

THE ORTHODOX POST

February 2016

Volume XII, 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

A few more weeks and we'll find ourselves in Lent. Again returning to that season of preparation, we are pointed forward to Pascha, faced onward to that greatest of celebrations, and we orient our lives toward this feast. For us, Christians of the Eastern Church, holidays are never surprise events sprung upon us unexpectedly. Each feast has its pre-feast, days of preparation, and usual octave of time afterward to continue to celebrate. Easter, yet more so. We are people who like a party, like not to let the chance for rejoicing slip past us unacknowledged. So though Pascha comes for us this year a very late May first, we'll begin already to work our way up to then even now, commencing a cycle of prayer and practice even here in mid-February.

The Great Fast may be at times perceived as an oppressive stretch of time, stretching beyond the forty days of austerities we thought we were promised. The pre-fast fasting week of preparatory (though lighter) abstinence and post-fast fasting of Holy Week and its greater demands of abstinence can make the season seem interminable. In truth, sometimes the fast is oppressive, particularly if we spend it focusing on

President's Message

by Jim Liolin

Allow me to begin by saying thank you to all who have made their donations toward the Icons. Once again we received over \$5000 in contributions. This will help us with the budget for 2016. It is most certainly needed and appreciated.

On January 31st, we had for the first time two clergy serving liturgy who served our parish during the past two years. They were both recently ordained, one to the priesthood and one as a deacon. Father Ignatius was the main celebrant and he was assisted by Deacon Will. It was a special time for them and us. We wish them well in their chosen vocation.

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all that we are not having or, as is more likely, shouldn't have had but couldn't resist. But neither guilt nor pining are the virtues to be cultivated in this season or likely ever.

All the days of fasting and celebrating, preparing to fast and preparing to celebrate, are, according to one strain of theology, all the same, our meditation within them always upon the one same thing. All our lives are given to us to begin to comprehend the Resurrection of Christ, what this means, how and to what it calls us. We know the story; we likely know even many of its variant retellings: four Gospels, meditations by the

Continued on Page 5

Going forward this month on February 13th there will be a Valentine's Dance. Please make your reservations. Don't miss out!

House Blessings are continuing so make your appointment with Father Nathan. Our Sunday School has started again so please bring your children. It is important for them.

Finally, Saturday March 5, is Memorial Saturday. It occurs just before the start of Great Lent. There will be Liturgy and a simple potluck meal after church. Then Father Nathan will meet those who can attend and say prayers at Mt Tomori.

Look to early April for the General Meeting.

See you in Church!

Coffee List

Dear Ladies,

Here 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 Adelina Llupa.

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:

1. Cake for 50-60 people
2. Cookies for the children
3. 1 gallon of milk



January	31	Adelina Llupa
February	07	Barbara Papalexis / Barbara Filis
	14	Open
	21	Rehova Family
	28	Linda Foundos / Elizabeth Liolin
March	06	Open
	13	Agathia Luka / Antoneta Mertiri
	20	Nasi Pavllo / Marcela Guma
	27	Open

DAUGHTERS' CORNER

By Linda Foundos

We've made it through all the end of the year holiday festivities and a record blizzard too! We hope you all experienced the joy of the season. Now we look forward to our next activities. On **Sunday, February 28th** following services & a brief coffee hour, the Daughters will go to lunch at a nearby restaurant, **The Greek Family Restaurant**, 212-02 Union Tpke., Hollis Hills, 718-470-1700. Please contact Joanne Heiser or Linda Foundos if you would like to join us; and we certainly hope you do. A very brief meeting will be held at the restaurant. Carpooling from & returning to church will be arranged. Details will follow.

Please note that **Saturday, March 5th** is **Soul Saturday**. You may submit your list of names to be read during the prayer service to Joanne Heiser or Linda Foundos. A form for the names will be available at coffee hour. \$5 will be collected along with the form to defray the cost of the light lunch following the service on that Saturday.

Feel free to contact us with any ideas, comments or suggestions you may have.

