

VISIONS VISIONS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

HOLY TAXIARHAI AND SAINT HARALAMBOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

7373 CALDWELL AVENUE, NILES, ILLINOIS · 60714 — PHONE (847) 647-8880

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18)

DECEMBER 2011

Make ready,
O Bethlehem, for Eden
is opened.
Prepare, O Ephratha,
for Adam and Eve
are renewed.
Salvation enters the world
and the curse is destroyed.
Make ready, O hearts of
righteous men;
Instead of myrrh,
bring songs as
an offering of wisdom.
Receive salvation
and immortality for your
bodies and souls.
Behold, the Master
Who lays in a manger
urges us to complete
our spiritual songs.
Let us cry to Him without
ceasing: O Lord, glory to
Thee.

**(From Christmas Eve
Vespers)**



CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΓΕΝΝΑΤΑΙ! ΔΟΞΑΣΑΤΕ!

*"Awake, mankind!
For your sake
God has become man.
Awake, you who sleep,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ
will enlighten you.
I tell you again:
for your sake,
God became man...
Let us then joyfully
celebrate the coming
of our salvation and
redemption.
Let us celebrate the
festive day on which
He who is the great
and eternal Day
came from the great
and endless day
of eternity into our own
short day of time."*

St. Augustine

*On behalf of the Parish Council,
our parish organizations and the entire
St. Haralambos Family, we wish you
a blessed and joyful Christmas, and
a wonderful, healthy and prosperous
New Year!*



WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2011

Sunday, December 4—St. Barbara and St. John of Damascus

8:15 am—Orthros
9:30 am—Sunday School
9:45 am—Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, December 6—St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

8:30 am—Orthros and Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 11

8:15 am—Orthros
9:30 am—Sunday School
9:45 am—Divine Liturgy

Monday, December 12—St. Spyridon

8:30 am—Orthros and Divine Liturgy

Thursday, December 15—St. Eleftherios

8:30 am—Orthros and Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 18—Sunday before Christmas

8:15 am—Orthros
9:30 am—Sunday School
9:45 am—Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 24

6:00 am—Orthros
7:00 am—Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25—CHRISTMAS DAY

THE BIRTH IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR

8:30 am—Orthros
9:45 am—Divine Liturgy—Family Worship

Tuesday, December 27—St. Stephen the First-Martyr

8:30 am—Orthros and Divine Liturgy

Sunday, January 1, 2012—New Year's Day,

Feastday of St. Basil the Great

8:30 am—Orthros
9:45 am—Divine Liturgy —Family Worship

OUR SISTER COMMUNITY OF ST NICHOLAS in Oak Lawn invites you to Great Vespers at 7:00 pm on Monday evening, December 5 in honor of the Feastday of St. Nicholas, and to Divine Liturgy the morning of Tuesday, December 6. (Liturgy WILL be celebrated at St. Haralambos on Tuesday, December 6.)

OUR SISTER COMMUNITY OF ST SPYRIDON in Palos Heights invites you to Great Vespers at 7:00 pm on Sunday evening, December 11 in honor of the Feastday of St. Spyridon, and to Divine Liturgy the morning of Monday, December 12. (Liturgy WILL be celebrated at St. Haralambos on Monday, December 12.)

OUR SISTER COMMUNITY OF ST BASIL in Chicago invites you to Great Vespers at 7:00 pm on Saturday evening, December 31st in honor of the Feastday of St. Basil, and to Divine Liturgy the morning of Sunday, January 1st. (Liturgy WILL be celebrated at St. Haralambos on Sunday, January 1st.)

OUR SISTER COMMUNITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST in Des Plaines invites you to Great Vespers at 7:00 pm on Friday evening, January 6 in honor of the Feastday of St. John, and to Divine Liturgy the morning of Saturday, January 7th. (Liturgy will NOT be celebrated at St. Haralambos on Saturday, January 7.)

SACRAMENTS AND BLESSINGS

BLESSINGS OF INFANTS—Forty days after birth, a child and its mother come to church to receive a 40 Day Blessing, imitating Christ who was presented in the Temple 40 days after He was born. Please call the church office to arrange this blessing.

BAPTISMS—Please call the church office to schedule Baptisms. Plan ahead!—there are some days when Baptisms are not performed. Keep in mind that there should be only one Godparent and that a child is supposed to be given but one name when he or she is baptized.

WEDDINGS—Please arrange an appointment with Fr. Dean at least eight months before the proposed wedding date to allow time for all necessary marriage preparation.

