

ORTHODOX POST



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Pastor's Message

Whether they took the train or one of the women learned to drive, pooling the others with her in the family car, or if they "risked their lives" riding with the much beloved and fondly remembered though infamous at the wheel Fr. Belba, I don't know. Those first Daughters of St. Nicholas have all gone now, leaving their children, our Church, and the richness of their stories behind. But what I remember having heard, lifting sheet pans of lakror into the heat of the ovens and amid the chatter and history imparted over philo and butter and filling, is that those ladies would, several times each year, visit each other. By this I don't mean that the local folks would call on each other, from Hell's Kitchen and Harlem and the Bronx and Queens later on; this was both natural and necessary, routine on name days and holidays alike.

No, the daughters would pay calls annually to their neighbors in Philly and Connecticut, keeping traditions and relationships alive, imports both from the old country, and keeping a practice of sisterhood beyond the particularities of geography and parish. I've asked their daughters and sons if they remember when these calls took place. Their answers are mixed and varied—not particularly a surprise as there was a natural ebb and flow over the decades. Picnics were popular, winter was not. Travel simply wasn't as easy or accessible back then. But in this month of May, we have a special feast day and one that some recall as children as an occasion to be packed in a car with hampers full of food, risking traffic or the confusion of rail schedules to find something familiar somewhere else.

Rusica or Mid-Pentecost falls each year on a Wednesday, halfway between Pashka and the feast of Pentecost. For generations in Albania, this was an occasion of especial celebration for mothers and children, a day when they would often journey out into the countryside to enjoy a meal al fresco. The icon for this lesser feast of Christ is curious, depicting Him as a child seated among bearded, attentive elders. Though the Gospel reading for the day is from St. John, the theme of the day recounts an incident from the early life of Christ found in St. Luke when the twelve-year-old Jesus was separated from His parents while visiting Jerusalem. Finding Him absent, Joseph and Mary begin to search the city and discover Him in a crowd of elders and religious scholars, seated among them, busily lecturing. This is the only episode or account of Christ's later childhood found in the Scriptures. He is busy already at the task of teaching, comfortable already at defying the expectations of those around Him.

On a warm Wednesday in the heart of spring, this little feast of Christ became one on which young families would gather to celebrate, and it stayed this even here in New York City, where there was little greenery to escape to. Church basements and halls hosted the chatter of conversations and relationships interrupted by immigration and the hard work of setting up new lives in America. Food was shared and sometimes prayer. Children played and argued in at least two languages. Then all returned home by road or rail, back to New York or Philly or Connecticut, renewed and reminded that, despite distance, they were together.

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Community News

Christ is Risen! April was a very busy month at our St. Nicholas community. We parishioners, in a way, have risen too. After more than two years of Covid restrictions, we came together stronger than ever for the paschal season. Each week we see more adults and more children. I always look for surprises, and there are plenty. One of them is the first visit of Claudia Spiro, the daughter of Andi and Iris Spiro. Claudia joined the big crowd of kids that got together on Palm Sunday. The same Sunday became very special thanks to delicious pancakes prepared by Christina Liolin and Kleo Filis. Chris and Kleo were joined by a group of hard-working ladies, Joanne, Britu, Linda, Tina and Karolina.

Our membership/pledge list is growing. Karolina and Eris Shyti family joined us recently after having been regular visitors for some time. We thank them for joining us and for being so helpful any time we have big events at church.

This month we will remember with great respect Albert Foundos who is so dearly missed. His legacy will continue at St. Nicholas Church with the young generation keeping up the traditions. What else can be a better example than Daniela Beno preparing the grure for her grandfather's one year memorial. Grandpa Al is very proud of her.

As you all know, Ananias Ananievski has been part of our community for a while. It is not the first time he is with us. During the month of April, Ananias was part of every Saturday and Sunday service. During Holy week he joined the choir too. We thank him for all his help. He truly has become part of our St. Nicholas family. We also would like to congratulate him on his upcoming graduation. He will have completed three years of study at St. Tikhon Monastery, but the next phase of his education will be leading people in the Orthodox faith. He has been doing just that here with us, and doing it so well. He will be so liked at any church lucky enough to have him. Best wishes to him.

