

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

505 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510

Fr. Nicholas Ferencz, Ph.D., Pastor

Rectory: 570-344-5917

Cell: 724-953-6046

nferencz35@gmail.com

www.stnicholasorthodoxscranton.org

Jane Togher, Board President

570-842-3311

jtogher@yahoo.com

Madelyn Hodanich, Choir Director

Hall - 570-344-1522

Christ Is Risen! Christos Voskrese! Christos Anesti! Feltamadt Krisztus Al Massih Kam!
Indeed He Is Risen! Vo Istinu Voskrese! Alithos Anesti! Valoban Feltamadott! Hakkan Kam!

SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

May 17, 2015

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., May 17 SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.

Martyr Pelagia

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 206–207. Music for “The Angel Exclaimed” on 195 & for the Greek “Christ is Risen” on 196.

Panachida: Nick & Agnes Towarnicki - Shimo family.

Last Church School Meeting

Parish Board Meets

Thu., May 21 ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 208–211.

Sun., May 24 SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 1ST

ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF NICEA.

HOLY APOSTLES TO THE SLAVS SS

CYRIL & METHODIUS.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – special sheets.

Panachida: Emma Sacco - 40 day memorial

Men’s Club Meets

Mon., May 25 Bishops Epiphanius & Germanus.

Memorial Day.

9:00 AM Graves Blessings, beginning at the

parish cemetery.

Confessions: Before Divine Liturgy

FASTING AND FEASTING

The Feast of the Ascension is this Thursday, May 21. Divine Liturgy will be at 9:00 AM.

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: Emma Sacco.

Living: Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek. Matt, Lori & Nathan Algar. Stephanie Bonk. Gloria Bracey. Tim & Christina Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Ted Goosley. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert & Eddie Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Dawn & Warren Kieffer. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Theresa Niester. Margie Pecuch. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Connie Lou Slater. Faye Snell. Marion Sosnowski. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tighe. Gary Wassel. Julia Worobey.

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

Assisted Living Homes: Julie Kovacs. Julie Roberts.
Eternal Light: Richard Czibik - Laurence Czibik &
 Denise Sovitch

PARISH STUFF

The **Men’s Club** regular monthly meeting is next Sunday, May 24.

Thanks and God bless! To all the folks who came to help with the Spring Cleaning yesterday in the church and hall. We had a really nice group and were able to get a lot done!

The **Parish Board** meets today.

Church Repairs: At the April meeting, the Parish Board voted to have some necessary minor repairs done to the church. The work will involve repairing some plaster cracks and breaks in the choir loft and the main sacristy areas. Repairs are being done now before the plaster issues expand and become a real problem. The repairs in the choir loft will be painted to blend in with the existing paint, and the entire sacristy will be painted (the existing paint is too old to be blended). The work was awarded to Robert A Ritterbeck, Inc., which is the firm that did the original painting of the interior. **Total cost is \$1550.** The Board is looking for donations to help offset the cost of this work. If you would like to donate toward this, please see Nick Polanichka.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH	
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH	
May 10, 2015	
\$ 340.00	General Collection
\$ 113.00	7 Day Light
\$ 15.00	Holy Days
\$ 20.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 16.00	Tapered Candles
\$ 10.00	Vigil Light
\$ 7.00	Eternal Light
\$ 521.00	Total Collection

Altar Society News. The Society is planning to grow their service to the parish community and intend to move forward with a couple of ideas that were voiced at the meeting. SO,

- Do you have fresh ideas ?
- Are you willing be part of making them happen?

- The Altar Society is seeking New Members to be part of an Important and Worthy organization.
- Contact Carol Pugh or Maryann Polanichka to renew your old membership, or to become a new member!

Grave Blessings on Memorial Day, May 25: I plan to begin at the parish cemetery at about 9:00 AM. Here is the tentative schedule:

9:00 AM	Parish Cemetery
10:30-ish AM	Abington Hills
Noon-ish	Fairview (in Elmhurst)
2:30-ish	Nicholson

The above times are approximate. I have a couple of cell numbers that I can call when I am on my way to each place. Just hang out and I will get there.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Ongoing Food Collection Project:

The food donation container continues to be available in the Church Hall. Please help fill this container with non-perishable food items: cans, dry goods, etc. This is an ongoing good thing.

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Camp Nazareth Family Day Raffle Tickets! We now have the raffle tickets for the annual Camp Family Day. \$20 each. Please see Nick Polanichka for yours before they run out!

