

# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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December 7, 2014

26TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST. 10TH SUNDAY OF LUKE. WITHIN THE FEAST OF THE  
ENTRANCE. GREAT-MARTYR CATHERINE.

## PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Dec. 7 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost. 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
of Luke. Within the Feast of the  
Entrance. Great-martyr Catherine.

8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets.

*Altar Society Meets.*

Wed., Dec. 10 Martyr James the Persian.

7:30 AM *Pirohi Prep*

Thu., Dec. 11 Martyred Monk Stephen the Younger.

8:00 AM *Pirohi Making*

Sun., Dec. 14 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost. 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
of Luke. Prophet Nahum.

9:45 – 10:15 AM Confessions

**10:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Tone 2 pp. 84–86.**

**Noon Hors d'oeuvres for St. Nicholas Banquet.**

**12:30 - ish St. Nicholas Banquet**

## FEASTS . . . & FASTS

**Confessions:** During the Christmas Fast, I will be especially available for Confessions before Divine Liturgy. Please see Parish Calendar for times.

**Filipovka (Philip's Fast, or Christmas Lent)** continues until Christmas Eve, January 6 civil (Dec. 24 Julian).

The *Traditional Fast* requires fasting from meat, eggs, dairy products, fish, oil, and wine. Fish, wine and oil are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, and oil and wine are allowed on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The fasting rules permit fish, and/or wine and oil on certain feast days that occur during the course of the fast: Apostle Andrew (Nov. 30/Dec. 13), Great-martyr Barbara (Dec. 4/17), St. Nicholas (Dec. 6/19), St. Spiridon and St. Herman (Dec. 12/25), St. Ignatius (Dec. 20/Jan. 2). The Nativity Fast is not as severe as Great Lent or the Dormition Fast.

As is always the case with Orthodox fasting rules, persons who are ill, the very young or elderly, and pregnant and nursing mothers are exempt from fasting. Each individual is expected to confer with their confessor regarding any exemptions from the fasting rules, but should never place themselves in physical danger.

There has been some ambiguity about the restriction of fish, whether it means the allowance of invertebrate fish or all fish. The rules strictly state that from the Dec. 20 to Dec. 24 (inclusively), no fish may be eaten.

The Eve of Nativity (Dec. 24) is a strict fast day, called Paramony (lit. "preparation"), on which no solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky (or at the very least, until after the

Vesperal Divine Liturgy that day).

The MINIMUM Diocesan Rule is no meat on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Christmas Eve is a DAY OF STRICT FAST in preparation for the celebration of the Birth of Our Lord – this is why it is called the “Paramony,” a word which means “Preparation. On this day solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky (or at the very least, until after the Vesperal Divine Liturgy that day). That’s why the *Vilija* or *Holy Supper* traditionally begins when the first star is seen.

No dispensation has been granted from fasting on Dec. 24, 25, 31, or Jan. 1 (civil calendar).

**Almsgiving:** Also, almsgiving (giving to the poor and needy) is the flip side of the coin of fasting. Our hands are supposed to move away from stuffing our own faces in order to give out to others who are in need.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Ongoing Food Collection Project:** Please remember those families who rely on food donations to help make ends meet. As you are aware, the funding for the Bread Basket of NEPA has been cut, and they rely on donations to help those families in need. A food donation container is available in the Church Hall. Please help fill this container with non-perishable food items: cans, dry goods, etc. Make this a part of your Christmas Lent and donate!

**Christmas Mitten Tree:** As in past years, we are asking for donations of *New* mittens, gloves, hats and scarves to adorn our “Gift Giving Tree,” set up in the hall. The donations will go to help keep the children of our area warmer this winter. All proceeds from this drive will go to *Families United*, a Foster Care program for children. *Deadline* for donations: **Dec. 21**. Help us decorate our Giving Tree properly this year!

### PEOPLE STUFF

*Please remember in your prayers:*

*Deceased:* Michael Besket.

*Living:* Matt & Lori Algar. Stephanie Bonk. Gloria Bracey. Mary Chupron. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Fr. George Dursa. Jada Eiden. Heather Harris. Robert & Eddie Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Dawn & Warren Kieffer. Anna Mae

Kuklis. Dee Lositski. Dan & Teri Ludwig. Peggy Majcher. Theresa Niester. John Polanichka. 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.

**Michael Besket** fell asleep in the Lord on November 28 and was buried this past Tuesday. We will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> day memorial on Sunday, January 11. Eternal Memory!