Thank you to the Tsamblakos family for not only buying and delivering the flowers for the Epitafi, but donating them to church. Their very generous contribution is very much appreciated. May God bless the entire family. Ladies of our church got together to decorate the Epitafi on Good Friday morning; and as always, they did a beautiful job. Without ignoring the help of Ananias and Father Nikodhim, this year we had some new help.....Emmanuel and Christos Diacosavvas. We thank the boys for helping and doing such a fine job with the leaves task. Having the young generation among us is priceless. They are learning, and we are passing on the traditions.

We look forward to stay connected and wish everyone a blessed summer. Thank you.

CELEBRATION OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION



President's Message

Needless to say, April has been a busy month. There were several important Sundays leading up to Palm Sunday and Pascha. The children did the traditional procession with their palms around the church. This was followed by a delicious Pancake and Bagel Breakfast. Thank you to all the ladies that cooked, shopped, set up, and did everything else to make this very successful.

Frankly, the attendance during Holy Week was weaker than previous years. How much was due to Covid concerns, and how much due to a 2 year absence is difficult to tell. We hope next year will be a more normal year. However, the attendance during the Saturday night Pascha service was another story. It was standing room only and many had to stand outside the church, but were able to join the procession! Several families stayed after the liturgy and broke the fast together sharing various foods.

I would like to thank everyone that has made a pledge this year and thus continue to support St. Nicholas and its mission. Additional pledges recently came in that have increased our membership to a new record level! What a blessing for our St. Nicholas community. Thank you to all that have assisted with the pledge program. While we cherish our St. Nicholas Church building, we must also remember that St. Nicholas is made by the people!

Palm Sunday Celebration



Community News

continued

Another special event in April was a ceremony held in the Bronx. Albanian community and New York personalities got together in a memorable ceremony to name one of the streets “Fan Noli Way.” What a great honor! Our church was represented by Father Nikodhim; Alketa and Genti Veshi attended as well.



FELLOWSHIP HALL

COFFEE LIST FOR THE MONTHS OF MAY AND JUNE

MAY 1	MEMORIAL	JUNE 5	ADRIANA TOPORE
MAY 8	MOTHER’S DAY LUNCHEON	JUNE 12	OPEN
MAY 15	PSIRAKIS FAMILY	JUNE 19	MEMORIAL
MAY 22	CHURCH SCHOOL PARTY	JUNE 26	OPEN
MAY 29	OPEN		

Please be advised that any family can have the pleasure of sponsoring the coffee at any Sunday OPEN in May and June. Contact the office at 718 380 5684.

Thank you so much to all the families for your support.

In addition, many people have inquired about parties at church. **Yes, our Fellowship Hall is available for party rental.** Plan your party with family and friends, and let us know if you would like to rent the Fellowship Hall.



Pentikostia - Pesëdhjetorja – Rushajet

Në Dhiatën e Vjetër Pesëdhjetorja (Pentekostia) ishte festa që kremtohej pesëdhjetë ditë pas Pashkës. Ashtu siç Pashka kremton eksodin e Izraelitëve nga skllavëria e Egjiptit kështu edhe Pesëdhjetorja kremton dhënien e dhjetë urdhërimeve nga Perëndia Moisiut, në malin e Sinait. Në Dhiatën e Re të Mesias, ngjarja e Pashkës merr një kuptim të ri, si kremtimi i vdekjes dhe ngjalljes së Krishtit, "eksodi" i njerëzve prej kësaj bote mëkatare në Mbretërinë e Perëndisë. Po, gjithashtu, në Dhiatën e Re, festa e Rushajeve (Pesëdhjetorja) është përmbushur dhe rinuar me ardhjen e "ligjit të ri", zbritjes së Shpirtit të Shenjtë mbi nxënësit e Krishtit.

Kur erdhi dita e Rushajeve, ata ishin të gjithë bashkë, në një mendje të vetme, në të njëjtin vend. Dhe befas nga qielli erdhi një ushtimë, si ajo e një ere që fryn furishëm dhe e mbushi gjithë shtëpinë ku ata po rrinin. Dhe u dukën mbi ata gjuhë si prej zjarri, të cilat ndaheshin dhe qëndronin mbi secilin prej tyre. Edhe u mbushën të gjithë me Shpirtin e Shenjtë... (Veprat 2:1-4). Shpirti i Shenjtë, të cilin Krishti u kishte premtuar nxënësve të tij, erdhi ditën e Rushajeve (Joani 14:26, 15:26; Lluka 24:49; Veprat 1:5). Apostujt morën "fuqi prej së larti" dhe filluan të predikonin dhe të jepnin dëshmi për Jisuin si Krishtin e ngjallur, Mbretin dhe Zotin. Tradicionalisht, ky moment është quajtur ditëlindja e Kishës.



