

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 Father Andrew Jarmus

When put to the test, will we pass?

Here's one of my favorite church jokes. It's Sunday morning in a large suburban parish. The church is full, over 2000 people. Suddenly, a gunman barges in and yells, "All right, who here is ready to die for the Lord?"

People begin stampeding out of the building, and when the dust has finally settled, the only ones left in church are the pastor, the gunman and 50 parishioners.

"Okay, Reverend," the gunman says to the pastor, "now that you know who the real Christians are, you can carry on."

In every joke there is some portion of truth. The truth in this joke is that not everyone that comes to church actually believes what is being taught there.

In the Gospels, Jesus tells of a man who goes out to sow seeds. The seeds fall in different places, some on the pathway, some in rocks, some in shallow soil, some in deep, healthy earth. Only the seeds that have fallen into the rich, healthy soil spring up; the rest are withered, eaten or

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swept away. When asked what the parable means, Jesus says that the seed is the word of God. A lot of people receive the Gospel only superficially, and in them it is easily forgotten or Jesus says that the seed is the word of God. A lot of people receive the Gospel only superficially, and in them it is easily forgotten or cast aside. Some, though, take it to heart; they allow God's Word to be implanted deep within them. It is from this second group that great blessings flow for themselves and for the world.

From this, we are lead to an important question: "Where do I stand? Do I really believe? Do I take Jesus' Good News to heart or am I just putting in time?" From time to time God points us to the answer to these questions by allowing our faith to be put to the test. God does not test us for His sake. He knows our hearts; he

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President's Message

By Bill Peters

As you can see in the photos of the Building Expansion Project on page 4, progress continues to be made!!! We will all benefit from and enjoy the use of the new classrooms and meeting rooms, the new elevator, the new air conditioning and the many other building improvements. Also continuing is the need to get 100% participation for the financial support of the Project by all parishioners and the friends of St. Nicholas Church. Many have made commitments and of these people, many have made payments. However, there are many of our friends who still have not made commitments. We must all talk with our friends and acquaintances about the need to donate money to support this Building Expansion Project which is so important to the life of our parish.

This past month, we started the new church year, Locally, Sunday School began for the children and religious education meetings started for adults. On a broader scale, the Albanian Archdiocese's Annual Meeting was held at St. John Chrysostom Church in Philadelphia with Bishop Nikon and representatives from all our churches, and the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) held meetings involving Metropolitan Jonah, all the archdiocese bishops, as well as clergy and lay representatives of the OCA dioceses.

During the next two months, the Daughters will hold our Annual Flea Market & Bake Sale. Also, we will begin our annual Pledge Program to ask parishioners to make their pledge of financial support for next year, 2010. The pledge of the money you all say you will be giving to the Church in 2010, will enable us to operate the church and serve the community.

Daughters' Corner

by Linda Foundos

Welcome home to all the travelers. We hope you all enjoyed a great summer. The Daughters' held a meeting recently for a preliminary discussion of our annual Flea Market/Bake Sale. We are planning to have our event on Saturday & Sunday, November 14 & 15. In the case of a construction delay, our back-up plan is to hold it the following weekend. So please, search your homes for clean items in good condition for which you have no further use. Your items may be a "treasure" to someone else and profitable to St. Nicholas. You can support our fund raiser in a number of ways: donating items/baked goods for sale, pricing, selling, shopping, baking lakrors, etc. We need your help to make this a social and financial success for St. Nicholas. It's fun! Get involved and see for yourself! You may begin bringing items following services on Sunday, November 1st.

Special thanks once again to all those that helped to make our reception for Deacon Nathan and Bishop Nikon's 40th anniversary such a wonderful success.

To all our students, we wish you a great school year! Each year is a building block to your beautiful future, so make it a good one!!

Wisdom for Life:

Happiness keeps you Sweet,
Trials keep you Strong,
Sorrows keep you Human,
Failures keep you Humble,
Success keeps you Glowing,
But only God keeps you Going!

