

THE ORTHODOX POST

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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

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The Articles We Hope You Won't Need to Read

Over the next couple months, Fr. Niko and our office secretary, Adriana Topore, will be teaming up to offer some practical columns answering questions that routinely arise when members of our community are faced with the difficult topics of death and dying, funerals and burials.

Everyone feels uncomfortable talking about death. For most, what happens when and after someone they care for dies is a situation, they will be confronted with only a few times. These incidents may include long periods of waiting or be sudden and unexpected, but the feelings of confusion and grief are there for all. And because death is tragic and because it makes us uncomfortable, we often avoid the topic until we can no longer.

At St. Nicholas, part of what we do is to help people through these tragedies. This is one way our community takes care of each other and takes

responsibility for each other. Each person who dies leaves an absence, a hole whose shape and exact proportions can't be known entirely right away. When someone has died or is dying, we should all know that help is here for us and that we will probably need help dealing with the issues that we must. St. Nicholas Church is here to help.

The first, best, and easiest thing to do when you know someone is sick or may be coming near to his or her end is to call the Church office (718-380-5684). Leave a message if we are out. Someone will be back in touch with you soon. (Continues)

Artikuj Që Shpresojmë Të Mos Keni Nevojë Ti Lexoni

(Interpreted by Adriana Topore)

Gjatë një periudhe disa mujore, Fr. Niko dhe sekretarja e Kishës sonë, Adriana Topore, do punojnë së bashku për të afruar disa kolona praktike duke ju përgjigjur pyetjeve që bëhen gjithmonë kur anëtarët e komunitetit tonë përballohen me situata të vdekjes ose kanë dikë duke vdekur, funerale dhe varrime.

Çdo njeri nuk ndjehet mirë kur flet për vdekjen. Zakonisht, ajo që ndodh gjatë dhe pas vdekjes, është një situatë që përballohem vetëm disa herë. Këto incidente mund të përfshijnë kohëra të gjata pritjeje ose ndodhin papritur e pa kujtuar, por ndjenjat e të qenit konfuz dhe vuajtja për atë që po vdes, na shoqëron të gjithëve. Edhe pse vdekja është tragjike dhe na bën të mos ndjehemi mirë, ne shpesh e

shmangim këtë temë derisa nuk shkojmë dot më tej. Ajo që Kisha e Shën Kollit bën, është të ndihmojë njerëzit gjatë tragjedive. Kjo është një nga mënyrat se si komuniteti jonë tregon kujdes për njëri-tjetrin dhe mer përsipër të ndihmojë. Kushdo që vdes na mungon, lë një vrimë që nuk dihet menjëherë (vazhdon në faqen tjetër)

The Articles We Hope You Won't Need to Read

(continues from the previous page)

This first call will help us know how to help you. In our Orthodox Christian tradition, there are special prayers that may be said when someone is dying, and it is common for the priest to visit to share these prayers both with that person and with the family and friends who may be anxious, uncertain, or sad. Do not worry about calling too early, and do not think that the priest will insist on coming to visit you, your family, or the person who is dying. We want to know how to help, and if a visit is not what you or the person you are caring for wants we respect this.

However, the earlier you can let us know what is happening the better we can let you know of all the different options your Church has for you.

Next month, we will be looking at making funeral arrangements. We hope you will remember that the priest and the office staff are here to help and that help comes in many forms, as different as each individual, each situation, and each loss. Above all, we hope you will remember that dealing with these hard things does not have to be something you must do alone.

If you have questions on this topic or others, please feel free to send them to:

secretary@stnicholasalbanian.org *We look forward to learning what you might want to learn.*

