

THE ORTHODOX POST

December 2016

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Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nathan Preston

It is said of Abba (Father) John the Dwarf that he withdrew and lived in the desert at Scetis with an old man of Thebes. His abba, taking a piece of dry wood, planted it and said to him, 'Water it every day with a bottle of water, until it bears fruit.' Now the water was so far away that he had to leave in the evening and return the following morning. At the end of three years the wood came to life and bore fruit. Then the old man took some of the fruit and carried it to the church saying to the brethren, 'Take and eat the fruit of obedience.'

Most of us, when we call to mind the idea of obedience, are inclined likely to think of children or of repressive governments. It is a word—indeed, a concept—seeming far out of fashion, applicable perhaps to the young, they who are still being instructed, but rarely thought right for those past childhood. So often do we conflate obedience and control and learn to shun them both as things unfitting for us, the free. Yet obedience remains still a frequent topic of discourse in the history of our faith and most especially with the monks and the nuns who populate our calendar of saints so richly. But this is not just for them. Obedience, that willful subjection to rules both universal and particular, is a reality of life generally and to our lives of faith necessarily.

It is by obedience that plants grow to flower and fruit, nodding their blooms to the sun, proffering their beauty and wealth by season and according to cycle. This seems natural

President's Message

By Jim Liolin

This is a busy month with Christmas shopping and other holiday events but let's not forget the reason for the season. Without Christmas there would be no Easter, so you see how important this time is for the Church. Don't forget to put your efforts into Church during the season of giving.

We held our semi-annual meeting in November. During the meeting we heard from the various program leaders on their accomplishments since January. The Sunday School, the Daughters of St. Nicholas, the Pledge program which is growing every year.

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that they should grow, that they should develop each year with regularity. And we depend on them for their consent to live and to die according to weather and the turns of the earth. This very obedience of the natural world makes our own existence possible because we know when to gather, when to store, when to make things last and then cast seeds openhanded again into the earth. Because the plants don't rebel, we eat and the generations behind us learn to do the same. The obedience of creation affords us the stability to be more than meagre hungerers searching for something to stave off the pain of empty stomachs. As human people, we strive after a similar natural perfection. As Christian people, we must acknowledge that, as the natural world is perfect in its abiding obedience, so we, too, were created to be.

Continued on Page 6

Additionally, we talked about the Beautification of the Church temple.

In a few months the committee in charge will make a proposal for updating the area that is important to our worship. Along with this is the preparation for the 75th Anniversary of our Parish in 2018. We are looking for people to be a part of this celebration committee. If interested please contact Fr. Nathan or myself .

Finally, the 2017 Budget was approved by the membership. Thank you all for your continued support and cooperation. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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



December 04	Silvana Kutali / Tina Korra
11	St. Nicholas Day Luncheon
18	Pancake Breakfast
25	Christmas Day
January 01	New Years Day
08	Barbara Papalexis/ Barbara Filis
15	Open
22	Adelina Llupa
29	Rehova Family

DAUGHTERS' CORNER

By Linda Foundos

As the year comes to a close, there are great events in which to participate. We look forward to seeing you at our annual **St. Nicholas Luncheon** on Sunday, December 11th and our annual **Christmas Pancake Breakfast** following our **Church School Pageant** on Sunday, December 18th.

Our St. Nicholas community is a true blessing. We want YOU to be a part of it too. Just a reminder to take a moment and reach out and contact someone you've not seen in a long while, someone not able to come around. For several of you that were regular attendees and not so lately, you are missed! We haven't forgotten you. We wish you all the best!

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

May the meaning of Christmas and best wishes be with us all throughout the year and always! Enjoy, but don't forget to pause to remember the reason for the season.

ICON AUCTION

Sunday, January 8th - After Liturgy



ICON RETURN

Bring in your Icons
from last year's Icon Auction,
As Soon As Possible!!!

*We need them to prepare for
the January 11th Icon Auction*

Christmas Liturgy Sunday, December 25th

In keeping with the customs of our Orthodox faith, the Divine Liturgy for Christmas will be served this year on Christmas morning at 10 am.