CONFESSION—Confessions are arranged by appointment. Please call the church office to schedule Confession.

MINISTRY TO PERSONS WHO ARE SICK—Orthodox Christians who would like to receive Holy Sacraments but are unable to attend church (hospitalized or at home) should contact the church office so Holy Sacraments can be administered to them.

Please inform the church office if your loved one is hospitalized! Most hospitals no longer inform us when they receive patients from our parish.

MEMORIAL SERVICES—Memorial Services are offered for the eternal rest of persons who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Customarily, these services are offered at 40 days, at 6 months, at 1 year and at 3 years. When three years have passed, the departed are more properly remembered on the Saturdays of the Souls.

DID YOU KNOW?...

.....About Saturday nights: Saturday night is the time of preparation for the Lord's Day (Sunday) and for the Divine Liturgy. It should be a quiet time of prayer and contemplation, a time to offer incense in our homes.

Did you know that the day begins with the setting of the sun? That is why the vespers of our holidays falls the evening before the holiday: the holiday has already begun!

For this reason, we should avoid planning parties and dinner dances on Saturday evenings.

**HOLY TAXIARHAI AND SAINT HARALAMBOS
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**
7373 CALDWELL AVENUE, NILES, ILLINOIS 60714
PHONE: 847/647-8880
Web: SaintHaralambosGOC.org

From Father Dean

Christmas 2011

Dear Stewards and Friends of St. Haralambos,

Thanksgiving has passed, the Fast has begun, and it is officially the pre-Christmas Season. Soon we will be celebrating the Birth and Baptism of our Lord, and we will all say, "Wow! It's already Christmas. Where did the time ago?"

Before we do that, let's reminisce a little. A year ago at about this time, we were repairing severe damage to our **church dome**, both on the outside and the inside. Scaffolding stayed in place for many weeks, as the damaged icon of the Pantocrator was replaced. Remember?

The year 2011 was **the 60th anniversary of our parish!** The community was established in 1951 in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago. In addition, May 5th was the **20th anniversary of the ordination of Deacon John Suhayda.**

During 2011, we also implemented our new **"Stewards in Action" Committee.** As this Committee expands, we expect that it will help our ministries become more effective, and we look forward to various activities such as the free **Appreciation Luncheon** that our Stewardship Committee sponsored for the whole community last November 6th! We are reminded that Christ is the Vine and we are the branches. We should be proud to be His branches, and we should produce worthy fruit! **Our next "Stewards in Action" Committee meeting will be at 7:00 pm on December 13; join us!**

As 2012 begins, we are beginning a **paper recycling program**, and invite you to bring all forms of paper for recycling! We are also reviewing **Phase 3**, and the possibility of a new construction project. Watch for more information!

On the cover of this issue is a picture of the place where Christ was born in the cave in Bethlehem. It's time for our thoughts to turn to Christmas, and to fill our hearts with awe and wonder as we remember the events of our Lord's birth: the promise, the cave, the star, the shepherds, the Magi, the choir of angels! Let us join them in proclaiming, **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!"** (We hope you enjoy the Christmas thoughts of Metropolitan Philip on page 6.)

May the Lord's love guide all of us through this season and the whole New Year. Merry Christmas!

Fr. Dean

Looking ahead, please mark your calendar:

- Sunday, January 8—Vasilopita Luncheon
- Sunday, January 22—Godparent Sunday Luncheon
- Sunday, February 12— St. Haralambos Dinner Dance and Silent Auction

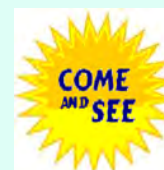
We would really appreciate your support of this year's 61st Anniversary Program Book! Contracts are available in the church office!

