

# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 4 No. 12.3

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

505 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510

Fr. Nicholas Ferencz, Ph.D., Pastor  
*Rectory:* 621 Vine St., Scranton, PA 18510  
*Rectory:* 570-344-5917  
*Cell:* 724-953-6046  
nferencz35@gmail.com  
www.stnicholasorthodoxscranton.org

Jane Togher, Board President  
570-842-3311  
jctogher@gmail.com  
Madelyn Hodanich, Choir Director  
Hall - 570-344-1522

DECEMBER 20, 2015

29TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. 11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE

## PARISH CALENDAR

SUN., DEC. 20 29<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. 11<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LUKE. HOLY BISHOP AMBROSE OF MILAN.

9:15 – 9:45 AM CONFESSIONS

**10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY** – TONE 4, PP 90–92  
NOON – ST. NICHOLAS BANQUET

Sun., Dec. 27 *Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Our Lord.* Martyrs Thrysus, Leucas, Philemon et al.

8:45–9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Panachida: Steve Roberts by Pucher family

Sun., Jan. 2 Martyred Bishop Ignatius of Antioch.  
9 AM *Cleaning and decorating the Church*

Sun., Jan. 3 *Sunday of the Holy Fathers.* Virgin Martyr Juliana.

8:45–9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Newly Elected Board Members take the Oath of Office.

WED., JAN. 6 VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, Martyr Eugenia.

7:00–7:30 PM Confessions

8:00 PM Great Compline

THU., JAN. 7 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

8:45–9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp 132–135

Fri., Jan. 8 *Synaxis of Holy Mary Theotokos.*

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Sat., Jan. 9 *Holy First-martyr & Archdeacon Stephen. Saturday after Christmas.*

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Sunday, Jan. 10 *Sunday After Christmas.* 20,000 martyrs of Nicomedia.

**ST. NICHOLAS DAY BANQUET**

*Today!!*

*Happy St. Nicholas Day!*

## FEASTING...

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD is coming up. See the Parish Calendar for the schedule of services.

## ...AND FASTING

**Filipovka (Philip's Fast, or Christmas Lent)** continues until Christmas Eve, Dec. 24/Jan. 6.

- 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: St. Spiridon and St. Herman (Dec. 12/25), St. Ignatius (Dec. 20/Jan. 2), etc. The Nativity Fast is not as severe as Great Lent or the Dormition Fast.

- As always, 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.
- The MINIMUM Diocesan Rule is no meat on Wednesdays and Fridays. All are encouraged and expected to do more than the minimum.
- *CHRISTMAS EVE* is a Day of *Fasting from Meat and Dairy* 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 no solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky. 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).

**Confessions:** All are reminded that fasting from food goes hand-in-hand with fasting from sin. This is why the Church encourages us to receive the Holy Mystery of Confession is given during the Christmas Fast period. During the Christmas Fast, Confessions are scheduled for Sunday morning before Divine Liturgy and before Christmas services. Please see Calendar for times.

**Almsgiving:** Also, giving to the poor and needy is the flip side of fasting.

### PEOPLE STUFF

*Please remember in your prayers:*

*Living:* Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek. Stephanie Bonk. Owen Bonn. Gloria Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Mary Kneiss. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Rose Markiewicz. Dolores Naglak. Theresa Niester. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka.

JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigie. Gary Wassel.  
*At Home:* Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. George & Anna Senich.

*Assisted Living Homes:* Julie Roberts. Marion Sosnowski. Kathryn Stocoski.

### YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

Dec. 13, 2015

446.00	General Collection
100.00	Parking Donation
7.00	1st Sunday
87.00	7 Day Light
10.00	Heat Offering
23.00	Holy Days
11.00	Taper Candles
10.00	Maintenance & Repairs
34.00	Donation
<u>137.00</u>	Christmas Flowers
<b>865.00</b>	<b>Total</b>

*Renovation Fund to date: \$1000.*

### PARISH STUFF

**Sue Danchak:** Sue received the donations from the parish last week and was very grateful to all. Please keep Sue in your prayers.

