

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 5 No. 2.1

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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FEBRUARY 7, 2016

36TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. 18TH SUNDAY OF LUKE.

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Feb. 7 36th Sunday after Pentecost. 18th Sunday of Luke. Bishop Gregory of Nazianzus, called the Theologian.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets.
Panachida: George Senich – 40 day comm.
Church School meets

Fri., Feb. 12 *Holy Bishops Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.*
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
Panachida: Mary Koscho

Sun., Feb. 14 **Sunday of Zacchaeus.** *Pre-festive of the Feast of the Encounter.* Martyr Tryphon. Nun Brigid of Kildare.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets.
Panachida: George Ferencz
Men's Club regular monthly meeting.
Altar Society meets.

MON., FEB. 15 THE ENCOUNTER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH SIMEON & ANNA IN THE TEMPLE
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Candles.

Wed., Feb. 17 Monk Isidore

8:00 AM *Pirohi Prep*

Thu., Feb. 18 Martyr Agatha.

8:00 AM *Pirohi Making*

Fri., Feb. 19 Virgin-martyrs Dorothy, Christina & Kallista

10 AM – 3 PM *Pirohi Sale*

Sun. Feb. 21 **Sunday of the Publican & the Pharisee.** Great-martyr Theodore Stratelates.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Parish Board meets

Confessions are available before Divine Liturgy.

FEASTING...

Upcoming Feastdays:

Three Holy Bishops Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom – Feb. 12 (Jan. 30). Divine Liturgy at 9 AM.

Encounter of Our Lord Jesus Christ with Simeon and Anna in the Temple – Feb. 15 (Feb. 2). Divine Liturgy at 9 AM. Candles are blessed on this day.

...AND FASTING

No Fasting – the week of the Publican and the Pharisee, Feb. 21 – Feb. 27.

Great Lent begins Monday, March 14. We have time, so don't panic yet. *However*, the Pre-Lenten cycle does begin Feb. 14 with the *Sunday of Zacchaeus*.

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: George Senich.

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. Madelyn Hodanich. Johnny Huniyack. Lorraine Kacaba. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Rose Markiewicz. Theresa Niester. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue. Gary Wassel.

At Home: Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. Anna Senich.

Assisted Living Homes: Julie Roberts. Marion Sosnowski. Kathryn Stocoski. Dolores Naglak. Mary Kneiss.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Breadbasket of NEPA: Donation boxes are in the hall.

PARISH FUND RAISERS

Pirohi Sales: *Thanks* to all who helped out this past week. Next sale is Friday, Feb. 19, with the usual workdays of Wednesday and Thursday.

Easter Kolači Sale! The Men's Club is now taking orders for their famous Kolači. Rolls are only \$8.00 each. Available flavors: Nut, Poppyseed, Lekvar, Apricot, Raspberry Coconut. *Pick-up Date:* Friday, March 18, 10 AM to 3 PM. To order, call 570-344-1522 and leave a message with your order. Order soon!!!

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH

Jan 31, 2016

\$1268.00 General Collection
18.00 1st Sunday
71.00 7 Day Light
279.00 Church Dues
65.00 Holy Days
11.00 Taper Candles
88.00 Maintenance & Repairs
185.00 Christmas
10.00 Easter

\$1995.00 Total

Renovation Donations to date: \$1000.

PARISH STUFF

House Blessings: This week I will be blessing houses on Wednesday and Friday. I will be calling to set up times. If I do not call, I am not coming.

Altar Society will meet on Sunday, February 14, to talk about upcoming Fund Raisers.

Men's Club regular monthly meeting is scheduled for today.

Parish Board meets Sunday, February 21.

Church School will be February 28.

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 24	Mar. 13
Feb. 7	Mar. 37
Feb. 28 (Note change)	Apr. 10 Apr. 24 - Palm Sunday, Last Class

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Orthodox Speaking Series: presenting *Metropolitan Kallistos Ware* who will be giving a lecture on "The Unchanging Gospel in an Ever-Changing Culture."

