

# THE ORTHODOX POST

December 2021

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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

I routinely receive requests for prayer. In person, by text, via email, the names come in, often with an explanation of the needs, wants, and crises arisen, but sometimes with none. And we raise these names, enunciate each, when we gather in prayer throughout the week. Often this is the best we can do as we struggle to acknowledge the limits of our own capability and as we see suffering that we can't solve however much we might wish to. We pray for what we cannot remedy or resolve, inviting others to share with us some greater smallness that we call community.

People ask me how to pray—particularly when they are grieving or struggling. We want words, incantations, to make the experience of our feelings of sadness or pain pass. I wonder often, though whether we need these buffers, need more barriers to try to stave off the realities of loss and disappointment, more concepts or teachings to resort to or retreat to with some misguided sense of erudition so that we try to sidestep the hurt that is so often felt merely being human. To those who ask, I give brief prayers; to those who insist, short passages of scripture that won't subsume them or their grief nor all their time.

## President's Message

by Lou Foundos

We have just celebrated Thanksgiving which is an American holiday but one with plenty of meaning for us Christians. It reminds us how much we have to be thankful for living in a country with religious freedom, the rule of law and having the opportunity to pursue whatever our heart desires. This also reminds us that we should not only be thankful but share our blessings by helping others less fortunate. The United States has a tradition of philanthropy and helping people through educational institutions, hospitals, charitable organizations, religious organizations, and other social help groups. I read an article the other day that indicated Americans donated about **\$536 BILLION** to nonprofits in 2019! While we sometimes hear about the greed factor, we can take solace in knowing that we are the most giving society in the

One of the great privileges of our faith, our Eastern Christian tradition, is that we are invited into prayer by more than our mind. Our whole self, body included, is intended toward good. I like to think that, if Church must for some reason be a classroom, it is more akin to a kindergarten than a college, offering a variety of brightly colored stimulating experiences rather than just lectures and the dust of dutiful pencils scratching away.

In the next couple months, we'll explore together how to pray by doing. No, we will not be discussing prostrations or kissing icons or lighting candles but cookery and a couple ancient dishes traditionally prepared within each household for sharing at Church. Gathering from the bounty of this world, tinkering and tampering with recipes until we get them just so, sanctifying our time and even our kitchens, these are forms of prayer, and like so much in the process of cooking, means also of transformation.

world! It is that time of year when we asked to renew our financial commitment once again to St. Nicholas through our annual pledge. Our expenses continue to increase, although for the last 20 months our attendance has been less than before the pandemic, and thus our overall income has suffered. In 2022 we will have even higher expenses due to inflation. Many of us pledge the same amount as in previous years. This year rather than do the usual, please consider increasing your pledge. For those that are able, **I would like you to consider increasing your pledge by 10%.**

We will once again be having our traditional **St. Nicholas Day Luncheon on Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>** following services. It is an opportunity to meet and greet old friends and help us celebrate the patron Saint of our church, St. Nicholas.

**Church is fully open, SO COME AND JOIN US!**

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# ST. NICHOLAS DAY LUNCHEON



**Sunday, December 5th**

**(Following Liturgy in our Fellowship Hall)**

**Fish Dinner: \$30**

**Children under 12: Free Child's Meal**

**Come and Help us Celebrate our St. Nicholas Feast Day.**

**We will also have our Raffle!!**

**Space is Limited. Tickets are being sold in advance at  
Coffee Hour on Sunday, November 21st and November 28th**

**ALSO, Buy and Reserve Tickets by Contacting:**

**Linda Foundos 516-671-8071**

**Blendi Korroveshi 516-417-3217**

**Adriana Topore 516-417-6637**

**Church Office (Adriana) 718-380-5684**



## ST. NICHOLAS ALBANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



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November 11, 2021

Dear St. Nicholas Family,

The Council and Father Nikodhim hope you are well. We know it has been difficult and so it is with St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas for several months has been open providing Sunday and mid-week services both in person and live-streaming to keep the community connected. Since October our Sunday School is bringing religious education to the children in-person and on-line. With the relaxed State regulations and vaccinations people are slowly coming back in the pews, and several baptisms and a wedding have taken place. We are retuning...but slowly.

### **Annual Stewardship Pledge appeal 2022:**

Brothers and sisters remember how it was when we gathered at Church services followed by our socializing with coffee hour? They were good times. Your *presence is a must* for the future of our parish. The longer *YOU* stay away, the longer it will take to get back to normal.