**HOLY TAXIARHAI AND
SAINT HARALAMBOS
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
NILES, ILLINOIS**

- Proistamenos.....Fr. Constantine P. Botsis
Synefimerios.....Fr. Chrysanthos Kerkeres
Pastoral Assistant..... Deacon John G. Suhayda
Chanter.....Nick Harisiadis
Parish Council Officers
President.....George Anastasiadis
Vice President..... Nick Andrews
Treasurer..... Perry Giannopoulos
Secretary.....Niki Tziavaras
Budget Committee Chairman.....Perry Giannopoulos
Building & Grounds Chairman.....
.....Michael Pontikes and Theodoros Karabatsos
Decor Committee Chairman.....Stephan Aliferakis
Finance Committee Chairman.....George Kotsionis
Phase III Chairman.....Pete Zouras
School Board Chairman.....Tom Zavos
Stewardship Com Chairman.....Dr. Thomas Bournias
Philoptochos President..... Elaine Couris
PTA Co-Presidents (Afternoon School)....
.....Linda Politis and Maria Hasapis
PTA President (Preschool).....Amalia Deligiannis
Greek School Principal..... Mrs. Anastasia Liapi
GSL Director..... Mrs. Andrianna Panayiotou
Preschool Director.....Mrs. Rita Petratos
Sunday School Director.....Presvytera Georgia Botsis
Athletic Director..... David Loomos
Scoutmaster..... George Alpogianis
Asst Scoutmaster.....Sam Parmakis
Asst Cubmaster..... John Frake
Little Angels.....Christina Papadis
YAL President..... Kyriakos Anastasiadis
GOYA Co-Presidents.....
.....Kosta Maris and Sofia Parmakis
Bookstore Manager.....Jolynn Ruggerio
Web Master..... George Houpiis
Office Staff.....
.....Barbara Skaouris and Alexandra Grivas

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Letter from our Priest (pg 3)
- Parish Announcements (pg 4)
- Ανακοινώσεις (pg 5)
- Christmas Thoughts (pg 6)
- Holiday Service Schedule (pg 7)
- St. Nicholas (pg 8)
- Calendar for December (pg 10)



**2011 STEWARDSHIP:
A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

As of November 23, 2011
613 stewards have committed
\$315,615.00

Have you become a 2011 Steward yet?

THE BULLETIN BOARD

Parish Announcements



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

HOLY COMMUNION---*During the Christmas Season, all Orthodox Christians usually plan to receive Holy Communion. In order to receive Holy Communion properly, please plan to prepare yourself through prayer, Holy Confession, fasting and almsgiving. Let us think of our heart as the manger in which Christ will be born, and let us prepare our manger to receive Him!*

2012 STEWARDSHIP



I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES!

When you receive our 2012 Stewardship mailing, we urge you to read the information carefully, and to make a bold and faith-filled commitment to your church for 2012!

At the present time, about 46% of our parish income is derived from stewardship. This means that we depend on other sources to sustain **54%** of **OUR** church's needs. Our church does not belong to somebody else! Can you help us get closer to fully sustaining our own church's needs (100%) through Stewardship?

STEWARDSHIP 2011—If you have not yet become a steward for 2011, it's not too late! Help us meet our 2011 goal—your help matters!

SHUT-INS—Please inform the church office about elderly or ill who would like to receive Holy Communion but are unable to come to church, so that our priests can bring the Sacrament to them.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS will take place after church services on Sunday, December 4. Plan to vote!

BLESSING OF HOMES—It is an annual custom in the Epiphany Season (Epiphany is Friday, January 6) to bless our homes with the Agiasmos of Epiphany. If you would like to have your home blessed by the priest, please call the church office (847-647-8880).

ANNUAL VASILOPITA LUNCHEON—our St. Haralambos Vasilopita Luncheon will take place on Sunday, January 8th in our Community Center after Church services. Plan on coming, and bring your entire family. The donation is only \$10.

METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO VASILOPITA—Plan to attend the annual Metropolis of Chicago Vasilopita. All are invited to join Metropolitan Iakovos and the clergy and laypeople of our Metropolis at this annual event which benefits St. Basil Academy. More information will be announced.

GODPARENTS SUNDAY—Our Godparents Sunday will be observed on January 22, 2012! Godparent Sunday gives us the opportunity to renew the relationship between Godparents and their Godchildren by receiving Holy Communion together and attending our Godparents Luncheon. This is a popular event every year, and reservations are required! Please call the church office to make your reservations, and plan to participate in our Godparents Sunday!

SANCTITY OF LIFE—Our Fourth Annual Pan-Orthodox Sanctity of Life Prayer Service will take place on Sunday evening, January 22, 2012 at Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church at 2501 S. Wolf Road in Westchester, IL. As Orthodox Christians, we believe and defend that all human life is sacred. Let us attend the service and pray together for the sanctity of Life!

ANNUAL ST HARALAMBOS DINNER DANCE—**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!** Our annual St. Haralambos Dinner Dance and Silent Auction will take place on Sunday evening, February 12 at the Chateau Ritz. It will be a wonderful evening with music and dancing, and a Silent Auction! There will also be a program ad book, and contracts are now available from our church office. As always, we count on your support! If you can support our Ad Book, or know of persons or businesses that could contribute an ad, please help. Please Keep the date open!

PRAY
FOR
PEACE

RECYCLE! You May Have Noticed...

