

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 3 No. 8.1

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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August 3, 2014

8TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Aug. 3 8th Sunday of Pentecost. Simeon & John, Fools for Christ. Prophet Ezekiel

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 99–101

Sat., Aug. 9 Great-martyr Panteleimon

Parish Family Day at Knoebel's Park

Sun., Aug. 10 9th Sunday of Pentecost. Apostles & Deacons Prochorus et al.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 102–104

FEASTS . . . & FASTS

Fasts: The next Fasting Period coming up is the Dormition Fast, which begins on Aug. 14 and ends on August 27.

Feasts: The next feasts upcoming are the two great Feasts of the Church: The Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor (Aug. 19) and the Dormition of Holy Mary Theotokos (Aug. 28).

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Living: Stephanie Bonk. Gloria Bracey. Mary Chupron. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Fr. George Dursa. Jada Eiden. Robert & Eddie Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Anna Mae Kuklis. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Mildred Orzolek. Emma Sacco. Amy Shimo. Connie Lou Slater. Faye Snell. Marion Sosnowski. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigie. Fr. Donald Valasek. Gary Wassel. Julia Worobey.

At Home: Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. George & Anna Senich. Kathryn Stocoski.

Assisted Living Homes: Michael Besket. Julie Kovacs. Julie Roberts.

PARISH STUFF

Knoebel Family Day Saturday, August 9- This year the parish Family Day will be on Saturday, August 9. The Men's Club is donating ride tickets to the children of the parish, as in past years. Please fill out the form in the vestibule and return it to Bill. For more information, please contact Bill Wassel at 570-241-3700 or bwassel@hibblerealty.com.

Chicken Barbeque & Bake Sale! The St. Nicholas Men's Club is holding a Barbequed Chicken Dinner on Saturday, August 16, from Noon to 4 PM at the Parish Hall, 505 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA.

The Dinner Menu will be ½ BBQ'd Chicken, Fresh Corn on the Cob, Potato, Tomato-and-Cucumber Salad.

The St. Nicholas Altar Society is holding a Bake Sale in conjunction with the Dinner and Fresh Baked Goods will be available for purchase in the hall.

Dinners are \$10 each. Advanced Reservations are preferred, to be returned by August 9.

For Reservations, Tickets or more information, please contact Bill Wassel at 570-241-3700 or bwassel@hibblerealty.com.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

Sunday, July 13, 2014

\$ 373.00 General Collection
\$ 82.00 Candle Offerings
\$ 35.00 Holy Days
\$ 95.00 Dues

\$ 585.00 Total Collection

Sunday, July 20, 2014

\$ 341.00 General Collection
\$ 5.00 Special
\$ 81.00 Candle Offerings
\$ 449.00 Maintenance & Repairs

\$ 876.00 Total Collection

Sunday, July 27, 2014

\$ 390.00 General Collection
\$ 95.00 Candle Offerings
\$ 13.00 Holy Days
\$ 26.00 Maintenance & Repairs

\$ 524.00 Total Collection

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Flea Market & Ziti Dinner St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 North Main Street, Pittston, Pa. will be having their 18TH ANNUAL FLEA MARKET & ZITI DINNER on August 2nd & 3rd, 2014. The Flea Market will be in the Church Hall. Saturday, Aug. 2 from 9am to 4pm and Sunday, Aug. 3rd from 9am - 3pm. We will also have a BAKE SALE, RAFFLE and ETHNIC FOOD SALE during the Flea Market. The ZITI DINNER will be Sat. Aug. 2nd from 12 to 4pm and on Sun. Aug. 3rd from 10am to 3pm. Take-outs are available only during dinner time schedule. Walk-ins are welcome! All proceeds benefit St. Michael's! Come one, come all!

Flea Market!!! Something for Everyone. At Sacred Heart Church of Peckville.

LOCATION: 1101 Willow Street, Peckville, Pa

CONTACT: 570-383-3244

DIRECTIONS: Main Avenue to Mid-Valley Hospital/Out Patient Clinic, bear right (coming from Dickson City), Turn left (coming from Eynon), turn right on Electric Street and then turn left on Willow Street. (Located 2 blocks from Mid-Valley Hospital) Plenty of FREE PARKING in Church's Parking Lot

DATES:

Friday August 8, 2014 8:00 am -2:00 pm

Saturday August 9, 2014 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Sunday August 10, 2014 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Huge flea market, many new items available, plus food, and instant bingo!