Artikuj Që Shpresojmë Të Mos Keni Nevojë Ti Lexoni

(në vazhdimësi të faqes së mëparshme)

se çfarë forme dhe përmasa do të marrë. Kur dikush vdes ose është duke vdekur, duhet të dimë që ndihma është këtu, dhe ndoshta kemi nevojë për ndihmë për të përballuar situata të ndryshme. Kisha e Shën Kollit ofron ndihmën e duhur. E para, më e mira, dhe më e lehta për t'u bërë kur ju e dini që dikush është sëmurë ose po i afrohet fundit të jetës, është mirë të merrni në telefon Kishën (718)-380-5684. Lini mesazh në qoftë se nuk ka njeri. Dikush do të përgjigjet së shpejti. Kjo telefonatë e parë na ndihmon ne që t'ju ndihmojmë më së miri. Në traditën tonë si të Krishter Orthodox, ka lutje të veçanta që thuhet kur dikush është duke vdekur, dhe është e zakonshme për priftin të vijë për vizitë në mënyrë që të bëjë lutjet për personin që po vdes si dhe për familjen e shoqërinë, të cilët janë të shqetësuar, të pasigurt, dhe ndjehen

keq. Mos u shqetësoni nëse merni në telefon shumë përpara se të ndodhë fatkeqësia, dhe mos mendoni se prifti do insistoj të vi për vizitë për ju, familjen, ose personin që po vdes. Ne duam të ndihmojmë, dhe në qoftë se ju ose personi për të cilin ju shërbeni, nuk dëshiron vizitë, ne e respektojmë dëshirën. Megjithatë, sa më herët të njoftoni, më mirë për ne t'ju informojmë për gjithshka që Kisha ka për ju. Muajin tjetër do përqëndrohemi tek tema e organizimit të funeralit. Shpresojmë ta mbani mend që prifti dhe stafi i zyrës janë ketu për t'ju ndihmuar, dhe ndihma vjen në forma të ndryshme për secilin individ, secilën situatë, dhe secilën humbje. Mbi të gjitha, ne shpresojmë t'ju kujtojmë që nuk jeni vetëm në përballimin e këtyre situatave të vështira.

Në qoftë se keni pyetje për këtë artikull ose të tjera, ju lutemi mos hezitoni ti dërgoni tek: secretary@stnicholasalbanian.org. Presim t'ju mësojmë ato që doni të mësoni

President's Message

by Lou Foundos

We have had a colder and snowier winter than we have had in a long time. However, March is here and the weather is getting warmer, and before we know it, it will be officially Spring! This means Pascha cannot be too far away, and thus lent will begin before the end of March. This is a good time to prepare one's self to enter this special season in preparation for Pascha. With Covid still here, we are not sure exactly how our Pascha week will look this year. Let us be hopeful that things will start opening up as more people receive vaccinations. God willing, we will be able to have more people in church for Pascha. As the weather warms up, we will decide when we will be able to resume our coffee hour outside, and hopefully soon thereafter in our

fellowship hall. Everybody sorely misses the fellowship and the human interaction.

I would like to thank all those that have pledged for 2021. We have received more than 80% to date, and we are on track to exceed the pledge amount from last year. I am very pleased with this strong commitment, especially since we have not been able to have our regular church services. If you have not pledged yet, please send your card in or call Adriana in the office. However, I would like to encourage all to consider attending regular liturgy. As you know, we follow all the CDC protocols and have an excellent record for the last 10 months. I would like to encourage all to receive the vaccination so we all can slowly get back to a new normal.

Our youngest followers



It has been great to get see some of our youngest members back at Church! Like all of us, they have missed the

routine and getting to see and be with friends. When they're here, though, they remember that they also have important duties during our worship, and we are glad to see them back at it. Thank you to all our little helpers and to all our helpers' drivers and chaperones!



The Season of Great Lent

As we enter into the season of Great Lent, it's good for us to try to do more. We prepare to greet Great and Holy Pascha by fasting, prayer, by charity and service. We ask more of ourselves during this holy season of abstinence so that we can realign our priorities and thereby rediscover our need for God. Confirmed in this hope, we become participants in His love. As part of your Lenten discipline, plan to attend a service you have not before, plan to be present in prayer, and prepare to be changed, readied for joy.

Canon of St. Andrew

Where are we? As Christians, we say we stand in the midst of a great line of saints and prophets and of sinners: those whose lives have been inextricably altered by knowing God. The meditative hymns of this service help locate us in this legacy of faith by recounting those who came before and inviting us to join their ranks of people in progress, learning to be better and better.

Presanctified Liturgy

Each Wednesday of the fast is like an island of refreshment. We can be strengthened by receiving Christ Himself into our lives through Holy

Communion. Though we are busy, though distracted, these sections of peace in the middle of the week help us know that God stands with us in everything.

