

# THE ORTHODOX POST

February 2020

Volume XVI, Issue 2



St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church, 181-14 Midland Parkway, Jamaica Estates, New York, NY 11432  
Web site: [www.stnicholasalbanian.org](http://www.stnicholasalbanian.org) E-mail: [fr.niko@stnicholasalbanian.org](mailto:fr.niko@stnicholasalbanian.org) Tel: (718) 380-5684

## Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nikodhim

February would seem a strange time to begin talking about summer. The earnest winter, that season marked in ice and bitter wind, that season of the long cold after Christmas and New Year holidays, is underway. Yet today this is precisely what I'd ask, that you turn your mind forward and think of summer.

Yesterday I received a call from Florida, from the Orthodox Christian Mission Center in St. Augustine, where they are preparing for summer and preparing groups to go all over the world talking and teaching and supporting local Christian communities. Two groups will be venturing to Albania, one to teach English to children at a summer camp near Durres and the other to help rebuild a monastery in Voskopoja and build relationships with the local religious teachers there. Both groups are seeking volunteers to spend two weeks helping the Church of Albania help the people of Albania.

I received this call yesterday because the OCMC wanted to reach out to us, the Albanian Orthodox here in America, first. They wanted to invite our own people to be involved in serving our own people in a place that, though distant, is still familiar and still a place many here call home. They wanted to let us know that they would like our help and that the work of rebuilding faith in Albania is not done.

Beautiful churches have been reconstructed, rebuilt after desecration and the devastation of so many oppressive years, but the rebuilding of faith is more than bricks and mortar and paint. Education both religious and academic

remains a pressing issue. English-language fluency, which if you are reading

this you have, aids to raise these levels of education, enabling folks there to grow not only in knowledge of their faith but also in the number and variety of economic and social opportunities available to them.

You might think, as you are reading this, yes, that's nice but I'm no teacher. But the very fact that you can read this means you possess the necessary skills already. Let me assure you that if you go, you won't be left on your own, left to manage, left without resources or plans. As part of a team and guided by local leaders and long-term missionaries, it is simply a matter of doing seemingly small things—playing with children, working alongside others, attending a service—that add up to something much larger. I write this with some confidence, for fourteen years ago this summer, a much less gray-haired version of myself met other team members in Florida and then boarded a first flight to Albania.

Please think about this summer. Take a look at [ocmc.org](http://ocmc.org). These trips do cost money, but scholarships are available from our diocese to help, and if I know anything of our own St. Nicholas people money is ready here at home too. Think about it. Imagine it as a short part of your summer answering Christ's call to go and make good happen. Think about it and let me know.

Last year we had a major expense of repairing and resetting the stained-glass windows which had become loose in some areas. There are some major expenses this year including major cement work on the side of the church, renovating the men's room and several shingles have come off the roof so we will need a new roof shortly.

We had our annual "Icon Auction" January 12<sup>th</sup>. This is one of our major fund raisers for the year. For those that did not attend, you can still make a donation and we will try to get you the icon of your choosing if it is still available. This is a long-standing tradition since the founding of St. Nicholas that is worth continuing.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Nicholas.

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## President's Message

by Lou Foundos

Thank you to all the members that have completed and submitted their pledge cards. Another mailing has gone out recently. To those that have not completed a pledge card yet, please bring it to church or send it so we can get an accurate reading of what our pledge amount will be for our 2020 budget. Unlike some countries, no support is provided by the government and in order for St. Nicholas to thrive and grow it is up to all the parishioners as a group. As we all know, costs never go down but only continue to increase. Therefore, any increases in your pledge would be greatly appreciated to meet our increasing costs. The church building is now almost 50 years old and maintenance expenses are increasing.

# Coffee List

## Daughters' 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 Christine 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*

### February 2 Open

9 Koroveshi/Soares

16 Britu Haile

23 Irma Mile/Xhuljana Baltadori

### March 1 Agathia Luka/Antoneta Mertiri

8 Open

15 Ornela Joanidhi/Odeta Skendi

22 Eli Troja/Alma Vesho

29 Barbara Papalexis/Barbara Filis

I very much appreciate words of wisdom, so I share some with you here . . .

“Consider how hard it is to change yourself, and you’ll understand what little chance you have of trying to change others.”

“Learn from the mistakes of others, you can never live long enough to make them all yourself.”