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, October 18th, after Liturgy



Come to our Meeting!!!!

Important business of the St. Nicholas Parish will be discussed, including: Building Expansion Project, Religious Education, Church Finances, Social Activities, Daughters of St. Nicholas.

KENDI SHQIP

(The Albanian Corner)



By A. Llupa

Tetor, 2009

Këtë muaj po japim nje pjese mbi kungimin.

...Pas lutjes "Ati Ynë", bijtë e Perëndisë marrin Kungatën e Shenjtë. Kremtuesi i jep paqen e Krishtit popullit dhe me kryet e ulura luten së bashku, që të jenë të denjë të marrin pjesë në Kungatën e Shenjtë. Kremtuesi lutet që Vetë Krishti të denjojë të na japë Trupin dhe Gjakun e Tij.

"Vër re, o Zot Jisu Krisht, Perëndia ynë, nga banesa jote e shenjtë dhe nga fronti i lavdisë së mbretërisë sate, dhe eja të na shenjtërosh, Ti që rri lart bashkë me Atin dhe që je këtu padukurisht bashkë me ne. Dhe me dorën tënde të fuqishme denjo të na japësh Trupin tënd të pacënuar dhe Gjakun tënd të çmuar dhe me anën tonë gjithë popullit."

Pastaj, Qengji i Shënjtëruar ngrihet me thirrjen: Të shenjtat, të shenjtëve. Populli përgjigjet: Një është Shenjt, një është Zot, Jisu Krishti, për lavdi të Perëndisë Atit. Amin. Prifti e copton Qengjin (bukën e shenjtëruar) në katër pjesë, sipas mënyrës që ishte prerë në Proskomidhi. Një pjesë e bukës së shenjtëruar (IS) vendoset në Potir së bashku me një kupë uji të nxehtë që simbolizon karakterin e gjallë të Krishtit të Ngjallur, trupi dhe shpirti i të cilit janë bashkuar dhe mbushur me Shpirtin e Shenjtë, në jetën e lavdëruar të Mbretërisë së Perëndisë.

Pastaj prifti merr Kungatën nga buka (XC) dhe pi verë prej Potirit të shenjtë. Ndërsa prifti po merr Kungimin, populli këndon disa vargje Kungimore të veçanta, të cilat ndryshojnë sipas kremtimit. Ata mund të këndojnë edhe himne të tjerë, sipas kremtimeve dhe sidomos kur Kungimi i klerikëve zgjat shumë.

Besnikët e marrin Kungatën e Shenjtë në një lugë të posaçme. Atyre u jepet buka e shenjtëruar (NIKA) dhe vera e shenjtëruar. Kungimi i besnikëve bëhet gjithmonë nga dhuratat e blatuara dhe të shenjtëruara të asaj Meshe të Shenjtë. Kungata e Shenjtë nuk merret kurrë nga ndonjë "rezervë". Siç e kemi përmendur, të gjithë ata që janë anëtarë të Kishës nëpërmjet mistereve të Pagëzimit dhe të Mirosjes (ardhjes së Shpirtit të Shenjtë), duke përfshirë edhe foshnjat, mund të marrin pjesë në Kungatën e Shenjtë.

Gjatë marrjes së Kungimit populli këndon: "Në darkën tënde mistike, O Bir i Perëndisë..." Kurse gjatë periudhës së Pashkës këndojnë "Kungoni Trupin e Krishtit, shijoni prej burimit të pavdekshëm. Alilua. Në përgjithësi, më përpara se të merret Kungimi, thuhet lutja "Besoj, o Zot...". Ky është akti personal i besës së secilit ndaj Krishtit dhe ndaj Mistereve të Shenjta të Kishës së tij.

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knows if we are sincere or not. The tests that we face are for us. They allow us to see for ourselves how serious we really are about our faith.