A paper recycling dumpster has been placed in the church's parking lot. Every pound of paper received from our church and its parishioners earns money for our organization. The PaperRetriever Recycling program accepts all forms of paper, including newspapers, magazines, envelopes, folders, office and school supplies, folders, fax and



copy paper, shopping catalogs, phone books, colored paper and mail (no cardboard). Our unwanted paper then gets turned into newspaper print. By participating in this program, you will help the church earn extra cash, and save the Earth as well.

OUR ANNUAL ST HARALAMBOS DINNER DANCE AND SILENT AUCTION WILL TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 12 AT THE CHATEAU RITZ.

Reserve the date!

MANY THANKS.....To all our stewards and friends who participated in this year's DCFS Gift Drive! Through your generosity, gifts were provided by St. Haralambos Church members for 200 foster children in Cook County!

ΕΝΟΡΙΑΚΕΣ ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΕΙΣ

ΘΕΙΑ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ-Κατά την εορταστική εποχή των Χριστουγέννων, όλοι οι Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί προγραμματίζουν να λάβουν Θείαν Κοινωνία. Δια να δεχθούμε την Θ. Κοινωνία, πρέπει να προετοιμασθούμε ανάλογα, με προσευχή, Εξομολόγηση, νηστεία και ελεημοσύνη. Ας θεωρήσουμε την ψυχή μας ως την φάτνη όπου γεννήθηκε ο Χριστός, και ας προετοιμάσουμε την ψυχή μας ως φάτνη δια να δεχθούμε τον νεογέννητο Χριστό!

ΕΣΩΚΛΕΙΣΤΑ ΑΤΟΜΑ-Παρακαλούμε όπως πληροφορείτε το γραφείο της εκκλησίας δια τους ηλικιωμένους ή αρρώστους που θέλουν να λάβουν την Θείαν Κοινωνία και δεν δύνανται να έλθουν στην εκκλησία, ούτως ώστε οι ιερείς να προγραμματίσουν να τους προσφέρουν την Θείαν Κοινωνία όπου διαμένουν.

2011 STEWARDSHIP-ΥΠΕΝΘΥΜΙΣΗ-Βασίζομεθα στην υποστήριξή σας. Έχετε γίνει steward δια το έτος 2011;

ΕΚΛΟΓΕΣ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟΥ—Την Κυριακή 4 Δεκεμβρίου, μετά την Θεία Λειτουργία, θα γίνουν οι εκλογές του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου. Ελάτε αυτή την ημέρα να ψηφίσετε!

ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ ΣΠΙΤΙΩΝ-Το έθιμο καλεί να αγιάζουμε τα σπίτια μας κατά την εποχή των Θεοφανείων (Ημέρα των Θεοφανείων είναι Παρασκευή, 6 Ιανουαρίου). Εάν θέλετε ο ιερέας να έλθει σπίτι σας για αγιασμό παρακαλούμε όπως τηλεφωνείτε στο γραφείο της εκκλησίας (847/647-8880).

ΕΟΡΤΑΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΙΤΑΣ — Η εκκλησία μας θα εορτάσει την Βασιλόπιτα εις τις 8 Ιανουαρίου με γεύμα το οποίο θα προετοιμασθεί από την Φιλόπτωχο μετά την Θεία Λειτουργία στην Κοινοτική μας Αίθουσα. Σας περιμένουμε με την οικογένειά σας. Η δωρεά είναι μόνον \$10.

ΕΤΗΣΙΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΙΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΗΣ - Προσκαλούνται όλοι στην ετήσια Βασιλόπιτα της Μητρόπολης Σικάγου. Τα έσοδα θα διατεθούν δια την Ακαδημία του Αγ. Βασιλείου.

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΝΟΝΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΔΟΧΩΝ-Η Κυριακή, 22 Ιανουαρίου είναι Κυριακή των Νονών και Αναδόχων εις τον Αγ. Χαράλαμπον. Είναι ευκαιρία δια τους Νονούς και Αναδόχους μαζί να λάβουν Θεία Κοινωνία εκείνη τη Κυριακή, και να παρακαθήσουν στο γεύμα που θα δοθεί μετά την Θ. Λειτουργία εις την Κοινοτική Αίθουσα του Αγ. Χαράλαμπους. Τηλεφωνήσατε στο γραφείο της εκκλησίας (847/647-8880) δια να κρατήσετε θέσεις και να παρευρεθείτε στην Κυριακή των Αναδόχων!