House Blessings



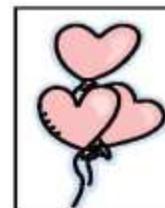
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Cell: 208-818-3372**

Sunday Church School



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Valentine's Party

Saturday, February 13, 2016

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

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Don't miss all the fun!!!!

Donation: \$60 adults \$25 children 12 & under

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

To purchase your tickets, please contact:

Anila Muho-Gjika (917) 584 - 4604 Zhani Joanidhi (917) 412 - 0344

Tom Benoit (917) 952-9252

TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT THE DOOR—DEADLINE DATE WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11th

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 _____

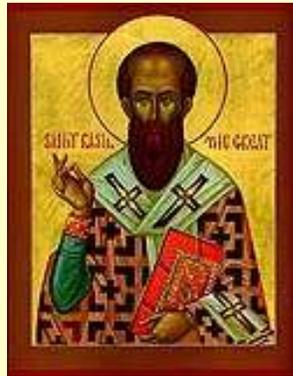
Telephone No. _____

Number of Adults _____ @ \$60 each = \$ _____

Number of Children _____ @ \$25 each = \$ _____

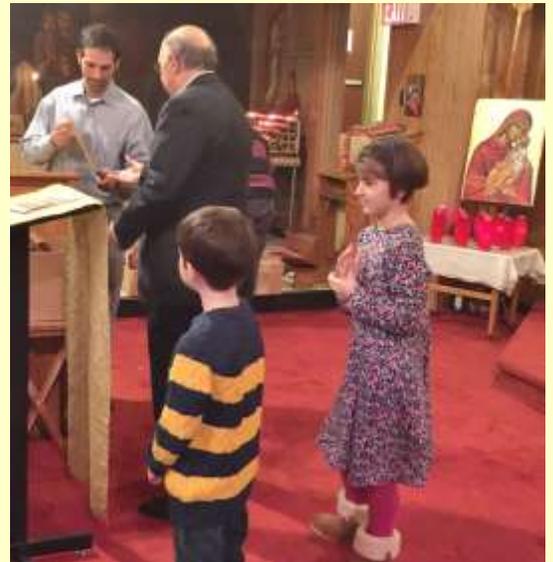
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

ICON PRESENTATION



On Sunday, January 10th, the Annual ICON Presentation and Auction was held after Liturgy. This event is an Albanian tradition and an annual event celebrated near the date of the Epiphany. In addition, it is also a much needed fundraiser for St. Nicholas Parish.

The event was a Success!!!! Those attending bid and donated for their favorite Icons. Also, if you were unable to attend, you can still participate and support the Church. You can make a donation for your favorite Icons talk to Fr. Nathan, Jim Liolin or Lou Foundos. Please Donate!!!!



2016 Pledge Program

Many Parishioners have turned in their Pledge for 2016!!!
To them, "THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!"

However, there are still a large number of Parishioners that still have to turn in their Pledge Card. They must indicate how much money they will donate to St. Nicholas Church during 2016. This will help pay for the costs that enable St. Nicholas to operate and serve our Community.

Most pledges are in the \$500 to \$3000 range. In addition to financially supporting the Church, Pledgers receive discounts for some church activities as well as when they buy cemetery plots.

We ask you to consider making a generous Pledge!!!
Pledge Cards can be put in the Sunday Collection Basket or mailed to the Office.

PLEDGE CARD

My total pledge for the year **2016** is \$_____

I will pay my pledge to St. Nicholas Church (please check one) Weekly Monthly Quarterly Yearly

Signature: _____

Parish Census:

We are continuously updating our parish database. Please take a few minutes and fill in the information requested below. Please print clearly. Thank you.

Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
 Telephone: _____ Workdate: _____
 Address: _____ Zip Code: _____
 (Phone Number) _____ Email Address: _____ Wedding Anniversary: _____

Other family members in household:

Name: _____	Birthdate: _____	Name: _____	Birthdate: _____
Name: _____	Birthdate: _____	Name: _____	Birthdate: _____

Please turn in your completed Pledge Card!!!!!!