Family Camp at Camp Nazareth June 5 – June 6. The Registration Form, Flyer and Schedule are all available on the Camp website: campnazareth.org. Planned are a variety of activities and events that will allow your family the opportunity to learn together, have fun together, pray together and simply be together in the peaceful environment of the Camp. Families will be staying together, and have to themselves a Camp cabin; plenty of space to rest and relax and simply be together during and after the weekend's festivities. Space is limited to the first 10 families, so please send in your registration forms soon. They are due by Friday, May 22, 2015.

St. John's Auxiliary, 310 Broadway St., Scranton is having a *Flash* potato/cheese Pirohi Sale on Monday, May 18, 2015. The price is \$8.00 per dozen. Please pre-order by calling 570-343-8820 by Friday May 8th. Pick up is at the Church Hall on Monday between the

hours of 12 to 4pm. Thanks!!!

Altar Servers' Retreat! Don't forget that this annual event is also taking place in Johnstown from Sunday, June 28 through Wed., July 1. All information and registration forms can be found on our diocesan website, www.acrod.org. Our parish will again be covering the cost of going for any of our altar servers. If you have any questions, please see Fr. Nik.

The Young Women's Encounter will take place from Sunday, June 28th to Wednesday, July 1st, 2015, running concurrently with the Diocesan Altar Boy Retreat. The YWE will be held at the Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Christian Church in Windber, Pennsylvania. Young women in our Diocese ages 12-18 are encouraged to attend. Please do not miss this opportunity for the girls of our Church and Diocese to gather with one another and grow in their faith. Space is limited, so please register as soon as possible. Registration forms will be made available in the coming weeks & space is again limited to the first 30 young women.

Orthodox Christian Studies Center Benefit Cocktail Party Tuesday, June 17, 2014 | 6 – 8:30 p.m. Thalassa Restaurant | 179 Franklin St. | Tribeca, N.Y. The Orthodox Christian Studies Center has earned the most prestigious grant available for humanities-based scholarship in the United States: a National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) Matching Challenge Grant. The NEH will award the center \$500,000 if—and only if—Fordham raises \$1.5 million. Join us to celebrate winning the NEH Grant and to help raise our portion of the matching challenge. All proceeds go to the National Endowment for the Humanities Matching Challenge Grant: Enhancing Orthodox Christian Studies. Tickets include cocktails, authentic Greek food, live music, and entertainment. For more information, contact Valerie K. Longwood at 212-636-7439 or longwood@fordham.edu. For additional information, please visit www.fordham.edu/orthodoxy.

Conference in Preparation for the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church - Co-sponsored by the Orthodox Theological Society in America (OTSA) and the Orthodox Christian Studies Center. Friday, June 26 – Saturday, June 27, 2015. Fordham School of Law | 150 W. 62nd St. (between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues) | New York, N.Y. On-campus

accommodation is available on campus on a first come, first served basis. To book, click "register online" below. To stay at the nearby Empire Hotel, call 212-265-7400 and ask for the "Fordham rate" (\$297 per night). REGISTER ONLINE. For more information, contact Jake Braithwaite at 212-636-7501 or braithwaite@fordham.edu.

St. Tikhon's Monastery 111th Memorial Day Pilgrimage May 22 – May 25. **Hi-Lite of the Pilgrimage:** the *Miraculous Myrrh-streaming Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Hawaii* will present throughout the pilgrimage, with a healing unction service on Monday. The event is open to the general public. Bring a friend!

The Schedule is posted in the hall and has been listed for the past couple of weeks in the bulletin. You can also find it on St. Tikhon's website, <http://sttikhonsmonastery.org/>

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

After the Midfeast (John 7:14), the Lord Jesus Christ came to the Temple again and taught the people who came to Him (John 8:2). After leaving the Temple, He opened the eyes of a man "who was blind from his birth (John 9:1).

The miracle described in today's Gospel (John 9:1-38) is even more remarkable than it might seem at first. St Basil and other Fathers tell us that this was not just a case of giving sight to a blind man born with eyes that did not function, but to someone who had no eyes at all! The second Exapostilarion for this Sunday says, "Along the way, our Savior found a man who lacked both sight and eyes..."

The Gospel says, "Since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind" (John 9:32). There are examples in the Old (Tobit 2:17) and New (Mark 8:22-26) Testaments of blind people receiving sight, but this is something completely unprecedented.

The Savior placed clay in the man's empty sockets and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. When he obeyed these instructions, the eyes of clay became living eyes!

