

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 3 No. 8.3

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

505 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510

Fr. Nicholas Ferencz, Ph.D., pastor

Rectory: 570-344-5917

Cell: 724-953-6046

Hall - 570-344-1522

www.stnicholasorthodoxscranton.org

nferencz35@gmail.com

August 17, 2014

10TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Aug. 17 10th Sunday of Pentecost. 7 Martyred Children of Ephesus.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 81–83
Parish Board Meets

TUE., AUG. 19 TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ON MOUNT TABOR.

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy and Blessing of First Fruits & Grapes. – pp. 166–169

Sun., Aug. 24 11th Sunday of Pentecost. Post-Festive of the Transfiguration. Virgin Martyr Susanna. Martyr Georgia.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets.

FEASTS . . . & FASTS

Fasts: *DORMITION FAST:* In the middle of summer, the Church provides us the opportunity to re-connect with our spiritual life, as we fly through all the distractions that summertime brings. The Dormition Fast begins August 1(14) and goes to August 14(27) (the Feast of the Dormition of Holy Mary Theotokos is August 15(28)). The traditional fast requires a Strict Fast (no meat, dairy, wine or oil) for those fourteen days, with these exceptions: the fast is mitigated (lessened) on Saturdays. There is no fast on Sundays or on the Feast of the Transfiguration (Aug. 6). Diocesan rules require only the usual fast from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Feasts: TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: Tue., August 19. This is a Major Holy Day of the Church which carries the same requirements of observance as Sunday. On this day, we *ble*

vegetables, the first-fruits of the garden. All are encouraged to bring a basket of fruit and veggies to have blessed and to take home. On this day we also bless and distribute grapes, the fruit of the vine from which we make the wine that becomes the Blood of Our Lord.

DORMITION OF HOLY MARY THEOTOKOS: Thursday, August 28. This is also a Major Holy Day of the Church which carries the same requirements of observance as Sunday. On this day, we bless flowers and herbs. All are encouraged to bring a bouquet or a basket of herbs for blessing.

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. Theresa Niester. Emma Sacco. Amy Shimo. Connie Lou Slater. Faye Snell. Marion Sosnowski. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue. 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.

Eternal Light: Stephen & Susan Baronyeh - Bonk family.

Panachida: Fr. Stephen Jula.

Fr. Stephen Jula, a long time priest of our diocese reposed in the Lord August 14, 2014. Funeral services will be on Sunday evening, Aug. 17, at 7 PM at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, 22909 Center Ridge Road, Rocky River, Ohio 44116, and Monday morning., Aug. 18.

PARISH STUFF

Chicken Barbeque & Bake Sale The St. Nicholas Men's Club and the Altar Society wish to thank all who helped make the day a success! God bless you all!

Parish Board meets today after Divine Liturgy.

From Bill Wassel, president of the Men's Club: I wish to thank the parents of the children who took the time to bring their children to the Saint Nicholas Family Day at Knoebels Park Saturday last. I hope everyone had a joyous day as we were blessed with wonderful weather. God bless you all!

The Altar Society will meet on Sunday, Sept 7, after Divine Liturgy.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

Sunday, August 10, 2014

\$ 324.00	General Collection
\$ 5.00	1 st Sunday
\$ 78.00	7-day Candles
\$ 2.00	Holy Days
\$ 90.00	Dues
\$ 20.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 13.00	Tapers
\$ 7.00	Eternal Light
\$ 10.00	Parking Donation
\$ 549.00	Total Collection

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

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.

THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

from *A Byzantine Rite Liturgical Year* by Julian Katrij

The observance of this feast goes back to the fourth century. At that time, St. Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, built a church on Mt. Tabor in honor of the Lord's Transfiguration. At the end of the eleventh century, the Crusaders found several churches and monasteries on Mt. Tabor. In the thirteenth century, however, the Muslims came and destroyed them. Cyril II, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, built a new church over the ruins of the ancient church in 1860. In 1923, a magnificent basilica in honor of the Transfiguration of our Lord was built on Mt. Tabor.