ΕΤΗΣΙΑ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟ ΑΓ. ΧΑΡΑΛΑΜΠΟΥΣ-Παρακαλούμε σημειώστε την Κυριακή το ΒΡΑΔΥ, 12 Φεβρουαρίου 2012, και σχεδιάστε να συνεορτάσουμε εις το Chateau Ritz! Θα γίνει Συμπόσιο και "SILENT AUCTION," επίσης θα τυπωθεί Program Book. Από τώρα διατίθενται συμβόλαια διαφημίσεων δια το Program Book εις το γραφείο της εκκλησίας. Η συμπαράστασή σας έχτισε την κοινότητά μας και την εκκλησία μας. Σας παρακαλούμε να υποστηρίξετε και το εφετεινό Program Book!



ΠΕΡΙ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΕΥΧΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΩΝ

ΕΥΧΕΣ ΝΕΟΓΕΝΝΗΤΩΝ ΤΕΚΝΩΝ--Κάθε μάνα και το παιδί της, σαράντα ημέρες μετά την γέννησή του προσέρχονται στην εκκλησία για να λάβουν την Ευλογία των 40 Ημερών, κατά μίμηση του Ιησού Χριστού ο οποίος παρουσιάστηκε στον Ιερόν Ναόν σαράντα ημέρες μετά την γέννησή του. Παρακαλούμε τηλεφωνείτε στο γραφείο της εκκλησίας για να κανονίσετε την ευλογία αυτή.

ΒΑΠΤΙΣΕΙΣ—Παρακαλούμε όπως τηλεφωνείτε στο γραφείο της εκκλησίας δια να προγραμματίσετε Βαπτίσεις. Σχεδιάστε πολύ ενωρίτερα!-Υπάρχουν μερικές μέρες που δεν γίνονται βαπτίσεις. Σας υπενθυμίζουμε ότι, κανονικά, πρέπει να δοθεί ένα όνομα στο παιδί, και πρέπει να είναι ένας ανάδοχος.

ΓΑΜΟΙ-Παρακαλούμε όπως κανονίζετε συνάντηση με τον π. Κωνσταντίνο τουλάχιστον οκτώ μήνες πριν την προτεινόμενη ημερομηνία του γάμου δια τις απαιτούμενες προετοιμασίες.

ΕΞΟΜΟΛΟΓΗΣΗ—Οι Εξομολογήσεις κανονίζονται κατόπιν ραντεβού. Δια να προγραμματίσετε εξομολογήσεις, παρακαλούμε τηλεφωνείτε στο γραφείο της εκκλησίας.

ΜΕΡΙΜΝΑ ΑΡΡΩΣΤΩΝ—Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί που θα ήθελαν να λάβουν τα Άγια Μυστήρια και δεν μπορούν να έλθουν στην εκκλησία (βρίσκονται εις νοσοκομεία ή ανήμποροι εις τα σπίτια τους) παρακαλούνται να επικοινωνούν με το γραφείο της εκκλησίας δια να μπορέσουν να τα λάβουν.

Παρακαλούμε να επικοινωνείτε με το γραφείο της εκκλησίας εάν κάποιος συγγενής σας είναι στο νοσοκομείο! Τα νοσοκομεία πλέον δεν μας πληροφορούν όταν έχουν αρρώστους από την ενορία μας.

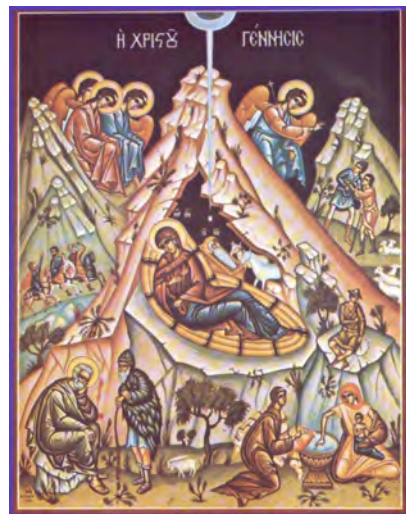
ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΑ—Επιμνημόσυνες δεήσεις γίνονται για την αιώνιον ανάπαυση των τεθνεώτων. Συνήθως, αυτές οι δεήσεις γίνονται κατά τις 40 ημέρες, τους 6 μήνες, τον 1^{ον} χρόνο και τον 3^{ον} χρόνο. Όταν έχουν περάσει τρία χρόνια, είναι πιο αρμόζον να ενθυμούμεθα τους αποθανόντας κατά τα Ψυχοσάββατα.

