

# THE ORTHODOX POST

December 2019

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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 Fr. Nikodhim

December already and the rush is upon us: soon St. Nicholas, soon Christmas, and St. Basil to bring in the new year. We are busy now in ways we notice. The holidays bring us this. Those routines that are, of themselves, already adequately hectic become more so with gifts and decorating, shopping, meals, and social calls to make. And within this all, we see how busy even our normal has become.

Secretly mostly I hear informal confessions at this time of year, those statements of self-doubt people tend to make to priests, those things they may wish to say aloud but cannot own up to openly so whisper as aside: "Why am I doing this?" and "Is it worth it?" I suspect folks hope their priest will help to stoke them onward in what they think of as obligation. I think I'm supposed to answer something about this season's blessedness or the innocence of children that we don't want tainted by their parents' stress. But like I do as I stand beside people in sacramental confession, I try to hold my tongue. Often those questions posed in worry or concern or doubt do much of the healing I'm supposed to oversee. Those things we think we're not supposed to think escape the lips, and some peace comes.

But is it worth it: Christmas and its excesses and its stresses? This little reflection is not one more critique of consumerism or of the supposed secularism that is threatening to overwhelm the religious importance of the season. You'll find those thoughts elsewhere with ease. Is Christmas worth it? As 2019 comes to a close, I hazard to say yes.

As Orthodox Christians, we choose to live seasonally,

## President's Message

by Lou Foundos

This has been a busy six months. The beautification project has basically been completed with a few minor touch ups remaining. All the small icons have been received and mounted at the back of the church. In addition, a larger icon has been mounted behind the altar. Unfortunately as the iconographer was doing the final work, he had a death in the family but should hopefully be back soon to complete the work. Since the church is over 50 years old, the stained-glass windows needed a cleaning and more importantly, the material holding the glass together had dried out and thus made some of the windows unstable. This cleaning and repair project was completed last month, and the stained glass windows now sparkle and are more secure. We also had our first Halloween Dance. Due to some short notice of the event, and deaths in the community, attendance was light but those that attended had a ball! Next year we look forward to a very successful function.

### Presented at General Meeting

This has been a busy six months. The beautification

fasts and feasts filling out the cycle of the year. In my years of pastoral ministry, I have been asked often why we don't feast like

every day is Christmas or Pascha. Obesity aside, I always reply that there is a purpose to our calendar. This summer, for the first time ever, I was asked why we don't fast like every week is Lent. My answer stayed the same. Time runs away from us already, unspooling mostly unnoticed. As people of faith, we say that time itself is part of that frontier that God asks us to live on and to work at knowing more fully as both His and our own. When every day seems the same, we may need to ask whether we are truly fulfilling this mandate. When yesterday's joys become today's routines and tomorrow's burdens, maybe something is wrong. Thus, these seasons and these changes to our routines give shape, return perspective, and challenge us afresh each time.

So is Christmas worth it? Yes. But its gift may be of the very stress that we feel. Its gift may be that something different makes us reassess. Its gift may be one of fatigue and the knowledge that we need to make some changes. Happily, a new season will come soon, arrive with difference and ask us to become participants in choosing what it will hold for us. I pray much both good and difficult will greet us, and we will be ready for every strain and growth.

This has also been a difficult period with more falling asleep of parishioners than normal. First and foremost, we lost *Archbishop Nikon* after a long illness. Many in the parish knew him as Nicky Liolin since he grew up at St. Nicholas. This leaves a void in our hearts, and we now have Metropolitan Tihkon as our caretaker bishop. We also had the passing of two long time members of the parish, *Viola Kallinikos* and *Bill Peters*. Viola had a long and productive life and was the anchor of her family and will surely be missed. The second and more recent and shocking death was *Bill Peters*. I left for a trip to Albania and discussed several items that Bill was handling, only to receive a shocking email that he had a sudden health issue and had passed away. He was one of the pillars of the community, always smiling and willing to do whatever was asked of him. He had served as Parish Council President and in other capacities and never said no if asked to do any work for the Church. The church was an important part of his life and he will be missed. **Memory Eternal! I perjetshem kujtimi!**

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# Coffee List

## Daughter's Corner

by Linda Foundos

Dear Ladies,

Below 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 Adriana Topore.

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:

- Cake for 40-50 people
- Cookies for the children
- 1 gallon of milk

*Christine Liolin*

### December 1 Memorial Kirka

8 St. Nicholas Luncheon

15 OPEN

22 Pancake Breakfast

29 Psirakis Family

### January 5 Britu Haile

12 Silvana Kutali/Tina Korra

19 Open

26 Adelina Llupa

The celebration of Thanksgiving Day has a beautiful sentiment. It is a special day to note what we should be noting each and every day. Life is quite an amazing thing. Yes, it's up and it's down, but overall is still quite amazing. Most people at the end of their lives all seem to come to the same conclusion. That is, that after all is said and done, love is the most important thing. We hope you enjoyed sharing this special time with loved ones and reaching out to others important in your life and appreciating the many blessings in our lives.

