

Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church



American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

903 Ann Street

Homestead, PA 15120

Rectory Office Phone: (412) 461-3264

Church Office & Auditorium: (412) 461-9437

Web Site: www.stnichomestead.org

E-mail Address: STNICKHOMESTEAD@GMAIL.COM

E-mail Address: frmzak@gmail.com

Pastor – Very Rev. R. Michael Zak, Cell phone:(412)-804-8865

Deacons: Fr. Deacons Artemius Stienstra & Dr. Marc Wisnosky

Sub- Deacon: Andrew Halapin, Jr.

Cantor/Choir Director: Danielle Bartko

Assistant Cantors: Donald Bodnar, Jr. & Michele Tomko

Parish Council President: Tom Pingor

Vol. 8; No. 12

Sunday, March 22, 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST: SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6;

Resurrection Tone: 7

Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

Tropar & Kondak: Blue Book: 99-101, 182-183 / Red Book: 114-117, 204-205

Sunday, March 29, 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST: SUNDAY OF SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS (OF THE LADDER)

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20;

Resurrection Tone: 8

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Tropar & Kondak: Blue Book: 102-104, 183-184 / Red Book: 117-119, 206-207

Mark 8:34-9:1 –

Matt. 16:24-26 –

Matt. 16:24 – The cross, a dreaded instrument of Roman punishment, is also a symbol of suffering by Christians in imitation of Christ. We practice self-denial for the sake of the love of God and the gospel. Accepting this suffering is not a punishment, nor is it an end in itself, but a means to overcome the fallen world for the sake of the Kingdom and to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal. 5:24).

Matt. 16:25 – The central paradox of Christian living is that in grasping for temporal things, we lose the eternal; but in sacrificing everything in this world, we gain eternal riches that are unimaginable (1 Co. 2:9).

Matt. 16:26 – **What will a man give in exchange for his soul?** This question emphasizes the utter foolishness of accumulating worldly wealth or power, for none of this can redeem man's fallen soul, nor benefit a person in the life to come.

Mark 9:1 – This is a reference to those who would witness the Transfiguration (vv. 2-13), as well as to those in every generation who will experience the presence of God's kingdom.

RECTORY OFFICE HOURS are 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Monday thru Friday.

EMERGENCY SICK CALLS can be made anytime. Please notify your Pastor when someone is taken to the hospital; Sacred Scriptures remind us to call the presbyter to anoint the sick.

MARRIAGES are celebrated on Saturdays and Sundays. Consult the Pastor at least 6 months in advance and before wedding reception plans have been made. Marriages cannot be celebrated during Lent or Advent, or on Fridays.

BAPTISMS are scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 A.M. Two God-parents are required; at least one of whom must be an Orthodox Christian by Faith, and the other a practicing Christian. An infant's first or middle name must be a saint's name.

CHURCH FUNERALS are provided for parishioners who are current in their spiritual and financial obligations to the Parish. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

FOLLOW OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE! Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org> Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews> You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

VENERATION OF THE CROSS

Rev. Fr. Dimitrios J. Antokas, Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, Bethesda, MD

One of the most difficult things to face is rejection. This third Sunday of the Great Fast, we venerate the cosmic sign of rejection – the Cross of the Lord Jesus, the throne of the Crucified God. It is a reminder that when Christ calls us, He bids us come and die!

Jesus knew rejection throughout His life – no room at the inn, badgering from Pharisees, betrayal by a friend, and the aloneness of crucifixion. The Cross is not only about rejection; it is a sign of God’s ultimate vulnerability. Christ aligned Himself with the marginalized, the sinners, and the destitute. The Lord’s preaching cost Him. What does it cost us?

In reaching out to the broken and wounded, International Orthodox Christian Charities makes the point that doing the Christian Gospel is not about being comfortable, it is about being faithful; it is not standing with those in worldly power, it is about giving real power to those who need it to survive.

Let us examine our lives closely. Are we in solidarity with Christ’s broken brothers and sisters? Do we see the Cross as the symbol of God standing with us in our suffering? Remember that God is not more powerful than He is in this incredible moment of humiliation. Can the same be said of us?

OUR DAYS ARE FULL OF DISTRACTIONS...

This world is rife with temptations to steer us away from what is truly needful. Our good intentions are easily pushed aside by the ‘urgencies’ of our professional, financial, and social pursuits. We want to be admired and respected for the image we present to the world. What about the image only He can see?

We are all invited to live these upcoming days approaching Pascha with a more focused effort to know Him more intimately. To reflect Him in our lives. Fasting, charity, and almsgiving, service to others all offer opportunities to live our lives closer to His example.

But what does He tell us? “... and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Mathew 6:18). Here is the challenge. Doing our spiritual work in secret.