ON THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

by Metropolitan PHILIP,
of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of N. America

What is a merciful heart? It is a heart that burns with love for the whole creation—for men, for birds, for beasts, for demons and for every creature. —St. Isaac the Syrian

Christmas music is filling the air. In every home there is a Christmas tree; some are real and some are plastic. Lights of every color are glittering in windows, shops, bars and even the discos. Some people are selling, some are buying, some are eating, some are drinking and some are starving to death.



I put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on my door because Christmas Eve is a very special and private time to me. I want to be alone in order to embrace all men and love all things. In the depths of my aloneness, the past, the present and the future become one single moment. In the depths of my aloneness I experience that boundless love which encompasses the whole creation. I am alone on Christmas Eve but not lonely, because in Christ Jesus there is no loneliness and there is no separation. The walls are destroyed and the barriers are no more. The Child of the manger has reconciled everything to Himself; henceforth, there is no race, no color, no conflict and no hatred; in Him there is "a new heaven and a new earth."

Christmas Eve, to me, is a time for reflection. The year is slowly sinking into the ocean of eternity, and in my reflection there are painful questions:

Did I love Him enough? Did I serve Him enough? Did I suffer enough? Did I forgive enough? How many tears did I dry? How many wounds did I bind? Was I faithful to Him who loved me beyond measure? How loving and compassionate is God, that despite my sinfulness and unworthiness, He "became flesh and dwelt amongst us." What an unfathomable condescension that He assumed our nature in order to make us partakers of His nature. Despite His Incarnation, He will always remain incognito in this world if we don't care for each other. But do we really care? Have we seen the starving children on our television screens? Have we ever seen so much despair, so much misery and so much helplessness? These are our brothers and sisters, His brothers and sisters. How sad it is that we do not see the tragedy unless it is projected for us on the screen!

Tonight the Body and Blood of this tender Child will touch millions of lips throughout this troubled world. This divine touch will make us Christlike if we care and respond to His love. To be Christlike, we must be born with Him in the manger, crucified with Him on the Cross and resurrected with Him from the dead. The manger, the Cross, and the empty tomb—these are one single event which sums up the entire history of salvation.

It is Christmas Eve, and another year is about to dawn on us. Let Your light shine upon us so that we may see a new vision, sing a new song and dream a new dream. And if we live to celebrate another Christmas, give us courage to love You more, serve You more and worship You more "in spirit and in truth."

From *And He Leads Them: The Mind and Heart of Philip Saliba*, Joseph J. Allen, ed. (Ben Lomond California: Conciliar Press, 2004), pp. 385f.

Schedule Of Holiday Services- Christmas and Epiphany



ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΕΡΩΝ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ / ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΩΝ

Saturday morning, December 24

- Eve of Christmas
- 6:00 am – Orthros
- 7:00 am-- Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 25 –

THE BIRTH IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

- 8:30 am – Orthros
- 9:45 am – Divine Liturgy—Family Worship

*Note: There is no fasting from Dec 25 through Jan. 4

Tuesday, December 27 –St. Stephen the First Martyr

- 8:30 am – Orthros and Divine Liturgy

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Sunday, January 1, 2012 –

- Feastday of St. Basil the Great
- 8:30 am – Orthros
- 9:45 am— Divine Liturgy (Family Worship)

Thursday, January 5 – Eve of Epiphany

- (Day of Fasting)
- 8:30 am – Ninth Hour
- 9:30 am—Vespers Divine Liturgy,
The Great Blessing of the Waters

Friday, January 6

- THE GREAT FEAST OF THEOPHANY**
- 8:30 am – Orthros and Divine Liturgy,
followed by The Great Blessing of the Waters

**THIS YEAR'S VASILOPITA LUNCHEON
WILL TAKE PLACE
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 8,
FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITURGY.**

Σάββατο πρωϊ, 24 Δεκεμβρίου

- Παραμονή της του Χριστού Γενήσεως
- 6:00 πμ – Ορθρος
- 7:00 πμ—Θεία Λειτουργία

Κυριακή, 25 Δεκεμβρίου

Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

- 8:30 πμ – Ορθρος
- 9:45 μμ – Θεία Λειτουργία

ΣΗΜ: Από την 25^{ην} Δεκ. μέχρι την 4^{ην} Ιαν. δεν νηστεύουμε.

Τρίτη, 27 Δεκεμβρίου—Αγ. Στέφανος

- 8:30 πμ –Ορθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία

ΕΥΤΥΧΕΣ ΤΟ ΝΕΟ ΕΤΟΣ!