May 18th—MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST
Reading and Icon courtesy of the OCA

Today's celebration is the midpoint of the fifty days between the Feasts of Pascha and Pentecost. Saint John tells us (John 7:14) that "in the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the Temple, and taught." The Feast in question is the Feast of Tabernacles (celebrated in September), not Pentecost.

The Church has appointed John 7:14-30 to be read for the Midfeast, thereby linking Pascha and Pentecost. In Chapter 8 of Saint John's Gospel, the Lord came to the Temple again and taught the people who came to Him. After leaving the Temple, he encounters the man born blind. We will hear about him on the Sunday of the Blind Man.

The Troparion of the Midfeast ("In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as Thou didst cry to all: If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink [John 7:37]. O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!") hints at the encounter of Christ and the Samaritan Woman in just a few days.

Today we perform the Lesser Blessing of Water, and the Blessing of Fields.

Troparion — Tone 8

In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, / fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as You did cry to all: / If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink! / O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to You!

Kontakion — Tone 4

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all / cried to all in the midst of the Feast of the law: / Come and draw the water of immortality! / We fall before You and faithfully cry: / Grant us Your bounties, for You are the Fountain of our life!

CHURCH SCHEDULE for May 2022

Sun. 1--Liturgy, 10am: Thomas Sunday
 Sun. 8--Liturgy, 10am: Holy Myrrhbearers, Mother's Day Luncheon
 Sun. 15--Liturgy, 10am: Sunday of the Paralytic
 Sat. 21--Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 22--Liturgy, 10am: Samaritan Woman, Church School Party
 Sun. 29--Liturgy, 10am: Sunday of the Blind Man

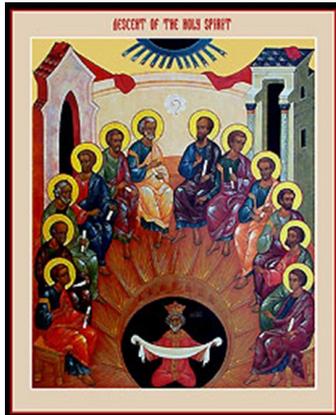


MAY NAME DAYS

1—St. Thomas: Tomi Beno, Thomaq Fundo, Thomas Fundo, Tommy Ligor, Thomas DiTullio, Thomas Mitre, Tom Mone
 4—St. Monica: Monica Adhin
 5—St. Irene: Renee Jones, Ira Gjoka, Rea Nune
 9—St. Christopher: Christopher Bode, Christopher Pulaha
 13—St. Glykeria: Gliqeri Mizaku
 14—St. Isidore: Isidoros Tsamblakos
 21—Sts. Constantine and Eleni: Cleo Filis, Helen Panajoti, Lenore Apostolu, Eleni Coka, Koco Grazhdani, Lina Kondili, Helena Mertiri, Iliana Rehova, Leonora Vozhilla, Elona Zekthi, Eli Troja, Sonja Troja

PENTECOST Commemorated on June 12th. Edited Reading and Icon courtesy of the OCA

In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, Pentecost is "the last and great day." It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the end—the achievement and fulfillment—of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, however, it is also the celebration of the beginning: it is the "birthday" of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.



With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fulness revealed, all gifts bestowed: it belongs to us now to "appropriate" these gifts, to be that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

THE VIGIL OF PENTECOST

The all-night Vigil service begins with a solemn invitation:

"Let us celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit,
The appointed day of promise, and the fulfillment of hope,
The mystery which is as great as it is precious."

In the coming of the Spirit, the very essence of the Church is revealed:

The Holy Spirit provides all, Overflows with prophecy, fulfills the priesthood,
Has taught wisdom to illiterates, has revealed fishermen as theologians,
He brings together the whole council of the Church."

In the three readings of the Old Testament (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezekiel 36:24-28) we hear the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit. We are taught that the entire history of mankind was directed towards the day on which God "would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh." This day has come! All hope, all promises, all expectations have been fulfilled. At the end of the Aposticha hymns, for the first time since Easter, we sing the hymn: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth..." ... Having reached its climax, the Vigil continues as an explosion of joy and light for "verily the light of the Comforter has come and illumined the world." In the Gospel reading (John 20:19-23) the feast is interpreted to us as the feast of the Church, of her divine nature, power and authority. The Lord sends His disciples into the world, as He Himself was sent by His Father. Later, in the antiphons of the Liturgy, we proclaim the universality of the apostles' preaching, the cosmical significance of the feast, the sanctification of the whole world, the true manifestation of God's Kingdom.