Now it's time for another celebration, that of the birth of our Lord. Let's make certain we remember "the reason for the season." Please join us to honor our patron St. Nicholas with a luncheon following services on **Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**. Later in the month, on **Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**, we will enjoy the Church School's Christmas Pageant presentation and carol sing-along. It will be followed by our annual Pancake Breakfast. Thank you to all those that put forth so much effort to make these events happen. You are very much appreciated.

*And here comes the year 2020!! We pray for good health & better world conditions all around. All the best in the new year!!*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



**BRING YOUR CHILDREN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL**

For the 2019-2020 school year, Sunday School classes will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month @ 10:30am. There will also be a children's sermon on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month.

## A JOURNEY WITH WOMEN SAINTS... WHO ARE THEY

Prepared by Ermira Mitre

“Women saints have spread the BIBLE and advanced the CHURCH from the beginning of Christianity. Female Saints have had the zeal to plant the seed of FAITH to tens of thousands of people who converted to Christianity throughout history.”

### The Life of St. Irene Chrysovalantou

(continued from the previous article)

St. Irene would pray from the evening until the time of the service of Orthros. After the service she would sleep until the sun rose. She would then go into the church and call the sisters one by one to confession and if one of them did not tell of all sins committed, St. Irene would advise as the angel would instruct. All the nuns came to respect her as a saint. Word spread quickly about the holiness of the abbess of Chrysovalantou. Inhabitants of the city came to see this honorable and venerable person by the hundreds. The nobility, political leaders, women, virgins, young, and old. Irene taught with such wisdom and compunction and the name of the holy abbess of Chrysovalantou became ever so popular.

Irene continued to pray hard and long. One night as she was praying with her hands lifted-up towards heaven, the demons came into her cell and began to scream in a terrifying voice. They spoke in an unfit manner and tried to distract our holy mother from prayer. They, however, were unable to faze the saint. Nevertheless, the demons continued to taunt Irene and mimicked her by saying, "Wooden Irene, wooden feet hold you up. For how long will you torture our race, how long will you burn us with your prayers and how long will you hurt and make us sad?" Our venerable mother remained unfazed. This audacious demon then lit a candle from the votive lamp and continued to light the mantle and veil of the saint herself on fire. The flames reached down to the ground and burned not only the saint's clothing, but deep into the skin on her shoulders, chest, and back. Her entire body would have surely burned had it not been for one of the sisters who rushed it to put the fire out after smelling it from her own cell down the hall. Unbelievably, the saint continued to stand unfazed by the whole event. Irene stood tall, hands still in the air and praying to our Lord above. "My child," Irene said to the frightened nun, "why did you do such a bad thing and interrupt the good that was taking place? We shouldn't think about the human things, but rather about the divine. An angel was standing in front of me weaving a wreath of various marvelous and fragrant flowers and as he stretched out his hand to place this wreath on my head, you came in. You thought that you were committing a praiseworthy act but instead committed a most unpraiseworthy act. The angel saw you and left. You brought to me sorrow and I lost a great opportunity." The sister began to cry as she began to gather up the fragments of our venerable mother's habit. They were partly burned and stuck to her flesh. A glorious fragrance then came forth from her. This fragrance was sweeter smelling and more powerful than all the costly perfumes that could be purchased. This aroma filled the monastery for many days and the nuns glorified thy God for this was a true miracle. St. Irene did not own a second garment and so her cell-attendant brought her a new one. In just days wounds that would have killed most people were miraculously healed by the Physician of our souls and bodies and she was granted the grace of prophecy.

At that time a certain eunuch of her sister (the wife of Caesar Vardis) came to visit the saint. Irene called him aside secretly and said to him, "Kyrillos, (this was the eunuch's name) tell my sister to prepare her things because in a few days her husband will die as an outcome of a plot of King Michael. After a little while this king will also lose both his kingdom and his life by another machination against him due to his foolish misdeeds. Be cautious not to say anything to anyone. None of our relatives should dare to rise up against the new king who will rise to the throne, neither should they deter him in any way, even if he will assume the throne after a murder, for God has loved him because he fears Him and God has been gracious to him." Learning of all this, the sister of Irene told her husband of the prophecies, being overcome by her love for him. Her husband from his pride and foolhardiness, rather than running to the Lord with tears and begging mercy, remained indifferent. He was interested only in learning who would be the next king and many times he sent messages to our holy mother Irene trying to learn the future king's name. A few days later he was killed in the military camp. King Michael was then killed in the same way and Basil the Macedonian became king.

