

Wisdom from the Fathers

Thank God every day with your whole heart for having given to you life according to His image and likeness - an intelligently free and immortal life...Thank Him also for again daily bestowing life upon you, who have fallen an innumerable multitude of times, by your own free will, through sins, from life unto death, and that He does so as soon as you only say from your whole heart: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee!' (Luke 15:18).

St. John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ: Part 1; Holy Trinity Monastery* pgs. 104-105 19th century

The Saint Nicholas Parish Bookstore Recommends

The Art of Prayer, an Orthodox Anthology, edited by Timothy Ware. According to one reader, "this book helps one get a 'feel' for the ethos of Orthodoxy, for the process of becoming truly human, as we are intended.

Orthodoxy and Catholicism examines the important similarities and differences in a thorough and non-polemical style.

A Child's Paradise of Saints retells stories of fifteen beloved saints presented in a warm, informal style, suitable for reading aloud.

The bookstore carries Lenten cookbooks and Greek olive oil soap.

Sunday of Prodigal Son

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man.

Saturday of Souls

Through the Apostolic Constitutions (Book VIII, ch. 42), the Church of Christ has received the custom to make commemorations for the departed on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after their repose. Since many throughout the ages, because of an untimely death in a faraway place, or other adverse circumstances, have died without being deemed worthy of the appointed memorial services, the divine Fathers, being so moved in their love for man, have decreed that a common memorial be made this day for all pious Orthodox Christians who have reposed from all ages past, so that those who did not have particular memorial services may be included in this common one for all. Also, the Church of Christ teaches us that alms should be given to the poor by the departed one's kinsmen as a memorial for him.

Besides this, since we make commemoration tomorrow of the Second Coming of Christ, and since the reposed have neither been judged, nor have received their complete recompense (Acts 17:31; II Peter 2:9; Heb. 11:39-40), the Church rightly commemorates the souls today, and trusting in the boundless mercy of God, she prays Him to have mercy on sinners. Furthermore, since the commemoration is for all the reposed together, it reminds each of us of his own death, and arouses us to repentance.

2009 Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Reading courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery

SAVE THE DATE for this special U-M Modern Greek program event: "Rebetiki Istoria," a group of the finest rebetika musicians in Athens, will perform a free concert on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. at the Stamps Auditorium, Walgreen Drama Center, 1226 Murfin Avenue, North Campus in Ann Arbor. This is an evening not to be missed. For more information call 734.936.6099.

Orthodox Traditions & Church Etiquette

In the Orthodox Church there are many customs and traditions that are an important part of our worship. Sometimes we need to address these etiquette issues.

Punctuality

The time to arrive at Church is before the service starts. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins enter quietly. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, wait until it is finished to quickly find a seat. If Father is giving the sermon, stay in the back until he has concluded. Try not to interrupt the Liturgy by your entrance. The best way to avoid this situation is to arrive on time.

From SS Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church, Palos Hills, IL.

THE SUNDAY BULLETIN

February 15, 2009

Orthros

9:00 AM

Divine Liturgy

10:00 AM

Church School

After Holy Communion

Epistle Reading

1 Cor. 6:12-20

Gospel Reading

Luke 15:11-32

Creed

English

Greeters Feb. 22

Sylvia Kleanthous/
Demetra Mitropoulos-
Rundus



SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Psaltis

Zannis Res

Choir

Dr. Jon Wardner

Prosforo

Anna Bairactaris

Fellowship Hour

Nellie Guibert, Jarnis-
Gutierrez, Amira Sab-
bagh & Julie Vile

Greeters Feb. 15

Andreas Stathopoulos
Young Adults Day

Trisagion

Panagiotis Stamatakos

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Feb. 15

12:30 p.m. G.O.Y.A. Parent Meeting
5:00 p.m. J.O.Y.

Monday, Feb. 16

10:00 a.m. Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Festival Meeting
7:30 p.m. Bible Study

Tuesday, Feb. 17

7:30 p.m. Y.A.L.

Thursday, Feb. 19

7:00 P.M. CHOIR REHEARSAL (NOTE DAY CHANGE)

Friday, Feb. 20

11:00 a.m. Exercise Class
7:30 p.m. Paraklesis

Saturday, Feb. 21

First Saturday of Souls
10:00 a.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy
6:30 P.M. GREEK SCHOOL MARDI GRAS

MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE: www.stnickaa.org

**Submissions for the Sunday bulletin must be sent to:
kate@stnickaa.org by 10 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to publication.**

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Epistle Reading Brethren, "all things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which belong to God.