Streaming Live on Saturday, March 5, 2016, from North Park University of Chicago, IL.

The schedule for this 1st Annual Event:

10 AM to Noon

Lunch

1 PM to 3 PM

There will be 3 respondents to the lecture:

Father John Behr, Dean, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary

Dr. Hauna Ondrey, North Park University

Dr. Marcus Pleasted, Marquette University

Moderator is Professor Nassif, Professor of Biblical Studies North Park University (Main planner for event)

Please note that this event will be "live streamed" for all who are not able to come, but wish to see the event live, and to *possibly be part of the audience during the Q/A session* with Metropolitan Kallistos.

Deacon Peter Sodini of St Michael's Church in Niles, IL is a member of the steering committee at North Park University of Chicago, IL for the Orthodox Speaking Series which is funded by the Kulis Foundation.

All are encouraged to tune in. Further information can be found here: <http://www.northpark.edu/orthodox>. Please feel free to contact Fr. Deacon Peter directly (pesodini@msn.com).

Pirohi, Haluski, Clam Chowder Sale St. John's Auxiliary, 310 Broadway Ave. Scranton will be held on Feb. 10th. Orders will be taken until Jan. 16 or while manageable. Pick up date is Feb. 10th between 10 and 2pm. Prices: Pirohi \$8.00 dozen; Haluski \$7.00 qt.; Clam Chowder \$8.00 qt. Please call 570-343-8820.

International Dinner is "France" St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church - 310 Mifflin Ave. Scranton, Pa. is proud to announce that the International Dinner for February is "France." Dinner is on Thursday, February 11, 2016. Seatings will be at 5:30 or 6:30pm. Reservations can be made at 570-343-5151 by February 9. The menu will start with an Appetizer of Frisee salad tossed in a warm mustard seed vinaigrette and bacon lardons. The Entree will be Beef Bourguignon served with a white bean puree. The dessert is Homemade Beignets. Coffee, Tea, Water is Included and a Cash Bar is available. The price is only \$20.00 per person.

Lenten Pizza and Soup Sale: St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St. Pittston, Pa. 18640 is having a "PIZZA & SOUP SALE" for Lent. We will offer Old Forge Style Baked (\$12) or Unbaked (\$10). Add \$1 extra for onions. Each week we will offer a soup of the week at \$8.00 per qt. Pre-order by Tues. Feb. 10 for Ash Wednesday or by Thursday at

570-905-7387 - Pick up will be from 4-7pm on Ash Wednesday and the following Fridays during Lent. Soup of the week is Homemade (Manhattan) Clam Chowder. All proceeds will benefit the Church.

Received on Friday, Jan. 29:

**Saint Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church
540 North Main Avenue, Scranton, PA 18504**

January 8, 2016

To The Parish Priest and his Parishioners,

We would like to invite you to an event honoring Father Nestor Kowal for his many years of service to St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church and his 50 years as a priest as he will be leaving us in the near future.

There will be a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM at St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church on Saturday, February 27, 2016.

The dinner will follow at 1:00 PM at St. George's Church Hall, 743 South Keyser Avenue, Taylor, PA.

The cost will be \$55.00 per person, which includes your dinner and a cash bar, by paid reservation only.

All are welcome to attend.

For further information please contact St. Michael's at 570-961-1795.

Thanking you in advance.

May God Bless You Always.

Sincerely,

Sharon Monahan

Financial Secretary

Ed Popil, President

The Parish Board & Trustees

Note: I also received a reservation form which is in the office and we can print up if you would like to make a reservation.