For every day leading to Pascha, do one good thing that will pass without notice. Do it without expectation of repayment. Just one thing. Every day. It can be as simple as a telephone call to someone you haven’t seen for a while, or a card to someone who is ill or struggling, or helping a stranger carry their groceries, or smiling and encouraging the person who is facing you. For that moment, be there with them. Particularly if it is difficult. Especially if it is difficult. There are people who are suffering beyond our imaginings. People who struggle just to face the world. People who are alone and bereft of the smallest kindness. Who among us truly knows the hearts of men? No one on this side of heaven. What you do in secret will stretch your soul, exercise your faith, and expand your heart.

Forgive, forgive quickly, and with your whole heart. Rid yourself of every grievance you have suffered. Forgive and do not judge. They are loved by the

Most High as much as you are loved. Are any of us blameless? Are any without fault? Does that person even exist?

Free yourself from the ceaseless cares of this world. Give yourself the chance to run into His open arms. Do these things in secret, “and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matt. 6:18).

Praying this Lenten season bring you more of Him, and less of the world. May God bless you for all you do!

ALL LITURGICAL SERVICES WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE CLERGY & CANTORS ONLY AT ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH THROUGH MARCH 31ST AND PERHAPS LONGER, BUT OUR SACRED TEMPLE WILL BE OPEN ON SUNDAYS AND OTHER DAYS OF THE WEEK FOR LIMITED PERIODS OF TIME!

Faithful members can come to Saint Nicholas for private prayer, lighting a candle, receiving the church bulletin, offering their Sunday envelopes and monetary gifts to the parish and securing additional spiritual literature made available to all parishioners. For our beloved senior citizens 65 years of age and older, those of us who are currently experiencing any type of sickness or illness or complications of a present ailment, please, stay at home and safe within your confines. For those of you who do come please remember to apply safe social distancing.

We will be reaching out to our Parish family in the following weeks by email, facebook and our church website. Please stay in touch with each other.

WE ARE APPRECIATIVE OF THE RESPONSE OF THE MEN’S CLUB TO ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH IN THE MIDST OF THE VIRUS PANDEMIC AFFECTING ALL HUMANITY ON THIS EARTH!

We express our deep gratitude and extreme thankfulness to the Saint Nicholas Men’s Club for making a special donation of \$1,000.00 to the church in the name of a Coronavirus Relief Donation, helping to supplement the continued envelope donations of beloved parishioners. This monetary gift is especially needful at this time when all liturgical services have been cancelled for a period of time and social distancing is being implemented and practiced by all. The Men’s Club is also making a donation to St. Michael’s Church in McKeesport. A general Pascha contribution is being submitted by this distinguished group of men, as well. May all our beloved parishioners and various organizations view this generosity of the “People of God” and do likewise into their individual stewardship and communal-group financial obligations to our “House of Worship.”

MEMBERS OF ST. NICHOLAS: JOIN OUR CHURCH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DEPOSITING YOUR TREASURES IN THE COIN BOXES TO BENEFIT THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER!

The self-denial banks are available for adult parishioners in the vestibule of the church and downstairs in the auditorium. The icon on the front of the O.C.M.C. Coin Box reminds us of Christ’s command to make disciples of all nations. The sacrificial money that you graciously collect will be used to help Orthodox Christians who serve as missionaries, volunteer for Mission Teams and support the mission of the Church to take the Gospel to people around the world. Please return the self-denial banks to the church office in the parish hall on Palm Sunday, April 12, 2020!

AS YOU HAVE DONATED IN THE PAST, PLEASE CONTRIBUTE IN THE PRESENT FOR THE REPLATING IN GOLD AND SILVER OF THE LITURGICAL VESSELS OF OUR CHURCH!

Three chalices and three Communion spoons used at every Sunday Divine Liturgy for the partaking of the Holy Eucharist were recently re-plated in gold and silver at the Frank Mance Plating Service on Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh, PA. When the liturgical vessels of the church needed a refinishing in the past, generous parishioners offered monetary gifts for this service. We humbly implore our faithful members to, once again, contribute their finances to maintain these sacred articles. Since the final cost for the plating service amounted to nearly \$1500.00, any sum of money is certainly appreciated by the “People of God.” Pass on your donation to any of the financial leaders in the parish office downstairs.

EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED! We are looking to become more connected as a parish by sending out important announcements, updates, death and sickness notices, and other pertinent information via email. Our high school Sunday School class has volunteered to collect these email addresses. If you have not already provided your email address, we invite you to do so through this Google Form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bQD9Lct1IWB7IUkoeqdcDASBa2KmYJaYf3qlcLY39MI/edit?ts=5e74e0c2>

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