The Akathist

The Virgin Mary, mother of Christ Himself, is given to us as a special friend; she is our mother too. Here, we ask that she console us, that she help us to know her son, that she stand as witness and companion to all the tragedies of our lives, so that we can learn to hope as she did and does.

Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Being family is more than just tracing family trees; it is choosing to live a shared life. Each Sunday evening of the fast is a family reunion. We get to meet our cousins and learn about them and enjoy being with them, sharing their hospitality. And we get to see that our family is large and interesting and diverse but shares that one necessary thing: love for God, the Father of us all.

Get ready to welcome the joy of God into these holy forty days. Lent is coming to prepare the way for Paschal rejoicing.

St. Nicholas Albanian
Orthodox Church

WEEKLY FOOD DRIVE

We are partnering with City Harvest to help feed the hungry during these difficult times. Please consider bringing some canned food to church each Sunday so that we can do our part. Please, no hygiene products at this time, only non-perishable canned or dry food.

Any questions, please speak to Jen Brehl, Joanne Heiser or Adriana Torpore. Thanks!

John 13:35 - "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

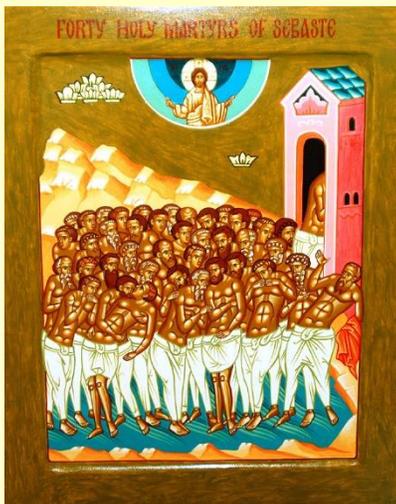


MARCH SAINTS AND NAME DAYS

Pak histori rreth çështjes së luftës dhe nderimit të ikonave.

(from last year's Post)

Në shekullin e tetë sunduesit isaurianë në Lindje, Leo III (717-741) dhe Konstandini V (741-775) u orvatën ta nënshtronin Kishën nën sundimin e tyre. Për të arritur kontrollin e Kishës këta dy perandorë i sulmuan ligësisht të krishterët e zellshëm, sidomos murgjërit, të cilët mbronin integritetin e Kishës. Sulmi mori formën e një persekutimi të egër kundër atyre që nderonin ikonat. Subjekti i sulmit ishte vendosur në vend të përshtatshëm, sepse ekzistonte realisht një ekzagjerim i nderimit të ikonave ndërmjet njerëzve të devotshëm që arrinte kufijtë e idhujtarisë dhe paganizmit. Një sinod i mbajtur, në 753 e dënoi zyrtarisht nderimin e ikonave nga të krishterët. Ai bëri thirrje për heqjen e të gjitha imazheve prej kishave, ndërtesave publike dhe shtëpitë e njerëzve. Ky sinod nuk ishte vetëm një lëvizje politike nga sunduesit për të fituar pushtet mbi Kishën, por nxorri edhe një argumentim të veshur me arsye dhe të përgatitur me mjeshtëri kundër nderimit të ikonave. Baza e pozicionit të sinodit u morr, kryesisht, nga mësimi biblik se Perëndia është i padukshëm, prandaj nuk duhet të bëhen dhe nuk duhen adhuruar nga besimtarët e vërtetë imazhet e dukshme dhe të gdhendura. Ka mundësi që ky argument të ishte frymëzuar nga kontakti i ngushtë me myslimanët, të cilët ishin fanatikisht strikt në këto pika. Peshkopët e Kishës ishin nën presionin e fortë perandorak për të dënuar zyrtarisht nderimin e ikonave. Kur ata e bënë, pasoi një persekutim i egër ndaj atyre që vazhdonin t'i mbanin dhe t'i nderonin imazhet e shenjta. Koha ndërmjet 762 dhe 775 njihet si “dekada e gjakut” meqë qindra të krishterë, kryesisht murgjër, u burgosën, u torturuan dhe, madje u vranë ngaqë i ruajtën dhe i nderuan ikonat.