We have heard in recent months of various precautions being taken concerning the H1N1 virus, commonly known as "Swine Flu." Concern among some Catholic and Protestant Churches over H1N1 has motivated them to modify their services to reduce the risk of possible infection at church. Some have asked the question, Should we do the same in the Orthodox Church? In particular, some question the practice of all the faithful receiving Holy Communion from the same spoon.

This is not the first time this question has come up. There was a similar concern in the early years of the AIDS epidemic (research later on found that it was impossible to contract HIV through sharing the same Communion spoon because there would not be enough of the virus present on the spoon to pose a risk).

In 2003, the concern was over Holy Communion and SARS, an acute respiratory disease. Infections began in China and spread through Southeast Asia, with another outbreak of the disease in Toronto, Canada.

Each time the question of whether or not we can contract disease through receiving Holy Communion come us, the responses are the same.

First of all – on a purely practical level – it is not necessary to actually touch the spoon when you receive Holy Communion. Simply tilt your head back slightly and open your mouth wide enough so that the priest can drop the Holy Gifts into your mouth without actually touching the spoon.

It has also been noted that, since the spoon is dipped into the chalice before each person Communes, the alcohol content of the wine and the hot water in the chalice (which is poured in just before communion) act as antiseptics.

There is also something infinitely more important about Holy Communion. Right before we receive Holy Communion, we all say a prayer together in which we ask that our partaking of the Holy Gifts be for "...the healing of soul and body..." The Saints call the Holy Communion "the medicine of immortality and the antidote to death." As a point of faith, it is simply does not make sense to assume that Holy Communion, this great Divine Gift that is given for our health and salvation, could ever lead to us becoming sick. Sounds nice, you're thinking, but where's the proof? How about these examples:

At the end of every Divine Liturgy, the priest (or deacon) consumes the remaining portions of the Holy Gifts in the chalice; he does so using the spoon and drinking from the chalice. This happens after all of the faithful have communed. If we truly ran the risk of being infected by diseases through Holy Communion, every flu season our priests would be on sick leave more often than they were doing their pastoral work.

Consider also clergy who are recovering alcoholics. Every Divine Liturgy -- that means at least once a week -- they consume the Holy Communion and do not "fall off the wagon" by doing so. I know of several such priests personally who have been in recovery for years. Why does the wine in the chalice not effect them? Because it is not just wine, it is the Blood of Christ, "Shed for you and for many, for the remissions of sins." Something given to us to cleanse our sins cannot also lead us into sin.

We find many examples in our Church's history of clergy giving Holy Communion to faithful infected with highly contagious illnesses, but not suffering from the infection themselves. The following is an incident from the life of the twentieth-century saint, John Maximovich, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco: "A Mrs. Menshikova was bitten by a mad dog. The injections against rabies she either refused to take or took carelessly.... And then she came down with this terrible disease. Bishop John found out about it and came to the dying woman. He gave her Holy Communion, but just then she began having one of the fits of this disease; she began to foam at the mouth, and at the same time she spit out the Holy Gifts which she had just received. The Holy Sacrament cannot be thrown out. And Vladyka picked up and put in his mouth the Holy Gifts vomited by the sick woman. Those who were with him exclaimed: 'Vladyka, what are you doing! Rabies is terribly contagious! 'But Vladyka peacefully answered: 'Nothing will happen; these are the Holy Gifts.' And indeed nothing did happen."

The second century writer, St. Justin the Martyr, said of the Eucharist: "For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these. We have been taught that the food which is blessed is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh." When we receive Holy Communion, we are taking God Himself into us.

If you are sick on a Sunday, stay home and rest; this is one of the reasons not to go to church that is "worthy of a blessing," as we say during the Liturgy. But, when we do gather for the Divine Liturgy, our Faith teaches us that we need not let the fear of contracting disease keep us away from receiving Holy Communion. Holy Communion is a sacrament of healing--it helps us fight infirmities, both physical and spiritual.