**Fr. Nik** will be away over the next week. If there is an emergency, please call Fr. Mark Leasure at 570-562-1170. You will also be able to reach Fr. Nik on his cell phone. Fr. Myron Oryhon will again be substituting on Sunday for Divine Liturgy.

**Church Cleaning and Decorating:** On Saturday, January 2, we are going to get together at 9 AM to clean and decorate the Church. All help is welcome, so come on down!!!

### COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Christmas Gift Tree for U.S. Veterans:** The Gifts were delivered this past week. Thanks again to all who contributed!

**Breadbasket of NEPA:** We are starting up again. Donation boxes are in the hall.

## PARISH FUND RAISERS

**THE PIROHI SALE, KOLAČI SALE & BAKE SALE yesterday were a *great success!* Thanks to all who worked, donated, offered their time and did whatever it took to make these Fund Raisers go so well! Many years to all!**

### RENOVATIONS PLANNED!

The Rectory and the Parish Hall both are in need of some serious repairs and renovations. At the October meeting, the Parish Board voted to accept a bid from S&H Construction Co., to do the following work:

#### Church Hall

Replace *Front Double Doors* and *Basement Door* at the bottom of the stairs. Paint *all exterior doors*. **Total cost: \$1644.**

*On hold* until funds are available: Painting of the *banquet hall* and *hallway*. Refinish the *wood floor*.

#### Rectory

Paint *all interior*. Refinish *wood floors on first floor, stairs and upstairs hall*. Install *paddle fan* in living room. **Total cost: \$4636.**

*On hold* unless funds are donated: replace *all vinyl shutters*, cost \$1128. We have an anonymous donor who will cover half the cost if the other half is also donated by parishioners.

If anyone wishes to donate toward any of these projects, please see Nick Polanichka or send your donation to the rectory.

## FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

**Diocesan Donation Program with Amazon!** As Christmas nears and our thoughts turn to gift giving for our loved ones, you also have an opportunity to give to the Diocese! Amazon.com offers a program whereby shoppers can use a special web address so that with every purchase made a donation is given to the diocese. This is a simple way to integrate stewardship into your holiday purchases and to proudly declare you know "the reason for the season" by remembering the diocese while you shop for your friends and family.

How do I participate? It's easy. Just go to the Diocesan website (<http://www.acrod.org>) and click on the "AmazonSmile" link on the left of the page. Please

note that Amazon lists us as the "American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the USA."

Happy shopping and please tell your friends!

**Stewardship Workshop Saturday, January 16.** Two Sobors ago, the diocese implemented a plan to develop and encourage a Stewardship Program on both the Diocesan level and the Parish level. Over the past few years, members of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee have been invited to parishes to explain and discuss what stewardship is, what it means, and what it means (hopefully) to you.

Instead of each of the parishes of the Pocono Deanery setting up their own workshop date, one Stewardship Workshop has been scheduled for all to attend, to be held at St. George's Orthodox Church (Taylor, PA) on January 16, 2016. Attendance is free, and the workshop is open to all clergy and parishioners in the Pocono Deanery. (Stewardship coordinators are especially encouraged to attend.) The workshop will begin at 9:00 a.m., and a lunch will be provided.

The workshop will give attendees a greater understanding of what Stewardship means for Orthodoxy, and ways that it can be incorporated into our churches. Attendees are asked to RSVP by December 26<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Michael Shimko by phone (570-430-6749) or by e-mail at [michael.shimko@me.com](mailto:michael.shimko@me.com).

*All* members of the parish are encouraged to attend (free lunch!). This is an issue that affects all Orthodox Christians. Hopefully, everyone in the parish will understand and make their participation in the life of parish one which comes out of this Stewardship model.

## MARTYRED BISHOP IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH

December 20/January 2

The martyred Bishop Ignatius the God-Bearer, was a disciple of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, as was also St Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (February 23). St Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch, and successor to Bishop Euodius, Apostle of the Seventy (September 7).