In his MENAION, St Demetrius of Rostov calls the blind man St Celidonius (see his account of St Lazarus in the Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles on January 4).

LEAVETAKING OF PASCHA

Wednesday, May 20

On Wednesday of the sixth week of Pascha, we celebrate the Leavetaking of the Feast. While most Feasts have their Leavetaking on the eighth day, Pascha, the Feast of Feasts, has its Leavetaking on the thirty-ninth day. The fortieth day is the Feast of the Lord's Ascension, which marks the end of the Lord's physical presence on earth. He does not abandon us, however. He has promised to be with us always, even until the end of the age (MT 20:28). As we sing in the Kontakion for Ascension, "Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: I am with you and no one will be against you." There is a similar thought expressed in the Troparion for the Dormition: "In falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos."

The services today are celebrated just as on the day of Pascha itself. The daily readings from Holy Scripture, of course, will differ. After the Dismissal at Liturgy, the paschal hymns are no longer sung. The prayer "O Heavenly King" is not said or sung until Pentecost. The Winding Sheet (Plaschanitsa) is taken from the altar and is put in its proper place. Even though today is a Wednesday, fish, wine, and oil are permitted.

Today we also commemorate the Finding of the Icon of the Mother of God "Of the Meeting" in Kalamata in the Peloponnesus.

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Last year we printed an excellent article about the Ascension called "And Ascended into Heaven...." by V. Rev. George Florovsky, D.D. from www.oca.org. It was originally published in St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, Vol. 2 # 3, 1954. If you did not keep last year's bulletin you can find it on the website listed above.

EQUAL OF THE APOSTLES AND TEACHER OF THE SLAVS, METHODIUS

Next Sunday we celebrate the Great Apostles to the Slavs Cyril and Methodius. Here is the life of St. Methodius. Next week – St. Cyril's life.

Saint Methodius, Equal of the Apostles, and Enlightener of the Slavs, came from an illustrious and

pious family living in the Greek city of Thessalonica. St Methodius was the oldest of seven brothers, St Constantine [Cyril was his monastic name] was the youngest. At first St Methodius was in the military and was governor in one of the Slavic principalities dependent on the Byzantine Empire, probably Bulgaria, which made it possible for him to learn the Slavic language. After living there for about ten years, St Methodius later received monastic tonsure at one of the monasteries on Mount Olympus (Asia Minor).

St Constantine eventually joined his brother St Methodius on Olympus, spending his time in unceasing prayer and reading the works of the holy Fathers.

The emperor soon summoned both of the holy brothers from the monastery and sent them to preach the Gospel to the Khazars. Along the way they stayed in the city of Korsun, making preparations for their missionary activity. There the holy brothers miraculously discovered the relics of the hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome (November 25).

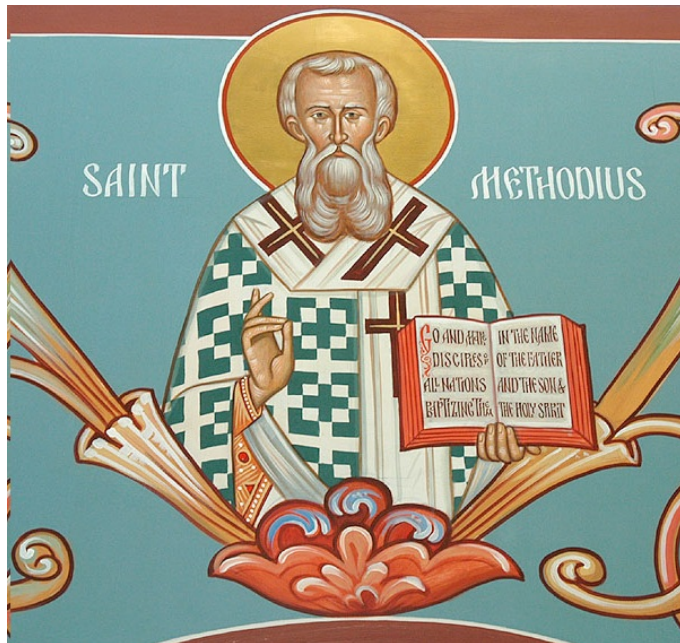
There in Korsun St Constantine found a Gospel and Psalter written in Russian letters [i.e. Slavonic], and a man speaking the Slavic tongue, and he learned from this man how to read and speak this language. After this, the holy brothers went to the Khazars, where they won a debate with Jews and Moslems by preaching the Gospel. On the way home, the brothers again visited Korsun, then returned to Constantinople with the relics of St Clement.