A noble and beautiful woman from Cappadocia, the home city of St. Irene, was engaged to a certain man. Later on, however, she thought better of it and decided against marriage. She decided instead to become a nun at the famed monastery of Chrysovalantou. The demon grew jealous, however, and filled her ex-fiancé with tremendous sexual passion. However, the man knew well that he would not be able to enter the monastery. Instead, he hired a powerful magician, a most able servant of the devil to whom he gave a large amount of money for the deliverance of the woman he wanted as his wife. The magician wrought his evil art in Cappadocia and the woman in the monastery went completely out of her mind. She began to run around the convent screaming and crying out the name of her ex-fiancé and swearing that if they did not open the doors of the convent she would suffocate. Our venerable mother heard the up-rise and cried, "Woe to me the wretched one, if by the carelessness of the shepherds the wolves snatch the sheep away. However, in vain do you labor, O sly devil, because Christ will not allow you to swallow my lamb." She then called the sisterhood together and instructed them to guard themselves against the snares of the demons and she ordered them all to fast for the entire week while praying to God and each one of them to make a thousand prostrations a day with tears for this sister of theirs who was undergoing temptation. (to be continued)



## DECEMBER SAINTS AND NAME DAYS

**4 - St. Barbara**

Barbara Filis, Barbara Papalexis, Barbara Duggan

**5 - St. Diogenes**

Dhiogjen Prifti

**- St. Sava**

Emil Bakalli, Savvas Diacosavvas

**6 - St. Nicholas**

Nicholas Foundos, Nicholas Brehl, Nikolin Petro, Nikollaq Vozhilla, Nikole Cerriku, Nick Filis, Joseph Catron

**12 - St. Spyridon (Piro)**

Spiro Gjika, Piro Rehova

**15 - St. Eleutherios and Anthi****16 - St. Iphigenia**

Efigjeni Qeramixhi

**17 - Prophet Daniel**

Daniel Oswald, Daniella Beno, Daniel Zekthi

**21 - St. Juliana**

Xhuljeta Muho, Jenny Peters

**- St. Themistokli**

Them Mertiri, Themistokli Dajko

**22 - St. Anastasia**

Anastasia Terova

**23 - St. Naum**

Naum Prifti

**25 - Christmas (Manoli, Kristi)**

Kristaq Panariti, Manoli Diacosavvas, Chrissien Gjika, Chris Gjoka, Chris Kirka, Kris Kutali, Christe Preftes, Christian Preftes, Christianna Sera, Christine Beno, Kristi Gjergji

**26 - St. Joseph the Betrothed**

Joseph DiTullio, Joe Catron

**27 - St. Stephen**

Stephen Kildunne, Steven Meta, Stefan Praela

**31 - St. Melania**

Melina Filipi



**Christmas Pageant**  
**Sunday, December 22nd**

**Santa's Visit**

**Holiday Breakfast**

## *Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church*

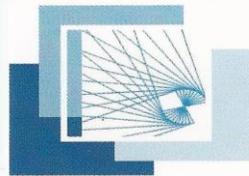
Please look at the Ads and support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

**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 - Lou Foundos

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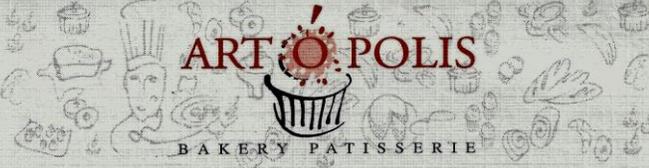
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**Major Church Activities and Events for  
December**

Sun. 1 - Liturgy, 10am-Kirka Memorial  
 Fri. 6 - Liturgy, 10am: St. Nicholas  
 Sat. 7 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 8 - Liturgy, 10am - Spirollari Memorial  
**St. Nicholas After Liturgy Lunch**  
 Thur. 12 - Prayers, tbd: St. Spyridon/St. Herman  
 Fri. 13 - Nativity Paraklesis, 7pm  
 Sat. 14 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 15 - Liturgy, 10am  
 Fri. 20 - Nativity Paraklesis, 7pm  
 Sat. 21 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 22 - Peters Memorial, 9:30am  
 Liturgy, 10am: Pageant and Pancakes  
 Tue. 24 - Royal Hours, 10am; Vigil, 7pm; Liturgy, 8pm  
 Wed. 25 - Typika and Prayers, 10am  
 Sat. 28 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 29 - Liturgy, 10am  
 Wed. January 1 - Liturgy, 10am: St. Basil

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

**DEC 01 Ilia LUKA / Bill PETERS**

**DEC 08 Ardian MILE / Edi SERA**

**DEC 15 Robert KORRA / Nasi PAVLLO**

**DEC 22 Roland LLUPA / Jim OSWALD**

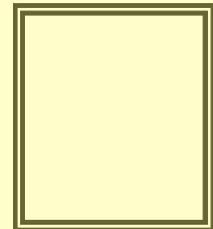
**DEC 29 Tomi BENO / Lou FOUNDOS**

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