This is a special blessing for us as we are permitted the opportunity to celebrate not one but two feasts! Since Sunday each and every week brings us back again to Christ's saving resurrection, every Sunday is a little Pascha; and since the Nativity of the Lord, Christmas, falls this year on the Lord's Day, this will be a meeting of these two great feasts, a coming together of these essentials episodes of our Christian faith.

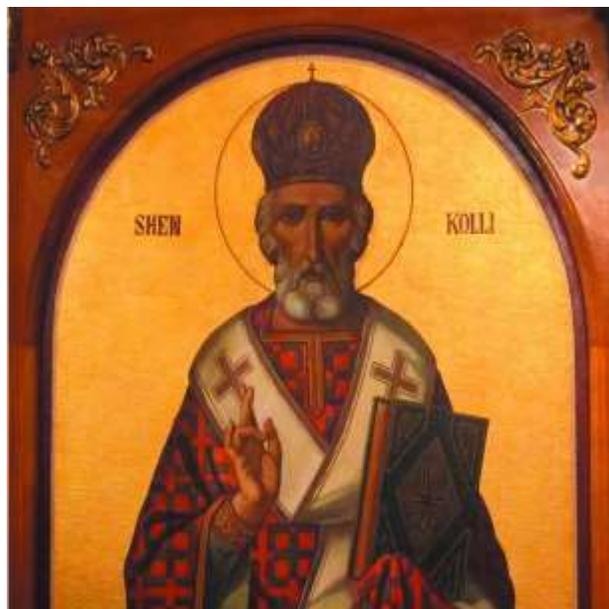
Every few years when they are joined like this, we dutifully celebrate both though this may occasionally mean readjusting our schedules slightly. Yet in this way, we come back again to Christ, Whose birth and resurrection are the cause of our joy, the reason for our celebration.

On Saturday, December 24, at 7 pm the Church will celebrate a Christmas Vigil prayer service.

St. Nicholas Day Luncheon

TIME IS RUNNING OUT!!!!

GET YOUR TICKETS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



Sunday, December 11th
after Liturgy in the Fellowship Hall

Fish Dinner: \$25

Children under 12: Free Child's Lunch

Come and Help us Celebrate our St. Nicholas Feast Day.
There will be Prizes to be won at our Raffle!!

Space is Limited. Tickets will be sold in advance at Coffee Hour
on Sunday, November 20 & 27, December 4.

Buy and Reserve Tickets by Contacting:

Agathia Luka 718-456-6582

Zhani Joanidhi 917-412-0344

Irma Mile 516-470-0030

Church Office 718-380-5684

(Leave Message: Name, Phone Nbr. & Nbr of Tickets Needed)

**Christmas Pageant
&
Pancake Breakfast
&
Santa's Visit**

Sunday, December 18th



**2017 Pledge Program
St. Nicholas Needs Your Financial Support!!!**

PLEDGE CARD
My total pledge for the year 2017 is \$ _____
I will pay my pledge to St. Nicholas Church (please check one) Weekly Monthly Quarterly

Signature: _____
Parish Contact: _____
We are continually updating our parish database. Please visit us for updates and fill in the information requested below.
Please print clearly. Thank you.

Name: _____ Parish: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____ Mailing Address: _____

Other family members in household:
Name: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____
Name: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____
Name: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

The Pledge Program Campaign for 2017 has begun. Letters, information and Pledge Cards have been mailed to both those who made a Pledge for 2016 and those other families who are a part of the St. Nicholas Church Community, but who did not Pledge financial support this year.

During the Pledge Program Campaign the Church asks "You", the Parishioner, to tell it how much you will commit to donate to St. Nicholas during next year, 2017.

To serve the Parish Community and operate the Church, it costs more than \$150,000 each year. Currently, only about one-half of this cost is raised by the Pledge. Today, St. Nicholas has about 100 families supporting the Church with the Pledge Program.

There are another hundred families who attend Church periodically, but who did not Pledge in 2016. Typical yearly Pledges range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. In 2016, the average pledge per family is \$700.

Together, through this 2017 Pledge Program, we must try to raise more money to support St. Nicholas. Each of us is asked to do the best we can - that is "Increase last year's Pledge amount" or if you did not Pledge for 2016, "Submit the best Pledge you can for 2017". Let's increase our financial support of St. Nicholas!!! Turn in your PLEDGE CARD NOW!!!!