Κυριακή, 1 Ιανουαρίου 2012 – Αγ. Βασιλείου του Μεγάλου, Αρχιεπισκόπου Καισαρείας

- 8:30 πμ – Ορθρος
- 9:45 πμ - Θεία Λειτουργία

Πέμπτη, 5 Ιανουαρίου – Παραμονή Θεοφανείων

- (Ημέρα νηστείας)
- 8:30 πμ—9η Ώρα
- 9:30 πμ – Θεία Λειτουργία,
Τελετή του Μεγ. Αγιασμού

Παρασκευή, 6 Ιανουαρίου

-ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ

- 8:30 πμ –Ορθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία,
Τελετή του Μεγ. Αγιασμού

**ΕΦΕΤΟΣ, ΘΑ ΕΟΡΤΑΣΟΥΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΙΤΑ
ΣΤΗΝ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΙΚΗ ΜΑΣ ΑΙΘΟΥΣΑ ΤΗΝ
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ, 8 ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ,
ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΘΕΙΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ .**

The Holy Hierarch Saint Nicholas

By Ginny Neuwsma, *Antiochian.org* staff member

St. Nicholas of Myra, along with St. Patrick of Ireland, has the rare distinction of being one of the only saints in our Orthodox Church to be recognized and honored in the West. Although he was once portrayed in popular culture as the venerable staff bearing Father Christmas, whose kindly visage bore a resemblance to the bishop of old, today his true image has all but been obliterated, thanks to Madison Avenue. Courtesy of the marketing folks at Coke who first dreamed up the current version, he is a vacuous, cherry-cheeked flying Santa who can be all over the world at once on Christmas Eve and whose sole purpose in life is to satisfy children's materialistic cravings.

But to refresh our memories, who was the real St. Nicholas, and why has his story and life held such staying power? Nicholas of Myra was born at the end of the third century in Patara, on the south coast of Asia Minor, to godly parents who dedicated him to Christ from birth. From childhood, he evidenced a deep love for the Church and learning the services, daily reading the Holy Scriptures and praying. His uncle, the Bishop of Patara, recognized an unusual quality in his life and while he was still quite young, ordained him first as a reader, and then, a priest.

From the outset of his priesthood, he became known as a model of sacrificial giving and love. His parents were wealthy and when they had both reposed, he gave his inheritance money away one coin at a time, when there was need. While he was well known for his kindness and devotion to the liturgical life of the Church, his monetary gifts were given secretly and people didn't know until later just how generous he truly was. In the famous example that birthed the delightful tradition of Orthodox children setting out their shoes to be filled with treats on the eve of his feast day, Father Nicholas heard of a family in great distress. A formerly wealthy businessman of Patara had fallen on hard times, and was planning on selling his three daughters into prostitution. In the dark of night, the concerned priest tossed a bag of gold into the window of the man's home; subsequently, he gave him yet more coins, enough that the man could arrange honorable marriages and professions for his family.

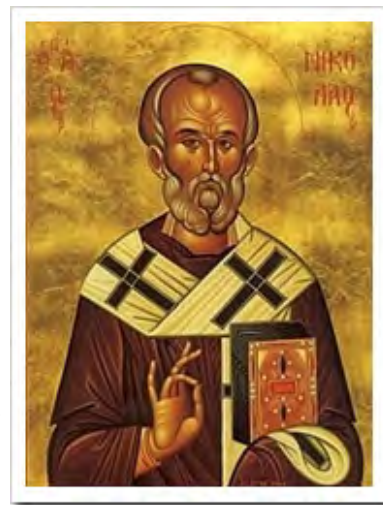
Father Nicholas decided after several years in the priesthood to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a trip that in those days required great effort and the willingness to be in dangerous situations. Along the way, he predicted a storm would assail his ship; this came to pass, and through his holy prayers, disaster was averted, the ship was saved, and a man's life spared after he had fallen overboard. Once he arrived in Jerusalem and the surrounding vicinity, as he was venerating Golgotha and other holy places his heart yearned for the solitary life of prayer and monasticism. With this intention he returned home; but God had other plans for him, and called him out, saying, "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there."

The fruit-bearing which the Lord spoke of came to pass with his election as the Bishop of Myra, which in turn happened through another unusual set of circumstances. Father Nicholas' Archbishop, John, had died, and one of the bishops of the Council said that the new archbishop would be revealed to them by God rather than be chosen from among them by men. One of the elder bishops had a vision, wherein he was told that the new hierarch would be the one whom he would meet when he went to the church at night. Upon arriving there, the elderly bishop discovered Nicholas, who was always the first to be at church.