TRIP TO UKRAINE! St. Vladimir Ukrainian Greek Catholic Parish of Scranton is sponsoring a trip to Ukraine from September 8 to 20, 2016. The 13 day itinerary will include Kyiv, Lviv, Yaremche in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains, Ivano Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Podilsky, Zarvanytsia [the Lourdes of Western Ukraine] and Ternopil. Included are visits to

centuries old sacred sites such as the Pecherska Lavra/Monastery of the Caves, Sunday Divine Liturgy at the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Kyiv and St. George Ukrainian Greek Catholic Cathedral in Lviv, the Maidan Memorial, Dnister riverboat cruise, Lviv Opera House, etc.

Tour land cost twin per person is \$2,290. Air fare is estimated to be approximately \$990. For full details contact Jean Stasyszyn Pedley at 570 698-6838 or Scope Travel at 201 463-4656.

ST GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN THE ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

January 25/February 7

Saint Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople, a great Father and teacher of the Church, was born into a Christian family of eminent lineage in the year 329, at Arianzos (not far from the city of Cappadocian Nazianzos). His father, also named Gregory (January 1), was Bishop of Nazianzus. The son is the St Gregory Nazianzus encountered in Patristic theology. His pious mother, St Nonna (August 5), prayed to God for a son, vowing to dedicate him to the Lord. Her prayer was answered, and she named her child Gregory.

When the child learned to read, his mother presented him with the Holy Scripture. St Gregory received a complete and extensive education: after working at home with his uncle St Amphilochius (November 23), an experienced teacher of rhetoric, he then studied in the schools of Nazianzos, Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Alexandria. Then the saint decided to go to Athens to complete his education.

On the way from Alexandria to Greece, a terrible storm raged for many days. St Gregory, who was just a catechumen at that time, feared that he would perish in the sea before being cleansed in the waters of Baptism. St Gregory lay in the ship's stern for twenty days, beseeching the merciful God for salvation. He vowed to dedicate himself to God, and was saved when he invoked the name of the Lord.

St Gregory spent six years in Athens studying rhetoric, poetry, geometry, and astronomy. His teachers were the renowned pagan rhetoricians Gymorias and Proeresias. St Basil, the future Archbishop of Caesarea (January 1) also studied in

Athens with St Gregory. They were such close friends that they seemed to be one soul in two bodies. Julian, the future emperor (361-363) and apostate from the Christian Faith, was studying philosophy in Athens at the same time.

Upon completing his education, St Gregory remained for a certain while at Athens as a teacher of rhetoric. He was also familiar with pagan philosophy and literature.

In 358 St Gregory quietly left Athens and returned to his parents at Nazianzus. At thirty-three years of age, he received Baptism from his father, who had been appointed Bishop of Nazianzus. Against his will, St Gregory was ordained to the holy priesthood by his father. However, when the elder Gregory wished to make him a bishop, he fled to join his friend Basil in Pontus. St Basil had organized a monastery in Pontus and had written to Gregory inviting him to come.

St Gregory remained with St Basil for several years. When his brother St Caesarius (March 9) died, he returned home to help his father administer his diocese. The local church was also in turmoil because of the Arian heresy. St Gregory had the difficult task of reconciling the bishop with his flock, who condemned their pastor for signing an ambiguous interpretation of the dogmas of the faith.

St Gregory convinced his father of the pernicious nature of Arianism, and strengthened him in Orthodoxy. At this time, Bishop Anthimus, who pretended to be Orthodox but was really a heretic, became Metropolitan of Tyana. St Basil had been consecrated as the Archbishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia. Anthimus wished to separate from St Basil and to divide the province of Cappadocia.

St Basil the Great made St Gregory bishop of the city of Sasima, a small town between Caesarea and Tyana. However, St Gregory remained at Nazianzos in order to assist his dying father, and he guided the flock of this city for a while after the death of his father in 374.

Upon the death of Patriarch Valentinus of Constantinople in the year 378, a council of bishops invited St Gregory to help the Church of Constantinople, which at this time was ravaged by heretics. Obtaining the consent of St Basil the Great, St Gregory came to Constantinople to combat heresy. In the year 379 he began to serve and preach in a small church called "Anastasis" ("Resurrection").