### PARISH STUFF

**Commemorations Binder:** The book for signing up for commemorations for the Altar Vigils, Eternal Light, Panachidas and Social Hour is now in the back of the church just as you come in. We think it might be more convenient for folks who want to make such commemorations. Let us know if you like this new arrangement.

**2015 Church Calendars** are now available in the hall. Please make sure you pick yours up!

**Auditors Sought:** The parish was unable to elect auditors at the Annual Meeting because no one would accept the nomination. If you are willing to consider taking on this task, please see Fr. Nik or Jane Togher. Ordinarily there are 2 auditors selected to check the parish’s books every year.

**NEXT PIROHI SALE FRI., DEC. 19, TOGETHER WITH THE ANNUAL COOKIE WALK.** Thanks to all who continue to work so hard.

**Extra Pirohi Making This Week:** Because orders have been coming in so fast, we asked the folks who work Pirohi if they would be willing to have an extra session, and they agreed. So, we will be making Pirohi this week on the usual days:

*Wed., Dec. 10 7:30 AM Pirohi Prep*

*Thu., Dec. 11 8:00 AM Pirohi Pinching.*

We are going to make the usual 2 ½ bags. There will be no Sale on Friday of this week.

**Last Pirohi Making Next Week,** for the sale on 12/19. Thanks to all of you who have put in your time and effort to this fund raiser. We will work on the

usual days:

*Wed., Dec. 17 7:30 AM Pirohi Prep*

*Thu., Dec. 18 8:00 AM Pirohi Pinching.*

### **YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH**

#### **Sunday, November 23**

\$ 344.67	General Collection
\$ 1551.00	Pirohi
\$ 99.00	7-day Candles
\$ 11.00	Holy Days
\$ 96.50	Heat Offering
\$ 17.00	Tapers
\$ 90.00	Church Dues
\$ 10.00	Eternal Light
\$ 5.50	Maintenance & Repairs
<b>\$ 2224.67</b>	<b>Total Collection</b>

#### **Sunday, November 30**

\$ 682.00	General Collection
\$ 33.00	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday
\$ 74.00	7-day Candles
\$ 106.00	Holy Days
\$ 180.00	Heat Offering
\$ 180.00	Church Dues
\$ 3.00	Tapers
\$ 60.00	Christmas Flowers
\$ 38.00	Maintenance & Repairs
<b>\$ 1356.00</b>	<b>Total Collection</b>

**St. Nicholas Banquet Preparations:** We need to set up the hall for the St. Nicholas Banquet. We will be getting together this Saturday, December 13, around 9 or 9:30 AM. Please come down and give us a hand!

**Church School:** Church School meets Sunday, December 21.

**Parish Board** meets Sunday, December 21.

**Men's Club** meeting to be announced.

**Altar Society** meets today.

**Christmas Church Cleaning:** Thanks and God Bless! To those who came yesterday to help clean the church for Christmas. We got a lot done with a mighty few.

**ANNUAL ST. NICHOLAS BANQUET.** Next Sunday, Dec. 14. ***DIVINE LITURGY WILL BE AT 10:30 AM ON THAT DAY.*** The Banquet Menu will be a Turkey

Dinner with all the fixings. St. Nicholas will be making a special visit to us and the kids. Dinner tickets will be \$12/adult, \$5/child 12 years old and under, and free for children 4 and under. We need reservations ahead of time. Please see Nick Polanichka to pick up your tickets.

**Christmas Cookie Sale,** sponsored by the Altar Society, will be Friday December 19th along with the Pirohi sale. Please, anyone who can bake cookies, breads, nut/poppy rolls, etc. please contact Carol Pugh at 570-489-2321, [toots638@comcast.net](mailto:toots638@comcast.net).

### **FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF**

**Annual Community Christmas Day Breakfast, Thursday, December 25, 8 AM – 11 AM.** At the DeNaples Center, 900 Mulberry St., Scranton, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. There is no cost to guests. No reservations are needed. Parking is available in the garage at Mulberry and Monroe Ave. Sponsored by the Center for Service and Social Justice of the University of Scranton. Flyers with information are available in the hall.

### **GREATMARTYR CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA**

November 24/December 7

The Holy Great Martyr Catherine was the daughter of Constus, the governor of Alexandrian Egypt during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-313). Living in the capital, the center of Hellenistic knowledge, and possessed of a rare beauty and intellect, Catherine received an excellent education, studying the works of the greatest philosophers and teachers of antiquity. Young men from the most worthy families of the empire sought the hand of the beautiful Catherine, but she was not interested in any of them. She told her parents that she would enter into marriage only with someone who surpassed her in nobility, wealth, comeliness and wisdom.