THE VESPERS OF PENTECOST

The liturgical peculiarity of Pentecost is a very special Vespers of the day itself. Usually this service follows immediately the Divine Liturgy, is "added" to it as its own fulfillment. The service begins as a solemn "summing up" of the entire celebration, as its liturgical synthesis. We hold flowers in our hands symbolizing the joy of the eternal spring, inaugurated by the coming of the Holy Spirit. After the festal Entrance, this joy reaches its climax in the singing of the Great Prokeimenon: "Who is so great a God as our God?"

Then, having reached this climax, we are invited to kneel. This is our first kneeling since Easter. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fulness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who has already revealed to us the joyful End, who now will help us in our effort towards fulfillment and salvation.

All this is revealed in the three prayers which the celebrant reads now as we all kneel and listen to him. In the first prayer, we bring to God our repentance, our increased appeal for forgiveness of sins, the first condition for entering into the Kingdom of God.

In the second prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us, to teach us to pray and to follow the true path in the dark and difficult night of our earthly existence. Finally, in the third prayer, we remember all those who have achieved their earthly journey, but who are united with us in the eternal God of Love.

PENTECOST Commemorated on June 12th. Edited Reading and Icon courtesy of the OCA*Continued*

The joy of Easter has been completed and we again have to wait for the dawn of the Eternal Day. Yet, knowing our weakness, humbling ourselves by kneeling, we also know the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit who has come. We know that God is with us, that in Him is our victory.

Thus is completed the feast of Pentecost and we enter “the ordinary time” of the year. Yet, every Sunday now will be called “after Pentecost”—and this means that it is from the power and light of these fifty days that we shall receive our own power, the Divine help in our daily struggle. At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches—for the Church “never grows old, but is always young.” It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit—“the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life—comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity,” and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope.

Father Alexander Schmemmann (1974)

CHURCH Schedule for June 2022

Wed. 1--Vespers, 7pm: Ascension
 Thur. 2--Liturgy, 10am: Ascension
 Sat. 4--Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 5--Liturgy, 10am
 Sat. 11--Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 12--Liturgy, 10am: Holy Pentecost
 Sat. 18--Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 19--Liturgy, 10am: All Saints, Father's Day
 Mon. 20--Akathist to the Holy Spirit, 7pm
 Wed. 22--Akathist to the Holy Spirit, 7pm
 Fri. 24--Akathist to the Holy Spirit, 7pm
 Sat. 25--Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 26--Liturgy, 10am
 Mon. 27--Akathist to the Holy Spirit, 7pm
 Tue. 28--Vespers, 7pm: Sts. Peter and Paul
 Wed. 29--Liturgy, tbd, Sts. Peter and Paul

JUNE NAME DAYS

14—St. Niphon of Lukova
 22—St. Alban: Alban Zekthi
 29—Sts. Peter and Paul
 Pavli Grabocka
 Petrika Troja

**Prayers and Support for the
People of Ukraine**

Donate now to help those in crisis: those in need in Ukraine. International Orthodox Christian Charities is there, lending a helping hand. Make your donation [here](#) or go to: iocc.org

**Church School Party
Sunday, May 22**

Come celebrate the end of the term with special treats and activities for our kids. All are welcome



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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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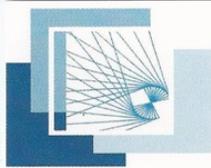
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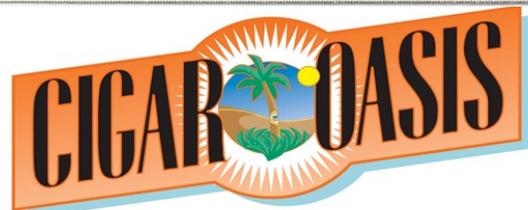
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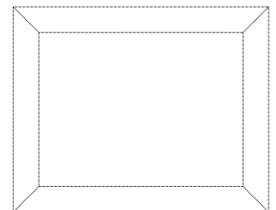
www.stnicholasalbanian.org

St. Nicholas Church is fully open! Come and pray and have a cup of coffee with friends.

If you're not feeling well, though, stay at home. We'll be here, ready for you when you're healthy.



St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church
 181-14 Midland Parkway
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