As you are aware our expenses are increasing. Although we had a record year of pledges in 2021 --\$70,000, it only covered less than half of the budget. To keep the church open we need to draw on our savings - *which will not last forever*. Because of very low attendance for almost two years the income from weekly collections, donations, candles, special services, have gone down and hall rentals are non-existent. ***We need you and your Stewardship Pledge for 2022.***

The Pledge Committee is asking you to be generous with your time for church and financial commitment when considering your 2022 pledge. *Please return to church with your Stewardship Pledge on or before Sunday, December 19, 2021.*

There are two options to make your Pledge:

1. **Complete the enclosed yellow card** and mail or bring it to church.
2. **Make your 2022 Pledge online** via the link or QR code below (*complete and submit online form*).

[2022 Pledge | St Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church](#)

Have a question? Please call the office (718-380-5684) and leave a message with a return phone number.

Thank you, stay healthy and help us make the mission of St. Nicholas a success. We hope to see you in church very soon.



**The Pledge Committee**

### **Të dashur antarë të familjes së Shën Kollit,**

Këshilli dhe At.Nikodhim urojnë që kjo letër ju gjen shëndoshë e mirë ju dhe familjen tuaj. Ne e kuptojmë që keni pasur kohë të vështira sikurse edhe Shën Kolli. Shën. Kolli prej disa muajsh ka filluar shërbimet normale fetare të djelave dhe gjatë javës drejtpërdrejt e në linjë dhe në kishë që të mbajmë komunitetin tonë sa më të lidhur. Në Tetor filluam shkollën e fëmijve drejtpërdrejt e në linjë. Numri i njerëzve të vaksinuar është në rritje, gjë që bën të mundshme që gjërat të bëhen më normale. Kemi pasuri një dasëm e disa pagëzime në kishën tonë dhe më shumë njerëz po marrin pjesë në shërbimet fetare. Po kthehemi në shërbime normale...por me ngadalë.

### **Zotimi juaj financiar për 2022:**

Motra dhe vëllezër, si ndiheni kur mblidhemi në Kishë për shërbimin e të djelës dhe më pas zbresim poshtë e bisedojmë me njëri tjetrin duke pirë kafënë? Janë pikërisht këto gjëra që mbajnë komunitetin tonë së bashku e krijojnë miqësi e harmoni. Pjesmarrja juaj është e nevojshme për të ardhurën e kishës tonë. Sa më shumë të zgjasi largesa nga komunitetin ynë aq më e vështirë do të jetë për të kthyer gjërat sa më normale.

Siç mund ta kuptoni dhe jeni në dijeni, shpenzimet e kishës janë rritur nga viti në vit. Megjithëse këtë vit (2021) morëm zotimin financiar prej \$70,000 nga të gjithë antarët e komunitetit tonë, kjo shumë mbulon pothuaj gjysmën e nevojave financiare të kishës. Nëse do të duam të mbajmë komunitetin tonë gjallërues nuk mund të vazhdojmë të tërheqim nga kursimet për të mbuluar shpenzimet - (diçka e tillë s'mund të vazhdojë për një kohë të gjatë). Duke qenë se komuniteti ska pasur mundësi të marrë pjesë në shërbimet për pothuaj dy vjet, të ardhurat nga shporta, qirinjtë dhe dhurimi i njerëzve të pranishëm gjatë shërbimeve fetare janë shumë të ulta ose pothuajse nuk janë më shumë se hiçi.

### ***Kemi nevojë për ndihmën dhe Zotimin tuaj financiar për vitin 2022.***

Komiteti i Zotimit Financiar ju kërkon të jeni bujarë me kohën dhe ndihmën financiare që do të vlerësoni për mbështetjen tuaj financiare për vitin 2022. Ju lutemi të ktheni formën e bashkangjitur në kishë me zotimin tuaj për mbështetjen e Shën Kollit për vitin 2022 në datën ose para datës 19 Dhjetor, 2021.

### **Dy opsionet e mundshme për të bërë zotimin tuaj financiar:**

1. **Mbushni formën e verdhë të bashkangjitur në këtë mesazh** dhe silleni në kishë.
2. **Mbushni formën tuaj për zotimin e vitit 2022 online** nëpërmjet adresës të mëposhtme ose kodit QR (*mbush dhe bashkangjishni formën online*).