This feast began to be solemnly observed in the Eastern Church under the title "The Lord's Transfiguration" from the sixth century; in Western Syria, in the eighth century, it was called "The Feast of Tabor".

Originally, the feast of the Transfiguration was observed in February. However, since this joyful feast fell during the time of the Great Fast, its celebration was not in keeping with the spirit of fasting and penance. Therefore, it was transferred to the 6th of August. Why this day? The historian Eusebius and St. John Damascene are of the opinion that the Lord's Transfiguration took place forty days before the death of Christ. Thus holy Church, in keeping with this opinion, transferred this feast from the month of February to the 6th of August, because forty days later, September 14, is the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross — the commemoration of the passion and death of Christ.

From the East, the feast of the Transfiguration reached the West somewhere around the seventh and eighth century. Here it came into practice slowly; it was observed at different times and even in the twelfth century [that is, after the Roman Church split away from the Orthodox Church] was not universally kept. The Armenians observe the Lord's Transfiguration on the 7th Sunday after the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The feast of the Transfiguration is one of the twelve principal feasts of our Church, having a one day pre-feast and a seven day post-feast. The sticheras

and canons of the feast were composed by St. John Damascene and Cosmas of Maiuma (8c).

This feast falls during that time when the fruits of the earth reach maturity. From the earliest times in the Eastern Church, on this day fruit is blessed in thanksgiving to God for the first-fruits of the earth. This custom was adopted by the Christian Church from the Old Testament which prescribed that fruit be brought to the Temple of the Lord. In the Book of Exodus we read: "You shall carry the first-fruits of the corn of your ground to the house of the Lord your God." (23,19) In the Book of Leviticus we read: "When you shall have entered the land which I shall give you, and shall reap your corn, you shall bring sheaves of ears, the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest." (23,10)

The custom of blessing the first-fruits in church was prescribed in the Canons of the Holy Apostles at the end of the third century. The Apostolic Constitutions of the fourth century have a prayer for the blessing of first-fruits. The local Synod of Carthage (318), in the forty-sixth rule gave prescriptions concerning the first-fruits that are brought to church. The Sixth Ecumenical Council of 691 spoke of the blessing of the first-fruits of grapes (the vine) and wheat. In the Typicons of the Great Church of Constantinople from the ninth-tenth century and in the Typicon of Evergetes Monastery of the tenth century no mention was made of the blessing of the vine, that is, grapes.

In Greece, in the month of August grapes and wheat, which are the more important fruits, reach their maturity. For this reason, the custom of blessing the grapes and ears of wheat in church on the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord prevailed there. In Rus-Ukraine, grapes of the vine were replaced by apples and other fruits.

SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

excerpts from *2005 Daily Lives, Miracles and Wisdom of the Saints and Fasting Calendar*

When someone whom you know judges you and tempts you is present, it is almost impossible for him not to bother you, as much as you may try to remain unaffected. After pardoning and praying for him,

however, you recover from the grief of sadness – *Joseph the Hesychast*

The perfect person does not only try to avoid evil. Nor does he do good for fear of punishment, still less in order to qualify for the hope of a promised reward. The perfect person does good through love . . . He is not interested in fame, or a good reputation, or a human or divine reward. The rule of life for a perfect person is to be the image and likeness of God. – *Clement of Alexandria*

For a true Christian, death is but a sleep until the day of resurrection, or a birth into a new life. And in solemnizing every week the resurrection of Christ, and with it our own resurrection from the dead, let us learn continually to die to sin, and to rise with our soul from dead works, to enrich ourselves with virtues, and not to sorrow inconsolably for the dead. – *John of Kronstadt*

Do not make judgments, and you will travel no quicker road to the forgiveness of your sins. – *John Climacus*

SAYINGS OF THE OPTINA ELDERS:

The Lord sees the hearts of men. But in their judgments of people can always be mistaken, and then these judgments become the fruit of simple idle talking. *St. Nikon*