Christmas is soon to be here, but amidst all our preparations let us remember those who will be struggling just to keep warm this winter. Bring your lightly used adult and children's winter coats to Church this year. We will collect these, bundle them, and deliver them to our local police precinct, firehouse, or public library. Afterward, these will be distributed to the needy throughout the city.

Make someone's winter a little warmer; make someone's Christmas a little bit brighter.

Please bring your clean and usable coats to St. Nicholas through Christmas Day.



As we enter into this season of giving thanks for God's blessings, it is good and right that we remember those who have less. To care for them is a holy task, given by Christ to His people. Through the coming month, we will be collecting donations to go to an area food bank. A list of most needed items follows below. Please be generous in doing good, for in serving those in need, we serve our God.

The NYC Food Bank suggests donations of these things:

- bottled water
- peanut butter
- shelf-stable milk
- proteins (canned tuna, chicken, salmon, sardines, ham, sausages, etc.)
- cereal
- granola/breakfast bars
- juice boxes
- dried fruit
- crackers
- personal hygiene products (soap, toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)
- diapers

FR. CHRYSOSTOM'S VISIT TO ST. NICHOLAS



On Sunday, October 30, St. Nicholas Church was very pleased to welcome Fr. Chrysostom Onyekakeyah. Fr. Chrysostom is a monk-priest from Nigeria within the Patriarchate of Alexandria. There, he serves St. Christopher's Mission Church in Awoidemili and ministers to four other neighboring communities. His responsibilities also include the care and education of many children as the Church has established an orphanage there to meet the needs of those young people left without family due to the country's ongoing AIDS crisis. Father was also very proud to note that the school associated with his orphanage is the only one locally that meets without educational fees and so includes diverse students of multiple religious backgrounds. The St. Nicholas community was proud to present an offering to Fr. Chrysostom to take back with him for support of these invaluable missionary and charitable works; more than a thousand dollars were collected. If you would like to purchase Father's book on the history of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, or if you would like to offer some support to this vital work of the Orthodox Church of Nigeria, please to Fr. Nathan. Fr. Chrysostom has promised to keep us in his prayers, let us commit to do the same!



Turkeys for Thanksgiving

In the spirit of "Thanksgiving" and helping one's neighbor, the woman's organization, AAWO "Motrat Qiriaz" donated several turkeys to members of the St. Nicholas Albanian Church Community.

There efforts have made the holiday happier for several families. The generosity of "Motrat Qitiaz" is very much appreciated. Thank You!!!

Pastor's Message – Continued from Page 1

It is our understanding and comprehension of humankind that it was created to worship, that we were created to worship. Not oddly or extravagantly or in some feigned or foreign sense are we to worship, but by cycle and by measure. As the earth yields to the pull of the sun and stars spin in the heavens or like the grass greening, the waves' intervals and tides, worship is part of our existence; it is part of our obedience due as created beings. In it, we discover ourselves because we finally find our place in the cosmos. To worship means to be as we are but more. It augments us.

Pause for just one moment here and reflect: When was the last time I prayed? When, the last time I was in Church? Have I let my life be emptied of that God I purport to follow? Distractions, priorities askew or, worse, unconsidered, have I fatigue at fighting to be something other than a created, perfect, child of God? Am I obedient? No. But, as St. John the Dwarf declaims, the fruit of this is sweet, and it is fruit promised to those who are willing.

We come to Church to learn how to be in the world, what to be out there where most of our time is spent. We pray daily our own rule of worship and praise and gratitude to He Who Is because this is who we are: worshipping creatures. Nothing less lets us call ourselves Christians, not blood or name or past. It is our worship that marks us as Gods, by our obedience that we are called His.



ST. SPYRIDON - Commemorated on December 12th
 (Reading and Icon courtesy of OCA Website)

Saint Spyridon of Tremithus was born towards the end of the third century on the island of Cyprus. He was a shepherd, and had a wife and children. He used all his substance for the needs of his neighbors and the homeless, for which the Lord rewarded him with a gift of wonderworking. He healed those who were incurably sick, and cast out demons. After the death of his wife, during the reign of Constantine the Great, he was made Bishop of Tremithus, Cyprus. As a bishop, the saint did not alter his manner of life, but combined pastoral service with deeds of charity.