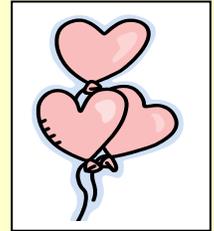
“A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.”

Oprah used to talk about keeping a “joy journal” where each day you would write something for which you were thankful, that you appreciated, that brought you joy. It’s wonderful to live life with a joyful heart, seeing the good in people & things and keeping a positive attitude. The days of our lives pass quickly; we should not take our loved ones, good health or waking to a new day for granted. Realize and appreciate the beauty in it. We can also experience joy in reaching out to assist others in any way we can.

We hope you will plan to join in the festivities at our annual Valentine’s Day Dinner Dance on February 15<sup>th</sup>. It is always a lively, fun event.



**House Blessing season is now underway. Begin the New Year right, schedule a date for Father to visit and bless your home.**



# **Valentine's Party**

*Saturday, February 15, 2020*

*7:00 p.m. till 12:00 a.m.*

*Buffet Dinner & Drinks, Dancing and Companionship*

*Music by Altin Shehu and his band*

*St. Nicholas Albanian Church*

*Fellowship Hall*

*181-14 Midland Parkway*

*Jamaica Estates, New York*



*Don't miss all the fun!!!*

*Donation: \$70 adults    \$35 children 12 & under*

*Capacity is limited, so tickets will be sold in advance and NOT at the door.*

*To purchase your tickets, please contact:*

*Anila Gjika (917) 584 - 4604*

*Zhani Joanidhi (917) 412 - 0344*

*Agathia Luka (917) 568 - 2106*

*Adriana Topore (516) 417 - 6637*

*TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT THE DOOR-DEADLINE DATE WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7<sup>th</sup>*

*Please make your check payable to St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church.*

*(Please cut here & return your completed form with your check.)*

*Name* \_\_\_\_\_

*Address* \_\_\_\_\_

*City, State, Zip* \_\_\_\_\_

*Telephone No* \_\_\_\_\_

*Number of Adults* \_\_\_\_\_ *@ \$70each = \$* \_\_\_\_\_ *Number of Children* \_\_\_\_\_ *@ \$35 each = \$* \_\_\_\_\_

*TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$* \_\_\_\_\_

## FEBRUARY SAINTS AND NAME DAYS



### Repose of Saint Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn

Commemorated on February 27

Proclamation on the Glorification of Our Holy Father Bishop RAPHAEL (30-Apr-2000) Our holy Father Raphael was born in Syria in 1860 to pious Orthodox parents, Michael Hawaweeny and his second wife Mariam, the daughter of a priest of Damascus.

When the holy Apostle Paul had a vision of a man entreating him to come to Macedonia to help them (Acts 16:10), he set off on a great missionary journey. When Saint Raphael heard of the needs of his countrymen who were scattered in a strange land, he crossed the ocean to labor in yet another foreign country.

Archimandrite Raphael arrived in New York on November 2, 1895 and was welcomed by a delegation of Arab Christians who were awaiting their leader from Russia. On November 5, his first Sunday in America, he assisted Bishop NICHOLAS in serving the Divine Liturgy at the Russian church in New York city. Less than two weeks after his arrival, Archimandrite Raphael found a suitable place in lower Manhattan to set up a chapel and furnished it with ecclesiastical items that he had brought with him from Russia. Bishop NICHOLAS blessed the new chapel, which was dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Myra.

This zealous pastor remained in New York teaching, preaching, and celebrating the divine services for his parishioners. It was not long, however, before he heard of smaller communities of Arab Christians scattered throughout the length and breadth of North America. Since these Arab immigrants had no pastor to care for them, it was not surprising that some should turn to other Christian traditions, or completely neglect their religious duties. This was an ongoing concern for Saint Raphael throughout the course of his ministry. Although he was not opposed to dialogue with non-Orthodox Christians, nor to friendly relations based on shared beliefs, Saint Raphael never lost sight of the clear line of distinction that exists between the Orthodox and the heterodox. He always insisted that any church unity must be based on the teachings of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

The Orthodoxy of Saint Raphael's life and teaching was demonstrated over and over again by his words and his actions. He always upheld and defended the spotless Faith which was "delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Although at first he did not understand the teachings of the heterodox, he later discovered how far removed they were from Orthodox doctrine. When he realized this, he took steps to protect his flock from harmful influences. He directed his people not to attend heterodox services lest they become confused by "divers and strange doctrines" (Heb 13:9). He believed it would be preferable for the head of the household to read the Hours at home from the Service Book when it was not possible to attend an Orthodox church.