Resurrectional Apolytikion

When You descended unto death, O Lord who yourself are immortal Life, then did You mortify Hades by the lightning flash of Your Divinity. Also when You raised the dead from the netherworld, all the Powers of the heavens were crying out: O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory be to You.

Apolytikion of the Church

The truth of your manner of life manifested you to your flock as a rule of faith and an icon of gentleness and a teacher of self-control. By humility, therefore, you acquired the things on high, and riches through poverty. Father Holy Hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ our God, entreating that our souls be saved.

Kontakion

O Father, foolishly I ran away from Your glory, and in sin, squandered the riches You gave me. Wherefore, I cry out to You with the voice of the Prodigal, "I have sinned before You Compassionate Father. Receive me in repentance and take me as one of Your hired servants."



Gospel Reading The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Welcome Visitors!

Please fill out the form on the notepads in the pews and put it in the collection tray so we may welcome you to our Parish.

Visitors Please Note

Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians. Visitors are welcome to receive the Antidoro (Blessed Bread), distributed at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Prosforo is needed for March 15 and 22 and April 5.

Fellowship Hour sponsor needed for Sunday February 22, March 1 and 29.

Saint Nicholas Greek School Mardi Gras
Come join us on **Saturday, February 21st at 6:30 p.m.** for our annual Mardi-Gras.

Enjoy appetizers, dinner, dessert and cash bar. Dance until midnight.

Tickets: Adults: \$35.00; Child/Student (6-12): \$20.00; Under 6: Free.

Benevolent Fund for Saint Nicholas Greek School

Please support the Benevolent Fund for the Saint Nicholas Greek School and win a week in a luxury villa at Florida's Vacation Village at Weston, near Ft. Lauderdale (12/25/09-1/01/2010), plus \$400 for expenses. Raffle tickets are now on sale for \$20.00 in the social hall after church and through Costas Boutsikakis, Vasilios Pliakas and Nick Stamatopoulos. Drawing will be held at the Mardi Gras dance the evening of February 21, 2009 at the church and you need not be present to win.

Greeters Needed "The Welcoming Program is in need of Greeters" for this important ministry. Greeters ensure that everyone passing through our doors and entering Christ's Church are welcomed and made to feel comfortable as being created in the image and likeness of God. As well, to get to know others in our parish we normally might not get to know—or make the time to know."

Please consider taking part in this program and volunteer by calling Penny Bekiares-662-6606 or Chris Kerry-665-6273.

A.H.E.P.A. Scholarship

If you are interested in a scholarship from A.H.E.P.A., the local chapter or the district, please try to meet with Dr. Kleanthous in the multi-purpose conference room after services on Sunday or get in touch with him at 475-2034 or email: c.kleanthousmd@sbcglobal.net.



Saint Nicholas Church School Notes

As part of the Church school curriculum, it is important and required that all children be present for the Divine Liturgy (10:00 a.m.) and attend class instruction after Communion.

Oratorical Festival Reminders: Preschool to 5th grade will work on their papers for in-class assignments only which will be due on Sun. Feb. 22nd. Please see their teachers with any questions or for information. **7th to 12th grade** students will be participating in the Parish Oratorical festival which is scheduled for **Sun. March 15, 2009**. Fr. Nick is looking forward to reading each and every paper. The children in the 6th grade will sit in and observe the actual event and will practice writing a paper with the 7th graders so that they will understand and become familiar with the process.

Reminders: 1) Attendance Pin (Must have 3 or less absences and make up dates are available to help erase missed classes.) **2) Honor Pin** (Must learn material from their grade level for the test). All this information can be found in the packet you received at registration, a copy can also be obtained from the teachers or visit the Church website.

Upcoming dates:

Sat. Feb. 21—*Makeup day (First Saturday of Souls)
Sun. Feb. 22—Preschool to 5th grade Oratorical papers are due.
Sat. Feb. 28 —*Makeup day (Second Saturday of Souls)

G.O.Y.A. News

Rev. Father Nick is hosting a parent meeting today at 12:30 p.m. He will discuss the results of the recent G.O.Y.A. parent survey. Please plan on attending this very important meeting. This is a great opportunity for parents to come together, address our concerns and learn how to better guide our children towards our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP: Everyone's Responsibility! If you have not made your pledge for 2008, please do so as soon as possible. If you need a pledge card for 2009, please call the office.

"Let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ Our God". **If not YOU...WHO? If not NOW...WHEN?**