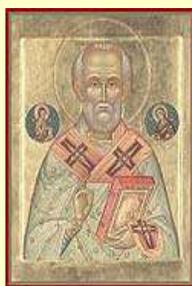
According to the witness of Church historians, St Spyridon participated in the sessions of the First Ecumenical Council in the year 325. At the Council, the saint entered into a dispute with a Greek philosopher who was defending the Arian heresy. The power of St Spyridon's plain, direct speech showed everyone the importance of human wisdom before God's Wisdom: "Listen, philosopher, to what I tell you. There is one God Who created man from dust. He has ordered all things, both visible and invisible, by His Word and His Spirit. The Word is the Son of God, Who came down upon the earth on account of our sins. He was born of a Virgin, He lived among men, and suffered and died for our salvation, and then He arose from the dead, and He has resurrected the human race with Him. We believe that He is one in essence (consubstantial) with the Father, and equal to Him in authority and honor. We believe this without any sly rationalizations, for it is impossible to grasp

this mystery by human reason." As a result of their discussion, the opponent of Christianity became the saint's zealous defender and later received holy Baptism. After his conversation with St Spyridon, the philosopher turned to his companions and said, "Listen! Until now my rivals have presented their arguments, and I was able to refute their proofs with other proofs. But instead of proofs from reason, the words of this Elder are filled with some sort of special power, and no one can refute them, since it is impossible for man to oppose God. If any of you thinks as I do now, let him believe in Christ and join me in following this man, for God Himself speaks through his lips." At this Council, St Spyridon displayed the unity of the Holy Trinity in a remarkable way. He took a brick in his hand and squeezed it. At that instant fire shot up from it, water dripped on the ground, and only dust remained in the hands of the wonderworker. "There was only one brick," St Spyridon said, "but it was composed of three elements. In the Holy Trinity there are three Persons, but only one God." The saint cared for his flock with great love. Through his prayers, drought was replaced by abundant rains, and incessant rains were replaced by fair weather. Through his prayers the sick were healed and demons cast out.

MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN DECEMBER



St. Barbara of Syria
Dec 04



St. Nicholas
Dec 06



The Conception of the Theotokos
Dec 09



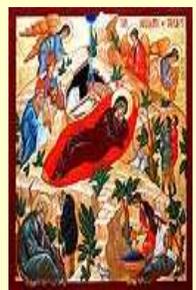
St. Herman of Alaska
Dec 13



St. Daniel
Dec 17



St. Nahum of Ochrid
Dec 23



The Nativity of our Lord
Dec 25

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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Dr. Eklea Gakuli DDS
 7 Bond Street #1D
 Great Neck NY 11021
 NYEdentalPC@gmail.com
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Fri & Sat 6AM-3AM

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Major Church Activities and Events

Paraklesis every Friday at 7:00 p.m.
December 02, 09, 16 and 23

Sat, Dec 03: Vespers, 5:00 p.m.
Sun, Dec 04: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
Mon, Dec 05: St. Nicholas Prayers, 6:00 p.m.
Tues, Dec 06: St. Nicholas Prayers, 10:00 a.m.
Sat, Dec 10: Vespers, 5:00 p.m.
Sun, Dec 11: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.;
St. Nicholas Luncheon
Tues, Dec 13: St. Herman Prayers, 10:00 a.m.
Sat, Dec 17: Vespers, 5:00 p.m.
Sun, Dec 18: Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.; Christmas
Pageant, Pancake Breakfast
Fri, Dec 23: Royal Hours, 10:00 a.m.
Sat, Dec 24: Christmas Vigil, 7:00 p.m.
Sun, Dec 25: Liturgy, 10 a.m. Nativity ofThe Lord
Sun, Jan 08: Liturgy, 10 a.m. ICON Auction

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

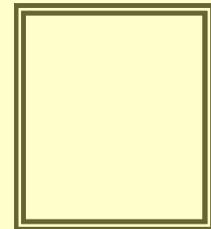
Dec 04: Robert KORRA / Lou FOUNDOS
Dec 11: Roland LLUPA / Edi SERA
Dec 18: Ilija LUKA / Bill PETERS
Dec 25: Stefan BALTADORI/Izzy TSAMBLAKOS
Jan 01: Nasi PAVLLO / Ardian MILE

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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