement from a broad group of people.
  - Paying off the loan
  - Changes in the Sunday School process
  - First Youth group meeting in years
  - The establishment of a Men’s Club
- Clearly it’s not our intention to say the Orthodox Natural Church Development process was the reason for the above successes, but more a mention that many of the above wins were items identified by the majority of comments during the various focus groups as areas for change.

### Key Findings & Learnings:

- Leadership:
  - The Priest’s role needs to evolve to one of taking on greater leadership and to help instruct the Board and the leaders of the various ministries with greater spiritual focus.
- Training & Mentoring:
  - The current leaders need to establish a more structured process of bringing on new people in leadership roles for the various ministries by improving our training and mentoring process to provide the needed support as people take on new roles.
- Communication:
  - We need to improve all aspects of how, what and when we communicate all the activities we as a community are involved in.
- Religious education:
  - Every focus group expressed a strong desire to learn more about our religion. Due to the nature of our Church being a commuter Church it was recommended that we set up small local learning groups. These “learning” groups would be held in homes throughout the community and the year.

As a result, the team has identified the following two action items to help bring to life the Empowering Leadership minimum factor.

### Action items:

- Seek out individuals by 9/1/2014 to lead the establishment and begin the planning by 12/31/2014 for the following Ministries:
  - Sunday School
  - Teen Youth Group
  - Adult Education
  - Development of a Church Face Book Page



- Establish a comprehensive data base management process for collecting all relevant contact information by 9/1/2014. Leverage the data base to create custom groups to more effectively communicate and distribute
  - The Orthodox Post
  - Weekly Communications
  - Web Site awareness. (Letting everyone know it's been updated and will be maintained as a source of current information of Saint Nicholas Activities).
  - Special needs – (to be able to reach the community if we have special guests or other important information to be communicated on short notice).

The Orthodox Natural Church Development team will be reaching out to everyone in the community through individual discussions/requests after church services and through the Post for us all to get involved and share your gifts with the Church to help make us stronger.

Respectfully,

The Orthodox Natural Church Development Committee.

### PASTOR'S MESSAGE – Continued from Page 1

thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

### KENDI SHQIP – Continued from Page 2

#### Gjëra të neveritshme për Zotin

Zoti i urren këto gjashtë gjëra, madje shtatë janë të neveritshme për të: sytë tinzarë, gjuhë gënjeshtare, duar që derdhin gjak të pafajshëm, zemra që kurdisin plane të këqija, këmbë që turren shpejt drejt së keqes, dëshmitarët e remë që thonë gënjeshtër dhe ata që shtien grindje midis vëllezërve.

Eshtë në shesht Perëndija,  
Ajo që ka mirësinë  
Secili do mund ta njohë,  
Ka Perendin' e të mirat,  
Po s'e mbuloj e padija,  
Edhe kush ka djallëzine,  
Njeri tek do mund t'a shohë.  
Ka djallë e ligësirat.

## Pascha Season Celebrations

Many Church Services and Celebrations highlighted the activities of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Pascha!!!

### PALM SUNDAY



### HOLY WEEK

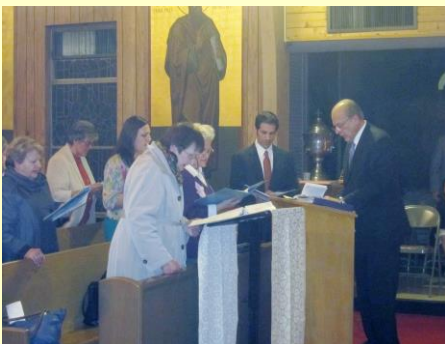
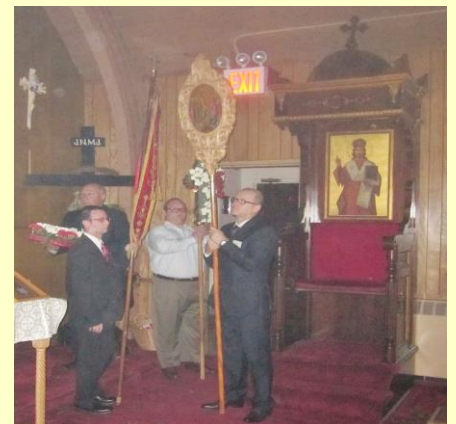
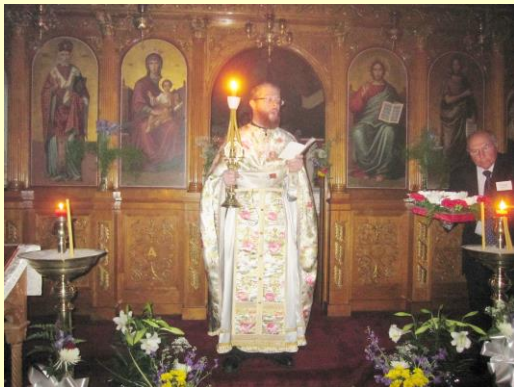




**GOOD FRIDAY**



**PASCHA**







### The Ascension of Our Lord - Commemorated on May 29<sup>th</sup>

AND ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN....”V. Rev. George Florovsky, D.D.