On the third Sunday of Lent in 1904, Saint Raphael became the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated on American soil. Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent performed the service at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn. The new bishop's vestments were a gift from Tsar Nicholas II. Following his consecration, Bishop Raphael continued his pastoral labors, ordaining priests and assigning them to parishes, and helping Bishop Tikhon in the administration of the diocese.

In July of 1905 Bishop Raphael consecrated the grounds for Saint Tikhon's Monastery and blessed the orphanage at South Canaan, PA.

For the next ten years Bishop Raphael tended his growing flock. With the growth of his New York community came an increase in the number of children, and he was concerned about their future. He wanted to establish an evening school to educate them in a Christian atmosphere, because the future of the Church in this country

## FEBRUARY SAINTS AND NAME DAYS

depended upon the instruction of the youth. Children who did not speak Arabic were already going to non-Orthodox churches where Sunday school classes were conducted in English. Bishop Raphael saw the absolute necessity for using English in worship and in education for the future progress of the Syro-Arab Mission.

Taking heed of Saint Paul's words to pray in a language that people understood (1 Cor.14:15-19), Saint Raphael recommended the use of the Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church (translated by Isabel Hapgood) in all of his parishes.

From his youth, Saint Raphael's greatest joy was to serve the Church. When he came to America, he found his people scattered abroad, and he called them to unity. He never neglected his flock, but traveled throughout America, Canada, and Mexico in search of them so that he might care for them. He kept them from straying into strange pastures, and he protected them from spiritual harm. During twenty years of faithful ministry he nurtured them and helped them to grow. At the time of his death, the Syro-Arab Mission had thirty parishes with 25,000 faithful.

He was also a scholar, and the author of several books. He wrote many, if not most, of the articles that appeared in The Word. He served his own Arabic community, and also reached out to Greeks and Russians, speaking to them in their own language. He became fluent in English and encouraged its use in church services and educational programs.

Saint Raphael came into contact with all sorts of people and was a gentle father to them. He gained their love and respect by first loving them and also through his charming personality and excellent character. He was always kind and merciful to others but was strict with himself. He accomplished many good things during his earthly life, and now he joins the holy angels in offering ceaseless prayer and praise to God.

*Through the prayers of the holy Bishop Raphael, may we also be made worthy of the heavenly Kingdom. Amen.*

**February 5 - St. Agatha**  
Agathia Luka

**February 6 - St. Photius**  
Fotaq Kondili

**February 12 - St. Kristo of Albania**

**February 17 - St. Theodore**  
Theodore Ladd

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

Nese nuk sheh emrin tend, te lutem lajmero priftin.

## *Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church*

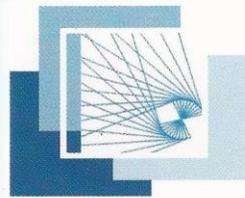
Please look at the Ads and support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

**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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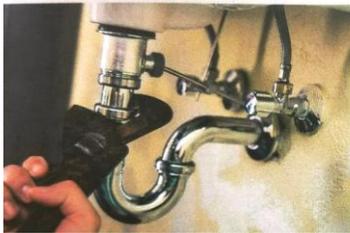


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**Major Church Activities and Events for**  
**February**

- Sat. 1 - Great Vespers, 5pm: Meeting of the Lord  
 Sun. 2 - Liturgy, 10am: Meeting of the Lord  
 Sat. 8 - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 9 - 10am: Liturgy, 10am: Publican and Pharisee  
 Sat. 15 - Vespers, 5pm  
     - Valentine's Dance  
 Sun. 16 - Liturgy, 10am: Prodigal Son  
 Sat. 22 - Liturgy, 10am: Saturday of Souls  
     - Blessing of Graves @ Mt. Tomori  
     - Vespers, 5pm  
 Sun. 23 - Liturgy, 10am: Meatfare Sunday  
 Sat. 29 - Vespers, 5pm

**Bring your children to**  
**Sunday School**

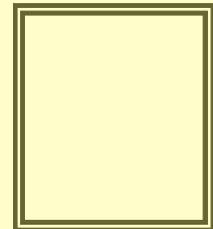
For the 2019-2020 school year, Sunday School classes will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month @ 10:30am. There will also be a children's sermon on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month.

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

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

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