23rd Annual Ukrainian Folk Festival celebrating Ukraine's Independence Day. Sunday, August 24, starting at 12:00 noon. At the Ukrainian American Sport Center Tryzub, County Line and Lower State Rds., Horsham, PA. Enjoy an outdoor concert of Ukrainian Folk and Modern Dance, Music and Song, Featuring Dance Ensembles from Whippany, NJ & Jenkintown, PA. Also, violinist Innesa Tymychko Dekajlo from Lviv, Vox Ethnika Orchestra from New York and the Spiv Zhytthia Chamber Choir from Washington, DC. Ukrainian ethnic foods, baked goods, picnic fare and refreshments available. For info: see flyer on Bulletin Board and/or 267-664-3857, www.tryzub.org.

DORMITION OF THE RIGHTEOUS ANNA, THE MOTHER OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Commemorated on July 25/August 7

adapted from www.OCA.org

Saint Anna was the daughter of the priest Matthan and his wife Mary. She was of the tribe of Levi and the lineage of Aaron. Ss. Joachim and Anna had been married for fifty years, and were barren. They lived devoutly and quietly, using only a third of their income for themselves and giving a third to the poor and a third to the Temple. They longed for a child but remained childless into their old age. The two of them gave themselves to prayer to God that He would work in them the wonder that He had worked in Abraham and Sarah, and give them a child to comfort their old age.

By the blessing of God, St. Anna finally conceived, and in the ninth month gave birth to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ss. Joachim and Anna took Mary, at the age of three, to the temple to be dedicated to the service of the Lord, and presented her to the priest Zechariah. The parents then, after offering up her sacrifice (according to the custom of the time), left the Virgin with other maidens in the apartments of the temple to be brought up therein.

During the next seven years, Righteous Anna and

Joachim visited Mary often at the temple until they died, leaving her an orphan at age ten. St. Joachim lived for 80 years and Anna for 79, and they both entered into the kingdom of God before the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos. The Dormition feast day of St. Anna is celebrated on July 25.

The holy Ancestor-of-God Joachim had himself reposed at 80 years of age, several years after the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple (November 21). St. Anna, having been left a widow, moved from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and lived near the Temple. At Jerusalem she bought two pieces of property: the first at the gates of Gethsemane, and the second in the valley of Josaphat. At the second locale she built a tomb for the members of her family, and where also she herself was buried with Joachim. It was there in the Garden of Gethsemane that the Savior often prayed with His disciples.

The most-pure body of the Mother of God was buried in the family tomb. Christians honored the sepulchre of the Mother of God, and they built a church on this spot. Within the church was preserved the precious funeral cloth, which covered Her all-pure and fragrant body. According to Tradition, she died peacefully in Jerusalem at age 79, before the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos.

During the reign of St. Justinian the Emperor (527-565), a church was built in her honor at Deutera. Emperor Justinian II (685-695; 705-711) restored her church, since St. Anna had appeared to his pregnant wife. It was at this time that her body and maphorion (veil) were transferred to Constantinople.

ST IRENE CHRYSOVALANTOU

Commemorated on July 28/August 10

from www.OCA.org

Saint Irene was the daughter of a wealthy family from Cappadocia, and was born in the ninth century.

After the death of her husband Theophilus, the empress Theodora ruled the Byzantine Empire as regent for her young son Michael. St. Theodora (February 11) helped to defeat the iconoclast heresy, and to restore the holy icons. We commemorate this Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Great Lent.

When Michael was twelve years of age, St. Theodora sent messengers throughout the Empire to find a suitably virtuous and refined girl to be his wife. St. Irene was chosen, and she agreed to the marriage. While passing Mt. Olympus in Asia Minor, Irene asked to stop so she could receive the blessing of St. Joannicius (November 4), who lived on the mountain. The saint, who showed himself only to the most worthy pilgrims, foresaw the arrival of St. Irene, and also her future life.

The holy ascetic welcomed her and told her to proceed to Constantinople, where the women's monastery of Chrysovalantou had need of her. Amazed at his clairvoyance, Irene fell to the ground and asked St. Joannicius for his blessing. After blessing her and giving her spiritual counsel, he sent her on her way.

When the party arrived in Constantinople, Irene's relatives met her with great ceremony. Since "the steps of a man are rightly ordered by the Lord" (Ps. 36/37:23), God arranged for Michael to marry another girl a few days before, so that Irene might be free to become a bride of Christ. Far from being disappointed, Irene rejoiced at this turn of events.