Have pity, and you will not condemn. *St. Anatoly*

Direct your younger brother skillfully, first with prayer for him, and then with brief advice, putting everything in the Lord's hands, for it is by Him that the steps of man are made straight. Watch over yourself wherever you may be. *St. Moses*

Prayer can cease only because of serious sins. Or if someone does not repent and is not watchful over himself. But if someone repents, he needs this prayer. You only need to keep yourself in depth of humility and worthlessness. But in order for prayer to be firmly established, the very best means are to endure sorrows and scorn. *St. Anatoly*

The Jesus Prayer is the most essential weapon in the work of our salvation. But he who takes hold of it must expect temptations and be prepared for an inner

battle, a battle with thoughts. The demons do not live the Jesus Prayer and in every way they take vengeance on the person who strikes them with this sword. *St. Barsanuphius*

One should not pay attention to tempting thoughts, but should drive them far away from himself, and not being disturbed, continue the mental work. Though the fruit of this labor be imperceptible, though a person may not experience spiritual delights, tenderness, etc.—still prayer cannot remain inactive. It quietly completes its work. *St. Barsanuphius*

Let your first task, as soon as you awaken, be the sign of the cross, and your first words—the words of the Jesus Prayer. *St. Barsanuphius*

THE DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

August 15/27

from <http://oca.org/>. Accessed August 15, 2014

After the Ascension of the Lord, the Mother of God remained in the care of the Apostle John the Theologian, and during his journeys She lived at the home of his parents, near the Mount of Olives. She was a source of consolation and edification both for the Apostles and for all the believers. Conversing with them, She told them about miraculous events: the Annunciation, the seedless and undefiled Conception of Christ born of Her, about His early childhood, and about His earthly life. Like the Apostles, She helped plant and strengthen the Christian Church by Her presence, Her discourse and Her prayers.

The reverence of the Apostles for the Most Holy Virgin was extraordinary. After the receiving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem for about ten years attending to the salvation of the Jews, and wanting moreover to see the Mother of God and hear Her holy discourse. Many of the newly-enlightened in the Faith even came from faraway lands to Jerusalem, to see and to hear the All-Pure Mother of God.

During the persecution initiated by King Herod against the young Church of Christ (Acts 12:1-3), the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus in the year 43. The preaching of the Gospel there had fallen by lot to the

Apostle John the Theologian. The Mother of God was on Cyprus with St Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Holy Mount Athos. St Stephen of the Holy Mountain says that the Mother of God prophetically spoke of it: “Let this place be my lot, given to me by my Son and my God. I will be the Patroness of this place and intercede with God for it.”

The respect of ancient Christians for the Mother of God was so great that they preserved what they could about Her life, what they could take note of concerning Her sayings and deeds, and they even passed down to us a description of Her outward appearance.

According to Tradition, based on the words of the Hieromartyrs Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3), Ignatius the God-Bearer (December 20), St Ambrose of Milan (December 7) had occasion to write in his work “On Virgins” concerning the Mother of God: “She was a Virgin not only in body, but also in soul, humble of heart, circumspect in word, wise in mind, not overly given to speaking, a lover of reading and of work, and prudent in speech. Her rule of life was to offend no one, to intend good for everyone, to respect the aged, not envy others, avoid bragging, be healthy of mind, and to love virtue.”

When did She ever hurl the least insult in the face of Her parents? When was She at discord with Her kin? When did She ever puff up with pride before a modest person, or laugh at the weak, or shun the destitute? With Her there was nothing of glaring eyes, nothing of unseemly words, nor of improper conduct. She was modest in the movement of Her body, Her step was quiet, and Her voice straightforward; so that Her face was an expression of soul. She was the personification of purity.

“All Her days She was concerned with fasting: She slept only when necessary, and even then, when Her body was at rest, She was still alert in spirit, repeating in Her dreams what She had read, or the implementation of proposed intentions, or those planned yet anew. She was out of Her house only for church, and then only in the company of relatives. Otherwise, She seldom appeared outside Her house in the company of others, and She was Her own best overseer. Others could protect Her only in body, but She Herself guarded Her character.”

To be continued.