Catherine's mother, a secret Christian, sent her to her own spiritual Father, a saintly Elder living in a cave outside the city, for advice. After listening to Catherine, the Elder said that he knew of a Youth who surpassed her in everything. "His countenance is more radiant than the shining of the sun, and all of creation is governed by His wisdom. His riches are given to all the nations of the world, yet they never diminish. His

compassion is unequalled."

This description of the Heavenly Bridegroom produced in the soul of the holy maiden an ardent desire to see Him. "If you do as I tell you," said the monk, "you will gaze upon the countenance of this illustrious man." In parting, the Elder handed Catherine an icon of the Theotokos with the divine Child Jesus on Her arm and told her to pray with faith to the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of the Heavenly Bridegroom, and She would hear Catherine and grant her heart's desire.

Catherine prayed all night and was permitted to see the Most Holy Virgin, Who said Her Divine Son, "Behold Thy handmaiden Catherine, how fair and virtuous she is." But the Child turned His face away from her saying, "No, she is ugly and unbelieving. She is a foolish pauper, and I cannot bear to look at her until she forsakes her impiety."

Catherine returned again to the Elder deeply saddened, and told him what she had seen in the dream. He lovingly received her, instructed her in the faith of Christ, admonished her to preserve her purity and integrity and to pray unceasingly. She then received the Mystery of holy Baptism from him. Again St Catherine had a vision of the Most Holy Theotokos with Her Child. Now the Lord looked tenderly at her and gave her a beautiful ring, a wondrous token of her betrothal to the Heavenly Bridegroom (This ring is still on her hand).

At that time the emperor Maximian was in Alexandria for a pagan festival. Therefore, the celebration was especially splendid and crowded. The cries of the sacrificial animals, the smoke and the smell of the sacrifices, the endless blazing of fires, and the bustling crowds at the arenas defiled the city of Alexandria. Human victims also were brought, the confessors of Christ, those who would not deny Him under torture. They were condemned to death in the fire. The saint's love for the Christian martyrs and her fervent desire to ease their sufferings compelled Catherine to speak to the pagan priest and to the emperor Maximian.

Introducing herself, the saint confessed her faith in the One True God and with wisdom exposed the errors of the pagans. The beauty of the maiden captivated the emperor. In order to convince her and to show the superiority of pagan wisdom, the emperor

ordered fifty of the most learned philosophers and rhetoricians of the Empire to dispute with her, but the saint got the better of the wise men, so that they came to believe in Christ themselves. St Catherine made the Sign of the Cross over the martyrs, and they bravely accepted death for Christ and were burned alive by order of the emperor.

Maximian, no longer hoping to convince the saint, tried to entice her with the promise of riches and fame. Receiving an angry refusal, the emperor gave orders to subject the saint to terrible tortures and then throw her in prison. The Empress Augusta, who had heard much about the saint, wanted to see her. She prevailed upon the military commander Porphyrius to accompany her to the prison with a detachment of soldiers. The empress was impressed by the strong spirit of St Catherine, whose face was radiant with divine grace. The holy martyr explained the Christian teaching to them, and they were converted to Christ.

On the following day they again brought the martyr to the judgment court where, under the threat of being broken on the wheel, they urged that she renounce the Christian Faith and offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint steadfastly confessed Christ and she herself approached the wheels; but an angel smashed the instruments of execution, which shattered into pieces with many pagans standing nearby.

Having beheld this wonder, the Empress Augusta and the imperial courtier Porphyrius with 200 soldiers confessed their faith in Christ in front of everyone, and they were beheaded. Maximian again tried to entice the holy martyr, proposing marriage to her, and again he was refused. St Catherine firmly confessed her fidelity to the heavenly Bridegroom Christ, and with a prayer to Him she herself lay her head on the block beneath the executioner's sword.

The relics of St Catherine were taken by the angels to Mount Sinai. In the sixth century,, the venerable head and left hand of the holy martyr were found through a revelation and transferred with honor to a newly-constructed church of the Sinai monastery, built by the holy Emperor Justinian (November 14).

St Catherine is called upon for relief and assistance during a difficult childbirth. Pilgrims to her monastery on Mt Sinai are given souvenir rings as a remembrance of their visit.