Remembering the words of St. Joannicius, Irene visited the Monastery of Chrysovalantou. She was so impressed by the nuns and their way of life that she freed her slaves and distributed her wealth to the poor. She exchanged her fine clothing for the simple garb of a nun, and served the sisters with great humility and obedience. The abbess was impressed with the way that Irene performed the most menial and disagreeable tasks without complaint.

St. Irene often read the Lives of the Saints in her cell, imitating their virtues to the best of her ability. She often stood in prayer all night with her hands raised like Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 17:11-13). St. Irene spent the next few years in spiritual struggles defeating the assaults of the demons, and bringing forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

When the abbess sensed the approach of death, she told the other nuns that they should not accept anyone but Irene as the new abbess. Irene was not told of the abbess's instructions, and when she died the community sent representatives to go and seek the advice of the patriarch, St. Methodius (June 14). He asked them whom they wanted as their superior. They

replied that they believed he would be guided by the Holy Spirit. Without knowing of the late abbess's instructions to the nuns, he asked if there was a humble nun by the name of Irene in their monastery. If so, he said, they should choose her. The nuns rejoiced and gave thanks to God. St Methodius elevated Irene to the rank of abbess and advised her how to guide those in her charge.

Returning to the monastery, Irene prayed that God would help her to care for those under her, and redoubled her own spiritual efforts. She displayed great wisdom in leading the nuns, and received many revelations from God to assist her in carrying out her duties. She also asked for the gift of clairvoyance so that she would know what trials awaited her nuns. Thus, she was in a better position to give them the proper advice. She never used this knowledge to embarrass others, but only to correct their confessions in a way which let them know that she possessed certain spiritual gifts.

Although St Irene performed many miracles during her life, let us mention only one. On great Feasts it was her habit to keep vigil in the monastery courtyard under the starry skies. Once, a nun who was unable to sleep left her cell and went into the courtyard. There she saw Abbess Irene levitating a few feet above the ground, completely absorbed in prayer. The astonished nun also noticed that two cypress trees had bowed their heads to the ground, as if in homage. When she finished praying, Irene blessed the trees and they returned to their upright position.

Afraid that this might be a temptation from the demons, the nun returned the next night to see if she had been mistaken. Again she saw Irene levitating as she prayed, and the cypress trees bowing down. The nun tied handkerchiefs to the tops of the two trees before they went back to their places. When the other sisters saw the handkerchiefs atop the trees, they began to wonder who had put them there. Then the nun who had witnessed these strange events revealed to the others what she had seen. When St Irene learned that the nun had witnessed the miracle and told the others, she was very upset. She warned them not to speak of it to anyone until after her death.

St Irene observed the Feast of St Basil (January 1) with great devotion, since he also came from Cappadocia. One year, after celebrating the feast, St

Irene heard a voice during the night telling her to welcome the sailor who would come to the door the next day. She was told to rejoice and eat the fruit which the sailor would bring her. During Matins, a sailor did come to the door and remained in church until after Liturgy. He told her that he had come from Patmos, where he boarded a ship. As the ship set sail, he noticed an old man on the shore calling for them to stop. In spite of a good wind, the ship came to a sudden halt. Then the old man walked across the water and entered the ship. He gave the sailor three apples which God was sending to the patriarch "from His beloved disciple John." Then the old man gave the sailor three more apples for the abbess of Chrysovalantou. He told the sailor that if Irene ate the apples, all that her soul desired would be granted, "for this gift comes from John in Paradise."

St Irene fasted for a week, giving thanks to God for this wonderful gift. For forty days, she ate small pieces of the first apple every day. During this time she had nothing else to eat or drink. On Holy Thursday, she told the nuns to receive the Holy Mysteries, then gave each one a piece of the second apple. They noticed an unusual sweetness, and felt as if their very souls were being nourished.

An angel informed St Irene that she would be called to the Lord on the day after St Panteleimon's feast. The monastery's feast day fell on July 26, so St Irene prepared by fasting for a week beforehand. She took only a little water and small pieces of the third apple sent to her by St John. The whole monastery was filled with a heavenly fragrance, and all discord disappeared.

On July 28, St Irene called the nuns together in order to bid them farewell. She also told them to select Sister Mary as her successor, for she would keep them on the narrow way which leads to life (Matthew 7:14). After entreating God to protect her flock from the power of the devil, she smiled when she saw the angels who had been sent to receive her soul. Then she closed her eyes and surrendered her soul to God.

St Irene was more than 101 years old when she died, yet her face appeared young and beautiful. A great crowd of people came for her funeral, and many miracles took place at her tomb.

In some parishes it is customary to bless apples on the feast of St Irene Chrysovalantou.