We can very easily convince ourselves, intellectually, that we are "real" believers. We do all the external things associated with being a Christian: we go to church regularly ("Well, not every service, but when I can"); we put a bit in the collection plate ("I have to support the church? I thought someone else did that."); we don't eat meat during Great Lent ("Well, at least not on Wednesdays and Fridays... OK, not on Fridays... well, not on Good Friday anyway."). Clearly, we are covering all the bases required of us. Right?

Then, something will come up that gives us a reality check. Something happens to us and it is like God is saying, "So, you say you are a believer, do you? Well, here is your opportunity to prove to yourself – and to others – that you truly believe in Me."

Sometimes these tests can be daunting. At these times we can cry out the words of that father who brought his demon possessed son to Jesus to be healed: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"(Mark 9:23,24)

Continued on Page 4

Building Expansion Continues – Foundation Phase



The Excavation Phase of our Building Expansion Project began after the May 17 Ground Breaking Ceremony. Progress continues as indicated in the photos above. A special Photo Gallery has been set-up on the Church's website, www.stnicholasalbanian.org. On the homepage, click the "Construction Progress" box at the lower right corner. This will bring you to the Photo Gallery showing all phases of the Project, to date. Click the phase you want to see, then click the photo to make it bigger. Your contribution to help pay for the Building Project is very much needed! If you haven't donated yet, please make your donation.

Community News

By Linda Foundos

- Tina & Bill Peters spent a delightful time in Switzerland this August visiting with their daughter Alexis and her beautiful family which included grand daughters Skyler and Sophia. Also, Tina and Bill vacationed for several days at Lake Lucerne.
- Donna, Jim, Kim, Daniel & Alex Oswald enjoyed a fabulous European vacation which included visiting with relatives of both Donna & Jim in Austria, and with Alexis (Peters) in Switzerland. They equally enjoyed the city and the Alps. They hiked, biked, toured and loved it all.
- The Kutali's, Sylvana, Andrea and Kris, had a wonderful time in Albania visiting with family and friends.
- Tina & Robert Korra enjoyed their summer days in Italy. How sweet it is!!
- Our wishes for a quick recovery to Al Foundos who underwent hip replacement surgery. His rehab is going well. Al looks forward to resuming his active, "pain-free" life.
- Wedding bells rang for Arjola Vozhilla and Dr. Gentian Toshkezi in a beautiful ceremony and reception on Sunday, September 27. Our sincere congratulations to the happy couple and their families. May God bless them with a life filled with joy.
- Happy, happy "special" birthday to Lenore Apostolu!! Her family surprised her with a dinner party to celebrate. A great time was had by all. We wish Lenore many more happy and healthy years!
- Looking ahead: On Sunday, October 25th there will be a 3-year memorial service for the father of Petrika Troja.

Please contact Linda Foundos at (516) 671-8071 or email her at ggsutter@aol.com

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Regardless of how difficult these experiences may be, they present us with a very clear picture of where we stand in our faith--shaky ground or a firm foundation. May God give us the fortitude to pass our tests and show ourselves to be people of living, real and firm faith. This is a faith that honors God. This is a faith that will carry us through even the worst of times. This is a faith that will draw countless others to the Church as they too seek stability, comfort, strength and guidance in their lives.

When put to the test, will we pass? God grant that the answer is a resounding "Yes!" Because, notice, the question is not "if we are put to the test," but "when." See you in church.

Blessings, Fr. Andrew

This Month's Feast Days

Great Martyr Demetrius Commemorated on October 26th



The Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-gusher of Thessalonica was the son of a Roman proconsul in Thessalonica. Three centuries had elapsed and Roman paganism, spiritually shattered and defeated by the multitude of martyrs and confessors of Christ the Savior, intensified its persecutions. The parents of St Demetrius were secretly Christians, and he was baptized and raised in the Christian Faith in a secret church in his father's home.