Like David fighting the Philistines with a sling, St Gregory battled against impossible odds to defeat false doctrine.

Heretics were in the majority in the capital, Arians, Macedonians, and Appolinarians. The more he preached, the more did the number of heretics decrease, and the number of the Orthodox increased. On the night of Pascha (April 21, 379) when St Gregory was baptizing catechumens, a mob of armed heretics burst into the church and cast stones at the Orthodox, killing one bishop and wounding St Gregory. But the fortitude and mildness of the saint were his armor, and his words converted many to the Orthodox Church.

St Gregory's literary works (orations, letters, poems) show him as a worthy preacher of the truth of Christ. He had a literary gift, and the saint sought to offer his talent to God the Word: "I offer this gift to my God, I dedicate this gift to Him. Only this remains to me as my treasure. I gave up everything else at the command of the Spirit. I gave all that I had to obtain the pearl of great price. Only in words do I master it, as a servant of the Word. I would never intentionally wish to disdain this wealth. I esteem it, I set value by it, I am comforted by it more than others are comforted by all the treasures of the world. It is the companion of all my life, a good counselor and converser; a guide on the way to Heaven and a fervent co-ascetic." In order to preach the Word of God properly, the saint carefully prepared and revised his works.

In five sermons, or "Theological Orations," St Gregory first of all defines the characteristics of a theologian, and who may theologize. Only those who are experienced can properly reason about God, those who are successful at contemplation and, most importantly, who are pure in soul and body, and utterly selfless. To reason about God properly is possible only for one who enters into it with fervor and reverence.

Explaining that God has concealed His Essence from mankind, St Gregory demonstrates that it is impossible for those in the flesh to view mental objects without a mixture of the corporeal. Talking about God in a positive sense is possible only when we become free from the external impressions of things and from their effects, when our guide, the mind, does not adhere to impure transitory images. Answering the Eunomians, who would presume to grasp God's Essence through logical speculation, the saint declared that man perceives God when the mind and reason

become godlike and divine, i.e. when the image ascends to its Archetype. (Or. 28:17). Furthermore, the example of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets and also the Apostles has demonstrated, that the Essence of God is incomprehensible for mortal man. St Gregory cited the futile sophistry of Eunomios: "God begat the Son either through His will, or contrary to will. If He begat contrary to will, then He underwent constraint. If by His will, then the Son is the Son of His intent."

Confuting such reasoning, St Gregory points out the harm it does to man: "You yourself, who speak so thoughtlessly, were you begotten voluntarily or involuntarily by your father? If involuntarily, then your father was under the sway of some tyrant. Who? You can hardly say it was nature, for nature is tolerant of chastity. If it was voluntarily, then by a few syllables you deprive yourself of your father, for thus you are shown to be the son of Will, and not of your father" (Or. 29:6).

St Gregory then turns to Holy Scripture, with particular attention examining a place where it points out the Divine Nature of the Son of God. St Gregory's interpretations of Holy Scripture are devoted to revealing that the divine power of the Savior was actualized even when He assumed an impaired human nature for the salvation of mankind.

The first of St Gregory's Five Theological Orations is devoted to arguments against the Eunomians for their blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Closely examining everything that is said in the Gospel about the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the saint refutes the heresy of Eunomios, which rejected the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He comes to two fundamental conclusions. First, in reading Holy Scripture, it is necessary to reject blind literalism and to try and understand its spiritual sense. Second, in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit operated in a hidden way. "Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us and makes the manifestation of Himself more certain. It was not safe, as long as they did not acknowledge the divinity of the Father, to proclaim openly that of the Son; and as long as the divinity of the Son was not accepted, they could not, to express it somewhat boldly, impose on us the burden of the Holy Spirit" (Or. 31:26).