COMMUNITY NEWS by Linda Foundos

- So romantic.....This past Christmas holiday, a young couple went ice skating at Rockefeller Center, and in front of the Christmas tree, he got down on one knee and proposed!!! The happy couple.....Iris Mile, daughter of Irma & Ardian Mile, and Andi Spiro, son of Angie & Petrit Spiro. Our congratulations to the happy couple and their families. Iris' sister, Angela, and Andi's brother, Elvin, are so happy that their siblings found each other to share the journey through the rest of their lives. We wish them all the best as they begin a new & exciting chapter in their lives. May God bless them all with much good health and happiness.
- Our sincere well wishes to Pauline Logore as she recovers from her recent surgery. We hope to see you back very soon.
- The brother of Christina Liolin, Anthony, fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, January 22nd after a battle with cancer. Our heartfelt condolences to Christina & Jim Liolin, and the extended Liberta family. Anthony leaves behind his wife, Annette, 2 married sons (Michael & Joseph) and 5 beautiful grandchildren. May his memory be eternal.
- The 70th Annual Albanian American National Organization convention will be held in Tirana, Albania on August 4, 5, 6 & 7 this year as it was ten year ago! It will take place at the Rogner Hotel where rooms have been reserved at the convention rate. Don't miss this fun-filled, exciting weekend. Please visit the website for details: www.aano.org.
- 19 Foundos family relations enjoyed their 4th annual Vermont ski weekend! They all lodge under one roof, sharing the cooking, playing games, enjoying the outdoors, challenging themselves on the slopes & loving the family bonding. They hope to keep it up indefinitely. Everyone agreed that it was a great weekend!

Pastor's Message – Continued from Page 1

saints in other passages of scripture and from non-scriptures, plot of countless films, programs, books, and conversations. But it is not simple knowing of this that is our goal, else we would all be (and perhaps too many are) content to find faith as affirmation. Some read the Bible as if were an encyclopedia entry, arid but occasionally of interest in proving a point or confirming a suspicion. Others as a phone book are happily convinced that they, at least, know where to find God's number should they ever wish to ring Him up. Our faith, however, must be more than a consulted thing. We live within it when we practice it well and appropriately.

Christ came, taught, healed, suffered, died, and Christ came back again. It is this coming back that we often fail to appreciate, and it is in this return that we find the beginning of our salvation, the beginning of our lifelong meditation. Because Christ has returned, He has validated the world in a way it was not before. For where God turns, there is holy land, our tasks and time filled with the promise of learning and coming to be holy ourselves in His presence. Christ passes through death but returns to life and, in so doing, shows us that it is here in this world that we so often find and more often make petty that salvation is to be obtained. No longer gamblers or wistful dreamers, staking our souls and faith on some tomorrow redemption, it is here and now that we are already ready to be with God, united to Him perfectly because His presence trumps our manifold imperfections. Christians need not play a long game of waiting to see; ours is a faith of present and presence.

Life with God, for those who want it, begins now. More than securing a spot in paradise and far, far more than fearing a change in reservation and winding up elsewhere, this life of faith promises us now to spend with God, now to spend with His people. Why wait when Christ is in our midst?



PRE-LENT - (Reading and Icon courtesy of OCA Website)

The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of **Great Lent**, which is itself preceded by its own liturgical preparation. The first sign of the approach of Great Lent comes five Sundays before its beginning. On this Sunday the Gospel reading is about **Zacchaeus** the tax-collector. It tells how Christ brought salvation to the sinful man and how his life was greatly changed simply because he “sought to see who Jesus was” (*Lk 19:3*). The desire and effort to see Jesus begins the entire movement through lent towards Easter. It is the first movement of salvation.

The following Sunday is that of the **Publican and the Pharisee**. The focus here is on the two men who went to the Temple to pray—one a pharisee who was a very decent and righteous man of religion, the other a publican who was a truly sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people. The first, although genuinely righteous, boasted before God and was condemned, according to Christ. The second, although genuinely sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God.