2022 Pledge | St Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church  
(<https://stnicholasalbanian.org/2022pledge>)



Keni pyetje? Ju lutemi merrni zyrën e kishës në telefon (718-380-5684) dhe lini një mesazh me numrin tuaj që tu kthejmë pergjigje.

Ju falenderojmë, dhe urojmë që ju dhe familja juaj të gëzoni shëndet të plotë. Urojmë dhe shpresojmë se kjo kërkesë do të ndihmojë misioni e Shën Kollit të jetë i sukses-shëm. Urojmë t'iu shohim në kishë së afërmi.

**The Pledge Committee**



*“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” Psalm 19:1*

## The Holy and Great Martyr Barbara

The month of December is filled with glorious martyrs, confessors, and prophets. As we journey towards the manger, the story of the Holy and Great Martyr Barbara (December 4th) reminds us that the transcendent light of Christ can touch our hearts even in remote and isolated places.

Barbara was born during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-311), a time when Christians were severely persecuted. Like many female saints, she was both beautiful and intelligent. Her father, Dioscorus, a rich widower, was devoted solely to his daughter. Wishing to protect her, he built a tower for Barbara and kept her there with all the physical comforts she might need, along with attendants, idols for worship, and pagan teachers to instruct her. Despite her instruction in her father’s pagan religion, Barbara would look out upon God’s creation and seeing the beauty of the world around her, she came to believe that there must be a supreme Creator. She rejected her pagan upbringing and devoted her life to discovering the truth. While her father was traveling, Barbara left the tower and met some Christians. Learning of Christ, her heart burned with love for Him, and she devoted herself completely to Our Lord, secretly betrothing herself to Him in her heart.

Her renowned beauty caused many to seek her hand in marriage, but she refused all her suitors. Dioscorus wondered if Barbara’s seclusion in the tower was at fault for her desire to remain unwedded. He allowed her to leave the tower and explore the city. There she met a priest, who instructed her in the mysteries of the Christian Faith and baptized her. Dioscorus had commissioned a new bathhouse for his beloved daughter. Unbeknownst to Dioscorus, Barbara asked the workers to change the design of the bathhouse. Instead of two windows, there would be three - in honor of the Holy Trinity. On one of the walls, Barbara traced a cross with her finger and the image was etched into the marble, as if the workers themselves had carved it. Later, her footprints were imprinted on the stone steps. The waters of the bathhouse were said to have great healing powers.

When Dioscorus saw the bathhouse, Barbara confessed her faith in the Trinity and her love for Christ. Barbara fled as her father tried to strike her with a sword. A cliff temporarily swallowed her up. There she prayed. When she appeared again, her father, surrendered her to Marcian, the governor of the city. There she was given the choice to sacrifice to idols or to die. Barbara proclaimed, "I would rather die, for in this way I will witness my love for my Savior Jesus." She was stripped and beaten until her entire body was wounded and bloodied.

Around midnight in her dark cell, a bright light shone. Christ himself appeared to Barbara and told her, "Don't fear, my child, for I will be always with you." After these words, all her wounds were healed. A woman, Juliana, witnessed this miracle and accepted Christ and joined Barbara on her martyric path. Both martyrs were terribly tortured and led naked through the city. The Lord sent an angel to cover their nakedness with a splendid robe. Finally, Saints Barbara and Juliana, were beheaded, Barbara being executed by her own father. Shortly after, both Marcian and Dioscorus were killed after being struck by lightning. Saint Barbara suffered in the year 306.

The prayers of Saint Barbara are believed to protect us from sudden death. Chanting the Troparion of Saint Barbara each day is a pious tradition still practiced by many who recall the promise that Christ made to Saint Barbara, that those who remember her sufferings would be preserved from sudden, unexpected death, and would not depart this life without benefit of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

### **Troparion — Tone 8**

**Let us honor the holy martyr Barbara, / for as a bird she escaped the snares of the enemy, / and destroyed them through the help and defense of the Cross.**

Material for the above article was drawn from resources including the website of the Orthodox Church of America, CopticChurch.net, and The Prologue from Ochrid by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic.



## Food Drive to Help the Hungry



Charity is one of the major tenants of Christianity. We do this through various institutions by making donations to them. In these especially difficult times, we are taking part in another way as well; that is with our Food Drive. For those with children and grandchildren, this can truly be a teaching moment. If you take your children with you to buy items for the food drive, it is a way for them to understand that not everyone is fortunate enough to have what they have. Some people are even lacking one of the bare necessities of life, namely food. Doing this shopping on a regular basis reinforces the message of charity and helping others.