March 9 - 40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste - St. Pericles

Albert Foundos

March 14 - St. Matilda

Matilda Tili

March 17 - St. Patrick

Petrika Troja, Nicholas Patrick Brehl

March 17 - St. Alexis

Aleko Bode, Alex Oswald

March 18 - St. Edward

Edi Sera, Eduart Shkurti

March 20 - St. Theodore

Theodore Ladd

March 23 - St. Nikon

March 25 - Annunciation (Evangelismos)

Evangeline Ladd, Vangjeli Family

March 26 - Archangel Gabriel

Gabrielle Peters

March 27 - St. Matrona

March 27 - St. Robert

Robert Korra

If you don't see your name please contact Fr. Nikodhim.

Nëse nuk sheh emrin tënd, të lutem lajmëro priftin.

HUMILITY AND LOVE

Fr Luke A. Veronis

Humility. It's not really a popular virtue today. It seems like our society promotes much more pride, egotism, vanity, even conceit and arrogance. We see this on full display among our athletes, our politicians, our celebrities, and among the rich and famous. In so many avenues of society, we see runaway egos and the vanity that comes from it. Maybe there was a time 100 years ago when people would at least pretend to be more modest, even if they had a big ego. Yet today, showing off one's pride and flaunting one's ego is acceptable and even celebrated.

In contrast to this, humility, meekness, and modesty almost seem like virtues of a by-gone era. They appear to be signs of weakness. How many parents teach and promote to their children to become meek? So few. This is why even Christians don't understand Jesus' teaching, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." We equate the meek with the weak and who wants to be considered weak?!?

Comparing these categories, the Church truly teaches something completely contrary to popular culture. Instead of celebrating pride and ego, our Faith teaches that pride is the root of all evil. Pride is what cast Lucifer from heaven. Pride is what betrayed Adam and Eve. Pride and one's ego is what haunts humanity in every generation since. Pride is the root of all evil and can destroy even all the good that we try to do. This is why Saint John Chrysostom teaches that "humility is the root, mother, nurse, foundation, and bond of all virtue."

Saint Anthony the Great once said, "I saw all the dangerous snares and temptations that the evil one spreads out over all the world and I groaned, asking "What can get anyone through such snares? How can we overcome such temptations?" Then I heard a divine voice saying to me, 'Humility. It's the one virtue that can help us overcome any and every temptation.'"

We see a beautiful example of such humility in the Gospel story of today. A desperate, foreign woman approaches Jesus seeking help for her ill, demon-possessed daughter. She doesn't know where to turn to find help her beloved daughter yet she must have heard about this miracle working Jewish prophet. The woman was not a Jew but a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician Canaanite. Although a foreigner, she must have heard of the fame of Jesus and boldly approaches Him.

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David" Are the words of a desperate woman crying out for help, a woman who feared for the well-being of her severely demon-possessed daughter.

This story proceeds in an unusual and fascinating manner because of the way Jesus responds to the woman. When anyone hears this story for the first time, they will be utterly confused by the reaction of Christ. He doesn't initially answer her cry. Not even a word. He seemingly ignores this desperate woman and turns his back on her pleas for help.

After his disciples get annoyed with the woman, they tell Jesus to send her away and again He responds in a surprising manner. "I was sent to the lost sheep of Israel." In other words, I wasn't sent for you, a foreigner. I was sent to my own people. What do I have to do with you?

She persists in her cries so Christ goes even further than His first two responses and bluntly states in an offensive manner, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." (Continues)

(from previous page)

Now imagine if YOU were this desperate woman seeking relief from Jesus. You approach Him believing He can help, and THREE TIMES He seems to not only ignore you, not only push you away, but then becomes quite offensive with his words, calling you a dog! How would you respond to someone who treated you like that? Our pride would be hurt. We would most likely be offended and become quite angry! How dare someone treat us in this manner?!? Maybe we would endure it for a little if we thought this man Jesus had some power to help our child. Maybe out of our deep love and concern for our child would we tolerate this behavior? But maybe we would simply storm off, angry at the audacity of this man to offend us in such a manner?!?