By the time Demetrius had reached maturity and his father had died, the emperor Galerius Maximian had ascended the throne (305). Maximian, confident in Demetrius' education as well as his administrative and military abilities, appointed him to his father's position as proconsul of the Thessalonica district. The main tasks of this young commander were to defend the city from barbarians and to eradicate Christianity. The emperor's policy regarding Christians was expressed simply, "Put to death anyone who calls on the name of Christ." The emperor did not suspect that by appointing Demetrius he had provided a way for him to lead many people to Christ.

Accepting the appointment, Demetrius returned to Thessalonica and immediately confessed and glorified our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of persecuting and executing Christians, he began to teach the Christian Faith openly to the inhabitants of the city and to overthrow pagan customs and idolatry. When Emperor Maximian learned that the newly-appointed proconsul was a Christian, and that he had converted many Roman subjects to Christianity, the rage of the emperor knew no bounds. Returning from a campaign in the Black Sea region, the emperor decided to lead his army through Thessalonica, determined to massacre the Christians.

When the emperor came into the city, he summoned Demetrius, who boldly confessed himself a Christian and denounced the falsehood and futility of Roman polytheism. Maximian gave orders to lock up the confessor in prison. An angel appeared to him, comforting and encouraging him. At dawn on October 26, 306 soldiers appeared in the saint's underground prison and ran him through with lances. The body of the holy Great Martyr Demetrius was cast out for wild animals to devour, but the Christians took it and secretly buried it in the earth.

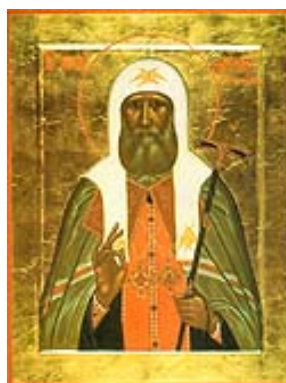
During the reign of St Constantine (306–337), a church was built over the grave of St Demetrius. A hundred years later, during the construction of a majestic new church on the old spot, the incorrupt relics of the holy martyr were uncovered. Since the seventh century a miraculous flow of fragrant myrrh has been found beneath the crypt of the Great Martyr Demetrius, so he is called "the Myrrh-gusher." St Demetrius is regarded as a protector of the young, and is also invoked by those struggling with lustful temptations.

MAJOR FEAST DAYS IN OCTOBER



Protection of the
Theotokos

October 01



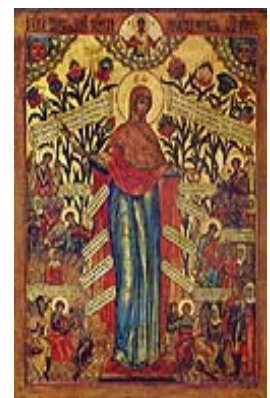
St. Tikhon of Moscow,
Enlightener of North
America

October 09



Apostle and Evangelist
Luke

October 18



"Joy of All Who
Sorrow" – Icon
of the Theotokos

October 24

Major Church Activities and Events

- Sun, Oct 04: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
- Mon, Oct 05: Parish Golf Outing at the Town of Oyster Bay Golf Course
- Wed, Oct 07: Adult Study Group, 7:00 p.m.
- Sun, Oct 11: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
- Wed, Oct 14: Adult Study Group, 7:00 p.m.
- Sun, Oct 18: Divine Liturgy, 10:00;
Parish General Meeting and
Youth Group Meeting after Divine Liturgy
- Wed, Oct 21: Adult Study Group, 7:00 p.m.
- Sun, Oct 25: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.
- Wed, Oct 28: Adult Study Group, 7:00 p.m.
- Mon, Oct 26: Great Martyr Demetrius, Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

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

- Oct 04: Lou Foundos / Robert Korra
- Oct 11: Roland Llupa / Edi Sera
- Oct 18: Ken Gjika / Izzy Tsamblakos
- Oct 25: Tomi Beno / Ardian Mile
- Nov 01: Ilir Fundo / Stefan Baltadori
- Nov 08: Bill Peters / Ilia Luka

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.stnicholasalbanian.org

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