For this cause, we have stationed a container near the office for a continuing food drive. We did not know what to expect, but the response has exceeded our expectations! To date, we have donated over 700 pounds of food and are collecting for the next pickup. This food that we are collecting should be food that is non-perishable such as pasta, canned goods, rice, boxed goods, peanut butter, etc. Any contribution is greatly appreciated.



**Bin at church  
Waiting to be Filled!**



**Food packed  
And Ready to Go**



**Truck picks up  
Food on the Way**

## Community News

by Adriana Topore

Yes, we do have some good news to share!

A wonderful thing about this year is that it has been a year of weddings, newborn babies, baptisms, and other joyous celebrations.

Congratulations to the Vasili family whose daughter Patricia was recently married to Zachary Rivard. Congratulations as well to the Sera family whose daughter Ediona was also recently married to Logan Kreglow. We wish them much happiness!

Erald Troja family welcomed baby boy Patrick. Congratulations to grandparents Eli and Petrika Troja.

The Petro family, Dita and Nikolin, welcomed their gorgeous baby girl Olivia on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Ariela is very happy to be the big sister. What a joy for Nena Romana!

We have great news from our young soccer players Aidan and Liam Kehoe, Daniela Beno, and Gabrielle Peters. Not only are they enjoying practices and games, but they are scoring and becoming even more talented, powerful players. Congratulations to Gabby for being a great team player and scoring a goal for her team. Daniela is a fierce player whose team was in the regional finals. We are so proud of all of our young athletes!

Our church enjoys welcoming visitors. Little Chloe and her parents Karolina and Eris Shyti are becoming regular visitors. Happy Birthday and Baptism Day to Chloe who celebrated her first birthday on November 29<sup>th</sup>. May God continue to bless Chloe and her family.

Sunday school is bringing such joy and educational benefit for our children. A special note of thanks to our Sunday school teachers Alexandra Kehoe, Alison Ladd, Laura DiTullio, Jonida Dervishi, and our coordinator Shelby who are doing such a wonderful job. Their efforts are very much appreciated. It is a great joy to see our Sunday school children enjoying playtime too during Coffee Hour in our Fellowship Hall. They are quite entertaining in their special way. They remind us how precious life is with their joy of living!

Several in our community have been travelling internationally. Marjeta and Pieri Vakefli recently returned to America. We are more than happy to see you at church once again. Andrea Topore ended his trip to Albania too. Dhespina and Pano Psirakis returned from their long trip to Greece. Tina and Robert Kora had a great trip to Albania. Arben, Ira, and Vasian Gjoka visited their family in Korca. Zhani and Ornela visited Albania and Greece. Nasi Pavllo is enjoying his stay in Albania. What a pleasure to be able to once again enjoy activities in life that have been put on hold because of the pandemic.

Trips around our own country never totally stopped. Welcome back to families and friends that traveled across America. Jonathan Topore just ended the American Tour with his band "Rivers of Nihil". Congratulations to the band being on the road again after an extended pandemic break.

We love to see you; we love to share with each other; we love all your stories. Aren't we so lucky to have a place where we can pray together and share our worries and joy too? Our Church is the place; our Church is here for all of us. We would love to see and hear from you.



This is a picture of baby Olivia Petro, daughter of Dita and Nikolin Petro, born on October 27th, 2021.

## DECEMBER NAME DAYS

**4 - St. Barbara**

Barbara Filis, 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

If you do not see your name, please contact Fr. Nikodhim.  
Nëse nuk sheh emrin tënd, të lutem lajmëro priftin.

**17 - Prophet Daniel**

Daniel Oswald, Daniella Beno, Daniel Zekthi

**21 - Juliana**

Xhuljeta Muho

**- Themistokli**

Them Mertiri, Themistokli Dajko

**22 - St. Anastasia**

Anastasia Terova

**23 - St. Naum**

Naum Prifti

**24 - St. Eugenia****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, Emmanuel Diacosavvas, Christos Diacosavvas

**26 - St. Joseph the Betrothed**

Joseph DiTullio, Joe Catron

**27 - St. Stephen**

Stephen Kildunne, Steven Meta, Stefan Prela

**31 - St. Melania**

Melina Filipi

## My First Experience at St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church

When my wife and I heard that we were going to visit one of the Albanian Orthodox churches here in the United States, we got so excited. Of course, we didn't know what to expect and what it is like to attend Holy Liturgy in an Albanian Orthodox church in the United States as this would be our first time to visit a church here. We were so eager for this experience and wondered how the people of the parish would welcome us.