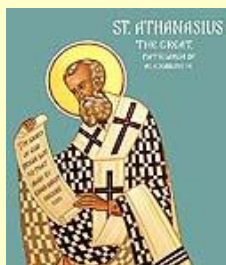
“I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God, and Your God” (John 20:17).

In these words the Risen Christ described to Mary Magdalene the mystery of His Resurrection. She had to carry this mysterious message to His disciples, “as they mourned and wept”. The disciples listened to these glad tidings with fear and amazement, with doubt and mistrust. It was not Thomas alone who doubted among the Eleven. On the contrary, it appears that only one of the Eleven did not doubt—St John, the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” He alone grasped the mystery of the empty tomb at once: “and he saw, and believed”. Even Peter left the sepulcher in amazement, “wondering at that which was come to pass”. The disciples did not expect the Resurrection. The women did not, either. They were quite certain that Jesus was dead and rested in the grave, and they went to the place “where He was laid,” with the spices they had prepared, “that they might come and

anoint Him.” They had but one thought: “Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher for us?”. And therefore, on not finding the body, Mary Magdalene was sorrowful and complained: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him”. On hearing the good news from the angel, the women fled from the sepulchre in fear and trembling: “Neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid”. And when they spoke no one believed them, in the same way as no one had believed Mary, who saw the Lord, or the disciples as they walked on their way into the country, and who recognized Him in the breaking of bread. “And afterward He appeared unto the Eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen Him after He was risen”. From whence comes this “hardness of heart” and hesitation? Why were their eyes so “holden,” why were the disciples so much afraid of the news, and why did the Easter joy so slowly, and with such difficulty, enter the Apostles’ hearts? Did not they, who were with Him from the beginning, “from the baptism of John,” see all the signs of power which He performed before the face of the whole people? The lame walked, the blind saw, the dead were raised, and all infirmities were healed. Did they not behold, only a week earlier, how He raised by His word Lazarus from the dead, who had already been in the grave for four days? Why then was it so strange to them that the Master had arisen Himself? How was it that they came to forget that which the Lord used to tell them on many occasions, that after suffering and death He would arise on the third day? The mystery of the Apostles’ “unbelief” is partly disclosed in the narrative of the Gospel: “But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel,” with disillusionment and complaint said the two disciples to their mysterious Companion on the way to Emmaus. They meant: He was betrayed, condemned to death and crucified. The news of the Resurrection brought by the women only “astonished” them. They still wait for an earthly triumph, for an external victory. The same temptation possesses their hearts, which first prevented them from accepting “the preaching of the Cross” and made them argue every time the Saviour tried to reveal His mystery to them. “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”. It was still difficult to understand this.

He had the power to arise, why did He allow what that had happened to take place at all? Why did He take upon Himself disgrace, blasphemy and wounds? In the eyes of all Jerusalem, amidst the vast crowds assembled for the Great Feast, He was condemned and suffered a shameful death. And now He enters not into the Holy City, neither to the people which beheld His shame and death, nor to the High Priests and elders, nor to Pilate—so that He might make their crime obvious and smite their pride. Instead, He sends His disciples away to remote Galilee and appears to them there.

## MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN MAY



St. Athanasius of  
Alexandria  
May 02



Greatmartyr Irene  
of Thessalonica  
May 04



St. John the  
Theologian  
May 08



St. Christopher  
of Lycia  
May 09



Mid-Feast of  
Pentecost  
May 14



Sts. Constantine  
and Helen  
May 21



## ***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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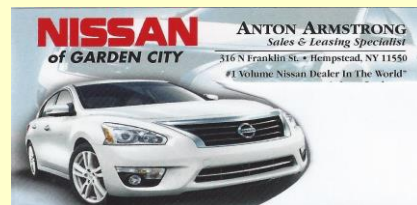
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## **Major Church Activities and Events**

Vespers every Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

May 03, 17 and 24 and 31 (not on the 10<sup>th</sup>)

Sun, May 04: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.  
 Mon, May 05: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m.  
 Sun, May 11: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.;  
                   Mother's Day Brunch in the  
                   Fellowship Hall after Liturgy  
 Sun, May 18: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.  
 Wed, May 21: Sts. Constantine & Helen Prayers,  
                   11:00 a.m.  
 Sun, May 25: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.  
 Wed, May 28: Vespers Liturgy, 7:00 p.m.:  
                   Ascension of the Lord  
 Thurs, May 29: Prayers, 11:00 a.m.;  
                   Ascension of The Lord

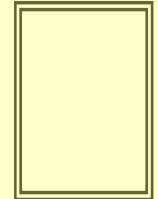
### Ushers' Schedule for Sunday Services Lista e sherbimit te dielave ne kishe

May 04: Jim OSWALD / Tomi BENO  
 May 11: Andrea KUTALI / John JANCE  
 May 18: Robert KORRA / Lou FOUNDOS  
 May 25: Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA  
 June 01: Ilia LUKA / Bill PETERS

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