The meditation here is that we have neither the religious piety of the pharisee nor the repentance of the publican by which alone we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ’s teaching, and to beg for mercy.

The next Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent is the **Sunday of the Prodigal Son**. Hearing the parable of Christ about God’s loving forgiveness, we are called to come to ourselves” as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being “in a far country” far from the Father’s house, and to make the movement of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that the Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only “arise and go,” confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that “home” where we truly belong.

The next Sunday is called **Meatfare Sunday** since it is officially the last day before Easter for eating meat. It commemorates Christ’s parable of the **Last Judgment**. We are reminded this day that it is not enough for us to see Jesus, to see ourselves as we are, and to come home to God as his prodigal sons. We must also be his sons by following Christ, his only-begotten divine Son, and by seeing Christ in every man and by serving Christ through them. Our salvation and final judgment will depend upon our deeds, not merely on our intentions or even on the mercies of God devoid of our own personal cooperation and obedience. Finally, on the eve of Great Lent, the day called **Cheesefare Sunday** and **Forgiveness Sunday**, we sing of Adam’s exile from paradise. We identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this day the Lord’s teaching about fasting and forgiveness, and we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive us.

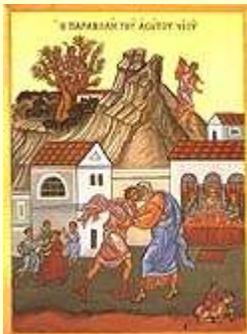
MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN FEBRUARY



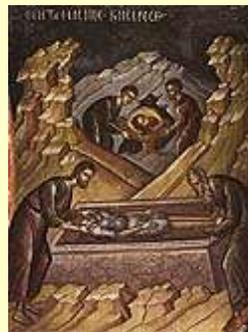
Meeting of Our Lord
in the Temple
Feb 02



St. Haralampos
Feb 10



The head of St. John
the Baptist
Feb 24



St. Raphael the
Bishop of Brooklyn
Feb 27

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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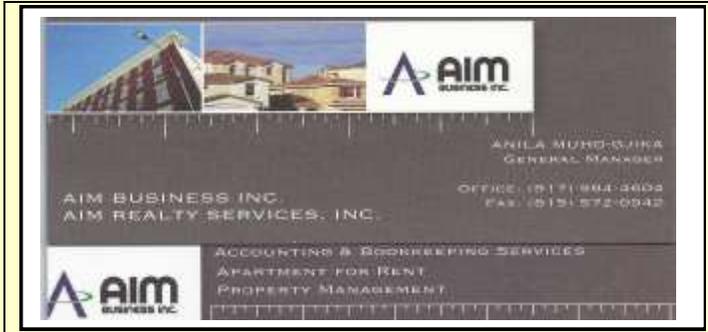
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Major Church Activities and Events

Vespers every Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m.
February 06, 13, 20 and 27

- Mon, Feb 01: Vesperal Liturgy, 7:00 p.m.;
Meeting of the Lord
- Tues, Feb 02: Prayers, 10:00 a.m.; Meeting of
the Lord
- Sun, Feb 07: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
- Thurs, Feb 11: Prayers, 11:00 a.m.; Sts. Blaise
and Haralampos
- Sat, Feb 13: Valentine's Dance (Fellowship Hall)
- Sun, Feb 14: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Zacchaeus
Sunday
- Sun, Feb 21: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Publican and
Pharisee (Fast Free Week)
- Sun, Feb 28: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Prodigal Son

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

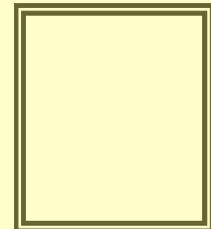
Feb 07: Andrea KUTALI / John JANCE
Feb 14: Robert KORRA / Lou FOUNDOS
Feb 21: Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA
Feb 28: Ilia LUKA / Bill PETERS

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