The moment we arrived, we really liked how the building looked on the outside, but the biggest surprise was when we entered the church. The icons on the walls, and especially the iconostas, were so amazing. We really liked how nicely the church was organized with liturgical books for the faithful to follow the service.

At the Holy Liturgy, I had the honor of serving inside the sanctuary. I must say that I had the same feeling as if I were serving at my parish back home in Albania. I really enjoyed the service and serving during the Liturgy. Father Nikodhim is an excellent host and a very welcoming priest. He shared with us the history of St. Nicholas church and gave us a tour of the inside.

What we really liked was the parishioners of St Nicholas who Father Nikodhim introduced us to after the Liturgy. We had a chance to meet them and get to know each other a little bit. We were surprised to see how many people came to the church since many of them have to drive at least one hour to get there. This shows how much they love Christ and the church; the Albanian people still go to church on Sundays, and they are still faithful. We were so happy to see that. Everyone we met was so friendly and so kind to us. Everyone who came to say hi to us wanted to know about us, and they offered to help us if we needed anything since we only arrived here from Albania one month ago. The service, the people, Albanians, and Americans, they literally made us feel as if we never left home. We are so thankful to God and to the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese that we are here and that they have given us such a great opportunity to be here, study and meet all the Albanian Orthodox community of the United States.

I hope in the future to see and learn more about the Christian life here in the United States, but more specifically about the Albanian Christian life. I would love to visit all the other Albanian churches and hope that one day I will serve here as God sees it best for me and for the community. I want to thank Father Nikodhim as well as every one of the people of St. Nicholas church for their hospitality. Both my wife and I are looking forward to seeing all of you again.

### Pictures from Blessings of vestments and Entrance of Theotokos Litya/Artoklasia



## 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!!!**

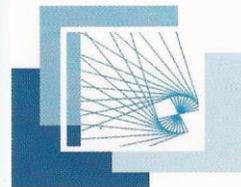
For new ads please contact Lou Foundos

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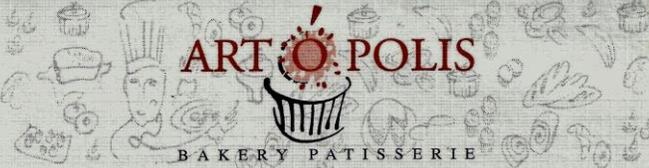
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*Smile*

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## CHURCH SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2021

Fri. 3 - Nativity Paraklesis, 7pm  
 Sat. 4 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 5 - Liturgy, 10am  
     - St. Nicholas Luncheon  
 Mon. 6 - St. Nicholas Prayers, tbd  
 Thur. 9 - Conception of St. Mary, tbd  
 Fri. 10 - Nativity Paraklesis, 7pm  
 Sat. 11 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 12 - Liturgy, 10am  
 Fri. 17 - Nativity Paraklesis, 7pm  
 Sun. 18 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 19 - Liturgy, 10am  
     - Pageant and Pancakes  
 Fri. 24 - Royal Hours, 10am  
     - Vigil, 7pm  
     - Christmas Liturgy, 8pm  
 Sat. 25 - Typika and Prayers, 10am  
     - Saturday vespers is cancelled.  
 Sun. 26 - Liturgy, 10am  
  
 Sat. January 1 - Liturgy, 10am: St. Basil

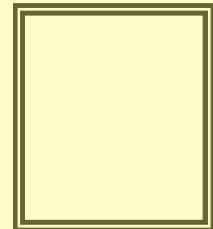
*We're on the Web, Facebook and Instagram as St. Nicholas Albanian  
Orthodox Church NY; stnicholas\_alb\_oca or*

*Visit us at:*

[www.stnicholasalbanian.org](http://www.stnicholasalbanian.org)

**St. Nicholas Church is fully open.** Reservations and masks are not required; however, we encourage everyone to continue to observe those precautions they think best. With a mask or without a mask, we will be glad to see you! And if you are not feeling well, take care of yourself and stay at home.

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



Customer Name  
 Street Address  
 City, State Zip Code