This is precisely where we learn from the Canaanite woman. Pay attention to how she responds to each action of Jesus. First, she cries out to the Jewish teacher “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David.” She wasn’t Jewish. She was a foreigner, yet she acknowledged Jesus as a descendent of David and calls him Lord. After Christ initially ignores her, the disciples try to send her away, and Jesus says he was only sent to the house of Israel, she “approached and worshipped him saying ‘Lord, help me!’” She approaches him respectfully despite the slight. Finally, when Jesus says, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs,” she humbly goes with the flow and ignores Jesus’ offensive words, responding with some wit, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Her extreme humility accepts being called a little dog. She doesn’t even try to pretend that she is worthy to sit at the banquet table with the master. She humbly and meekly is satisfied with crumbs that fall from his table. What extreme, utter humility and faith!

Saint John Chrysostom highlights this response from the Canaanite woman and explains that this is exactly why Jesus spoke to her in such a seemingly harsh manner. He knew the faith this woman possessed. He understood the extreme humility she cultivated in her life. He spoke to her in a seemingly offensive manner not to demean her at all, but to call forth her example of deep faith. He wanted his disciples to see such humility and faith and in the end He lauds her by saying, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And immediately, the woman’s daughter was healed! This foreigner displayed a faith that all could admire and learn from.

The pride and vanity we see all around us in society is not the path that will lead toward God. Our egocentric and self-centered pursuits are not the path that lead us into the kingdom of heaven. Saint Kosmas Aitolos noted very clearly that “A Christian needs two wings to fly to paradise: humility and love.”

In today’s story, we see a wonderful example of these two virtues. The Canaanite woman exhibited a desperate love for her daughter and then displayed extreme humility with our Lord. These two virtues led to a faith that brought about a miracle of healing. Humility and Love. The two virtues that lead to paradise!

Fr. Luke Veronis is special to the Albanian- American community. He lived in Albania for 10 years and was one of the volunteers that assisted Archbishop Anastasios in building the new Church of Albania. He presently is the Pastor of St. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, MA. Every year he returns to Albania for 2 weeks with some young volunteers to assist with the summer youth program. He is a gifted individual and we have decided to periodically provide some of his sermons.

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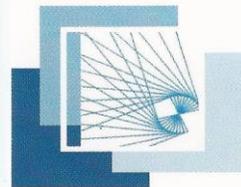
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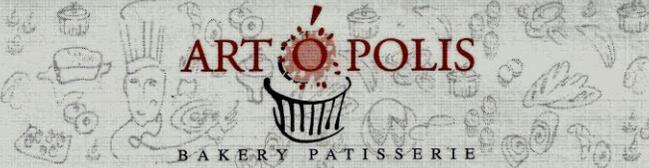
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CHURCH SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

- Sat. 6 - Liturgy, 10am: Saturday of Souls
- Vespers, 5pm
- Sun. 7 - Liturgy, 10M: Sunday of the Last Judgement
- Sat. 13 - Vespers, 5pm
- Sun. 14 - Liturgy, 10am: Forgiveness Sunday
- Mon. 15 - Canon of St. Andrew, 7pm
- Tue. 16 - Canon of St. Andrew, 7pm
- Wed. 17 - Presanctified Liturgy, 7pm
- Fri. 19 - Akathist to the Theotokos, 7pm
- Sat. 20 - Vespers, 5pm
- Sun. 21 - Liturgy, 10am: Sunday of Orthodoxy
- Wed. 24 - Vespers and Liturgy, 7pm: Annunciation
- Fri. 26 - Akathist to the Theotokos, 7pm
- Sat. 27 - Vespers, 5pm
- Sun. 28 - Liturgy, 10am: Palamas Sunday
- Wed. 31 - Presanctified Liturgy, 7pm

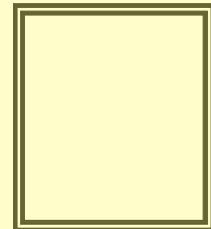
**Planning to attend Church this Sunday?
Please call.**



At St. Nicholas we are committed to the safety of all who worship here. Right now, this means a few additional responsibilities. Please help keep everyone healthy by reading and following those directions posted in the parish entryway. Please help us make sure that everyone who wants to come to Church can; you can do this by phoning the parish office (718-380-5684) and leaving a message by the Friday before you wish to attend or by sending an email to secretary@stnicholasalbanian.org

We can't wait to see you soon!

St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church
181-14 Midland Parkway
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