St Constantine remained in the capital, but St Methodius was made igumen of the small Polychronion monastery near Mount Olympus, where he lived a life of asceticism as before.

Soon messengers came to the emperor from the Moravian prince Rostislav, who was under pressure from German bishops, requesting him to send teachers to Moravia who could preach in the Slavic tongue. The emperor summoned St Constantine and said to him, "You must go there, but it would be better if no one knows about this."

St Constantine prepared for the new task with fasting and prayer. With the help of his brother St Methodius and the disciples Gorazd, Clement, Sava, Naum and Angelyar, he devised a Slavonic alphabet and translated the books which were necessary for the celebration of the divine services: the Gospel, Epistles,

Psalter, and collected services, into the Slavic tongue. This occurred in the year 863.



After completing the translation, the holy brothers went to Moravia, where they were received with great honor, and they began to teach the services in the Slavic language. This aroused the malice of the German bishops, who celebrated divine services in the Moravian churches in Latin. They rose up against the holy brothers, convinced that divine services must be done in one of three languages: Hebrew, Greek or Latin.

St Constantine said, "You only recognize three languages in which God may be glorified. But David sang, 'Praise the Lord, all nations, praise the Lord all peoples (Ps 116/117:1).' And the Gospel of St Matthew (28:18) says, 'Go and teach all nations....'" The German bishops were humiliated, but they became bitter and complained to Rome.

The holy brothers were summoned to Rome for a decision on this matter. Taking with them the relics of St Clement, Sts Constantine and Methodius set off to Rome. Knowing that the holy brothers were bringing these relics with them, Pope Adrian met them along the way with his clergy. The holy brothers were greeted with honor, the Pope gave permission to have divine services in the Slavonic language, and he ordered the books translated by the brothers to be placed in the Latin churches, and to serve the Liturgy in the Slavonic language.

At Rome St Constantine fell ill, and the Lord revealed to him his approaching death. He was tonsured into the monastic schema with the name of Cyril. On February 14, 869, fifty days after receiving the schema, St Cyril died at the age of forty-two.

St Cyril commanded his brother St Methodius to continue with their task of enlightening the Slavic peoples with the light of the true Faith. St Methodius entreated the Pope to send the body of his brother for burial in their native land, but the Pope ordered the relics of St Cyril to be placed in the church of St Clement, where miracles began to occur from them.

After the death of St Cyril, the Pope sent St Methodius to Pannonia, after consecrating him as Archbishop of Moravia and Pannonia, on the ancient throne of St Andronicus (July 30). In Pannonia St Methodius and his disciples continued to distribute services books written in the Slavonic language. This again aroused the wrath of the German bishops. They arrested and tried St Methodius, who was sent in chains to Swabia, where he endured many sufferings for two and a half years.

After being set free by order of Pope John VIII of Rome, and restored to his archdiocese, St Methodius continued to preach the Gospel among the Slavs. He baptized the Czech prince Borivoi and his wife Ludmilla (September 16), and also one of the Polish princes. The German bishops began to persecute the saint for a third time, because he did not accept the erroneous teaching about the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son. St Methodius was summoned to Rome, but he justified himself before the Pope, and preserved the Orthodox teaching in its purity, and was sent again to the capital of Moravia, Velehrad.

Here in the remaining years of his life St Methodius, assisted by two of his former pupils, translated the entire Old Testament into Slavonic, except for the Book of Maccabees, and even the Nomocanon (Rule of the holy Fathers) and Paterikon (book of the holy Fathers).

Sensing the nearness of death, St Methodius designated one of his students, Gorazd, as a worthy successor to himself. The holy bishop predicted the day of his death and died on April 6, 885 when he was about sixty years old. The saint's burial service was chanted in three languages, Slavonic, Greek, and

Latin. He was buried in the cathedral church of Velehrad.

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, “I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior’s words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor’s sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine (May 21) consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova (Aug. 27), who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ’s Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies.

Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), St Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos (December 12), and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius (who later became Patriarch of Alexandria (May 2 and January 18). He is called “the Great,” for he was a zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. In the Sixth Ode of the Canon for today’s Feast, he is referred to as “the thirteenth Apostle.”

The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, “God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous.”

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heresiarch Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan’s knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. St Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word “consubstantial,” which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ’s divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).