The divinity of the Holy Spirit is a sublime subject. "Look at these facts: Christ is born, the Holy Spirit is His Forerunner. Christ is baptized, the Spirit

bears witness to this... Christ works miracles, the Spirit accompanies them. Christ ascends, the Spirit takes His place. What great things are there in the idea of God which are not in His power? What titles appertaining to God do not apply also to Him, except for Unbegotten and Begotten? I tremble when I think of such an abundance of titles, and how many Names they blaspheme, those who revolt against the Spirit!" (Or. 31:29).

The Orations of St Gregory are not limited only to this topic. He also wrote Panegyrics on Saints, Festal Orations, two invectives against Julian the Apostate, "two pillars, on which the impiety of Julian is indelibly written for posterity," and various orations on other topics. In all, forty-five of St Gregory's orations have been preserved.

The letters of the saint compare favorably with his best theological works. All of them are clear, yet concise. In his poems as in all things, St Gregory focused on Christ. "If the lengthy tracts of the heretics are new Psalters at variance with David, and the pretty verses they honor are like a third testament, then we also shall sing Psalms, and begin to write much and compose poetic meters," said the saint. Of his poetic gift the saint wrote: "I am an organ of the Lord, and sweetly... do I glorify the King, all atremble before Him."

The fame of the Orthodox preacher spread through East and West. But the saint lived in the capital as though he still lived in the wilderness: "his food was food of the wilderness; his clothing was whatever necessary. He made visitations without pretense, and though in proximity of the court, he sought nothing from the court."

The saint received a shock when he was ill. One whom he considered as his friend, the philosopher Maximus, was consecrated at Constantinople in St Gregory's place. Struck by the ingratitude of Maximus, the saint decided to resign the cathedra, but his faithful flock restrained him from it. The people threw the usurper out of the city. On November 24, 380 the holy emperor Theodosius arrived in the capital and, in enforcing his decree against the heretics, the main church was returned to the Orthodox, with St Gregory making a solemn entrance. An attempt on the life of St Gregory was planned, but instead the assassin appeared before the saint with tears of repentance.

At the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, St Gregory was chosen as Patriarch of Constantinople. After the death of Patriarch Meletius of Antioch, St Gregory presided at the Council. Hoping to reconcile the West with the East, he offered to recognize Paulinus as Patriarch of Antioch.

Those who had acted against St Gregory on behalf of Maximus, particularly Egyptian and Macedonian bishops, arrived late for the Council. They did not want to acknowledge the saint as Patriarch of Constantinople, since he was elected in their absence.

St Gregory decided to resign his office for the sake of peace in the Church: "Let me be as the Prophet Jonah! I was responsible for the storm, but I would sacrifice myself for the salvation of the ship. Seize me and throw me... I was not happy when I ascended the throne, and gladly would I descend it."

After telling the emperor of his desire to quit the capital, St Gregory appeared again at the Council to deliver a farewell address (Or. 42) asking to be allowed to depart in peace.

Upon his return to his native region, St Gregory turned his attention to the incursion of Appollinarian heretics into the flock of Nazianzus, and he established the pious Eulalius there as bishop, while he himself withdrew into the solitude of Arianzos so dear to his heart. The saint, zealous for the truth of Christ continued to affirm Orthodoxy through his letters and poems, while remaining in the wilderness. He died on January 25, 389, and is honored with the title "Theologian," also given to the holy Apostle and Evangelist John.

In his works St Gregory, like that other Theologian St John, directs everything toward the Pre-eternal Word. St John of Damascus (December 4), in the first part of his book AN EXACT EXPOSITION OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH, followed the lead of St Gregory the Theologian.

St Gregory was buried at Nazianzos. In the year 950, his holy relics were transferred to Constantinople into the church of the Holy Apostles. Later on, a portion of his relics was transferred to Rome.

In appearance, the saint was of medium height and somewhat pale. He had thick eyebrows, and a short beard. His contemporaries already called the archpastor a saint. The Orthodox Church, honors St Gregory as a second Theologian and insightful writer on the Holy Trinity.