Tradition suggests that when St Ignatius was a little boy, the Savior hugged him and said: "Unless

you turn and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mt. 18:3). The saint was called “God-Bearer” (Theophoros), because he bore God in his heart and prayed unceasingly to Him. He also had this name because he was held in the arms of Christ, the incarnate Son of God.

St Ignatius was a disciple of the Apostle John the Theologian, together with St Polycarp of Smyrna. As Bishop of Antioch, St Ignatius was zealous and spared no effort to build up the church of Christ. To him is attributed the practice of antiphonal singing (by two choirs) during church services. He had seen a vision of the angels in heaven alternately singing praises to God, and divided his church choir to follow this example. In the time of persecution he was a source of strength to the souls of his flock, and was eager to suffer for Christ.

In the year 106 the emperor Trajan (98-117), after his victory over the Scythians, ordered everyone to give thanks to the pagan gods, and to put to death any Christians who refused to worship the idols. In the year 107, Trajan happened to pass through Antioch. Here they told him that Bishop Ignatius openly confessed Christ, and taught people to scorn riches, to lead a virtuous life, and preserve their virginity. St Ignatius came voluntarily before the emperor, so as to avert persecution of the Christians in Antioch. St Ignatius rejected the persistent requests of the emperor Trajan to sacrifice to the idols. The emperor then decided to send him to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts. St Ignatius joyfully accepted the sentence imposed upon him. His readiness for martyrdom was attested to by eyewitnesses, who accompanied St Ignatius from Antioch to Rome.

On the way to Rome, the ship sailed from Seleucia stopped at Smyrna, where St Ignatius met with his friend Bishop Polycarp. Clergy and believers from other cities and towns thronged to see St Ignatius. He exhorted everyone not to fear death and not to grieve for him. In his Epistle to the Roman Christians, he asked them to assist him with their prayers, and to pray that God would strengthen him in his impending martyrdom for Christ: “I seek Him Who died for us; I desire Him Who rose for our salvation... In me, desire has been nailed to the cross, and no flame of material longing is left. Only the living water speaks within me, saying, ‘Hasten to the Father.’”

From Smyrna, St Ignatius went to Troas. Here he heard the happy news of the end of the persecution

against Christians in Antioch. From Troas, St Ignatius sailed to Neapolis (in Macedonia) and then to Philippi.

On the way to Rome St Ignatius visited several churches, teaching and guiding the Christians there. He also wrote seven epistles: to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna. He also addressed a letter to St Polycarp, who mentions a collection of the letters of St Ignatius in his letter to the Philippians (Ch. 13). St Irenaeus of Lyons quotes from St Ignatius’s letter to the Romans (AGAINST HERESIES 5:28:4). All these letters have survived to the present day.

The Roman Christians met St Ignatius with great joy and profound sorrow. Some of them hoped to prevent his execution, but St Ignatius implored them not to do this. Kneeling down, he prayed together with the believers for the Church, for love between the brethren, and for an end to the persecution against Christians.

On December 20, the day of a pagan festival, they led St Ignatius into the arena, and he turned to the people: “Men of Rome, you know that I am sentenced to death, not because of any crime, but because of my love for God, by Whose love I am embraced. I long to be with Him, and offer myself to him as a pure loaf, made of fine wheat ground fine by the teeth of wild beasts.”

After this the lions were released and tore him to pieces, leaving only his heart and a few bones. Tradition says that on his way to execution, St Ignatius unceasingly repeated the name of Jesus Christ. When they asked him why he was doing this, St Ignatius answered that this Name was written in his heart, and that he confessed with his lips Him Whom he always carried within. When the saint was devoured by the lions, his heart was not touched. When they cut open the heart, the pagans saw an inscription in gold letters: “Jesus Christ.” After his execution St Ignatius appeared to many of the faithful in their sleep to comfort them, and some saw him at prayer for the city of Rome.

Hearing of the saint’s great courage, Trajan thought well of him and stopped the persecution against the Christians. The relics of St Ignatius were transferred to Antioch (January 29), and on February 1, 637 were returned to Rome and placed in the church of San Clemente.