"What is your name, child?" he asked Nicholas..

"My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant."

After his elevation to the bishopric, St. Nicholas increased in piety and service to his flock. Not only did he continue to be known for his simplicity and almsgiving, he also gained a reputation as a defender for the faith. One story tells of his slapping Arius himself at the First Ecumenical Council. He also destroyed temples and assailed heresies and paganism. During a time of great persecution under Diocletian and Maximian, he was arrested and tortured before being miraculously released.



Even while still alive, miracles followed in St. Nicholas' wake. His prayers once saved Myra from a devastating famine. He also became known for helping sailors in distress, as in the one instance where he appeared at the helm of a ship during a deadly storm and brought it safely to port. Another time, a passenger fell overboard, cried, "Saint Nicholas, help me!" and at once found himself at home surrounded by his amazed family. People under his care knew that where he was, peace and faith followed, as it was said that his very countenance radiated the love and presence of God.

Why has St. Nicholas continued to be so loved and venerated?

***He's a shared saint.**

From the eastern end of Russia to the western shores of Ireland, Catholic and Orthodox Christians alike share a love and devotion to his memory. When Myra fell to the Saracens, his relics were moved to the south of Italy in Bari, where they continue to work miracles today. In some countries he is the patron saint for crop growers, in other places he's special to sailors; in yet others, he is the advocate of children.

***He modeled servant leadership and resisted the temptations of wealth and power.**

St. Nicholas considered neither his parents' inheritance money, nor the positions granted him within the Church, reason to lord anything over anyone, but rather always chose the path of selfless service. In this, he worthily resembled Christ, who, while being God, "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2: 7, 8) This kind of leadership draws people in and invites obedience through love, rather than by issuing edicts and demands.

***He was tender but he knew how to be tough when needed.**

The same saint who couldn't bear to see three daughters sold into shame, stormed pagan houses of worship and fearlessly stood up to the popular heretic, Arius. That model of fierce defense coupled with kindness, is always desperately needed in the Church, no more so than today.

Apolytikion of St. Nicholas

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence;
your humility exalted you;
your poverty enriched you.
Hierarch Father Nicholas,
entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

Aristotle Preschool and Kindergarten hosted its Second Annual Reenactment of the Very First Thanksgiving!!

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Call (847) 647-8880 to place your
name on the school's waiting list.

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 9:00 am— Pre-School Conferences 7:30-Bible Study 7:30—SYNERGY	2 4:30 pm— Parent-Teacher Conferences (no classes)	3 9:00 am—Annual Christmas Family Retreat 9:00 am-Saturday Greek School
4 ST BARBARA 8:15 am—Orthros 9:30 am—Sunday School 9:45 am—Divine Liturgy ELECTIONS	5	6 St. Nicholas 8:30-Orthros and Liturgy 11:30 am—Little Angels Playgroup 4:30 pm—Greek School	7	8 6:00pm— Annual Philoptochos Christmas Party 7:30-Bible Study	9 4:30 pm—Greek School	10 9:00 am-Saturday Greek School
11 8:15 am—Orthros 9:30 am—Sunday School 9:45 am—Divine Liturgy GENERAL ASSEMBLY	12 St. Spyridon 8:30-Orthros and Liturgy 5:30 pm—Family Night 7:00—Scouts mtg 6:00 pm—GOYA	13 11:30 am—Little Angels Playgroup 4:30 pm—Greek School 4:30 pm—PTA 7:00 pm-Stewards in Action	14 7:30 pm— Philoptochos mtg	15 St Eleftherios 8:30-Orthros and Liturgy 7:30-Bible Study	16 4:30 pm—Greek School	17 9:00 am-Saturday Greek School
18 8:15 am—Orthros 9:30 am—Sunday School 9:45 am—Divine Liturgy CHRISTMAS PAGEANT	19	20 11:30 am—Little Angels Playgroup 4:30 pm—Greek School	21 7:30 pm—Parish Council Mtg	22 7:30-Bible Study	23 10:00 a-Preschool Christmas Program 4:30 pm—Greek School 6:00 pm-Xmas Program 6:00 pm—GOYA Xmas Caroling	24 CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING 6:00 am-Orthros and Liturgy
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 8:30— Orthros and Liturgy	26	27 St Stephen the First Martyr 8:30-Orthros and Liturgy 6:00pm—Scouts outing	28	29	30	31

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