

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MAY 15, 2016

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

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

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., May 15 SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN. Bishop Athanasius the Great of Alexandria.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Panachida: Veronica Czibik & Eleanor Sovitch by Laurence Czibik.
Parish Board meeting canceled.

Sun., May 22 SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC. Saint Athanasias the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – special sheets
Panachida for all the deceased mothers of our parish and our parishioners.
Men's Club regular monthly mtg rescheduled for May 22.

Confessions: available before scheduled services.

FASTING AND FEASTING

PASCHAL SEASON: We continue the usual Wednesday and Friday fast.

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: Denise Sovitch.

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. Rose Markiewicz. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Patricia Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigie.

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

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

Eternal Light: Memory of Denise Sovitch by Bill & Beverly Thomas

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Breadbasket of NEPA: Donation boxes are in the hall.

PARISH STUFF

Men's Club: The regular monthly meeting is re-scheduled for Sunday, May 22.

Parish Board meeting today is canceled.

Memorial Day Grave Blessings: Grave Blessings will again be on Memorial Day, May 30. 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)
3:00 PM	Nicholson

The above times are approximate. As usual, I would appreciate it if you could let me know if I can call your cell phone to let you know I am on the way to your cemetery.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH

May 8, 2016

\$ 699.50	General Collection
\$ 31.00	1st Sunday
\$ 123.00	7 Day Light
\$ 35.00	Pirohi
\$ 40.00	Holy Days
\$ 186.00	Church Dues
\$ 22.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 20.50	Taper Candles
\$ 7.00	Eternal Light
\$1092.00	Easter
\$ 2.00	Palm Sunday
\$ 2.00	Christmas
\$1000.00	Memory of Denise Sovitch
\$ 15.00	IOCC
\$3275.00	Total Collection

Renovation Donations to date: \$1000

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Camp Nazareth Raffle Tickets are now available in the Office in the Hall. They go pretty fast, so please see Nick Polanichka for yours!

The Diocesan 3rd Annual Young Women's Encounter will take place from Sunday June 26th to Wednesday June 29th, 2016. The YWE will be held at Ss. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Windber, Pennsylvania. Young women in our Diocese ages 12 - 18 are strongly encouraged to attend.

Registration details are forthcoming on our Diocesan website acrod.org. Please register as soon as possible – Space is limited! For more information or if you have any questions please contact Pani Eleni Stagon at acrodywe@gmail.com.

Camp Nazareth Family Camp 2016: Our Diocese is pleased to announce its fourth annual Family Camp at Camp Nazareth this year in conjunction with Family Day. The event is exactly what it sounds like. Families “camping” together in the Camp cabins and participating in a weekend of services, games, discussions, activities and challenges that are all designed to help families deepen their relationship with God and with one another.

This year's theme – “*Not letting Orthodoxy be your Family's Secret Identity*”. Our Family's Orthodoxy is both Public and Private...sometimes our family has to be like Superman and sometimes like Clark Kent!!

Family Camp is scheduled for Friday, June 3 – Sunday, June 5, 2016. We had a wonderful time together last year and we are looking forward to being together again this year. A variety of events and activities have been planned that will allow families to learn, have fun and pray together, and simply be together in the peaceful environment of the Camp. With the newly renovated and expanded cabins, together with the new High and Low Ropes Course the Camp has even more to offer our families this year.

Don't miss out on this opportunity for you and your family. Space is limited to the first 10 families, so please send in your registration forms soon. They are due by Friday, May 20, 2016 and can be found at the Camp website -- campnazareth.org

St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St. Pittston IS HAVING A HALUPKI (PIGGIE DINNER) on Sunday, May 15, 2016 from 1-3pm at our Church Hall. Adult tickets are \$10.00 and Children under 12 -\$7.00. We are also selling Lottery Tickets for the month of June. All are welcome to attend!

St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St., Pittston is having a "**TRUNK SALE**" on June 4th, 2016 in the Church Parking Lot. Clear your garage and sell your stuff without strangers at your house. Pack up your "junk" and throw it in the trunk and make dollars! We will open from 8am to 3pm; set-up at 7am. Pre-paid spots are only \$10.00 each. Limited Space available. 1st Come - 1st Served. No Refunds. Call today to reserve your spot! 570-905-7387. E-Mail - lindahando@hotmail.com. Rain Date is June 11th. Food will be available.

St. Tikhon's Monastery 2016 Annual Pilgrimage

Join us May 27-30th for the 112th Memorial Day Pilgrimage! Archimandrite Sergius and the Brotherhood invite everyone to attend for part or all of this year's event.

The arrival of the Hawaiian Myrrh-Streaming Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God at 3:30pm on Friday will officially mark the start of the 112th Pilgrimage Weekend at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Highlights of this year's Pilgrimage include

- A PaTRAM Young Singers Conference which will run concurrently during the weekend.
- A historical display of the Alaskan Native Spiritual Legacy from Villanova University will be on display in the monastery's museum.
- See the box for the Schedule.

ST. TIKHON'S MONASTERY ANNUAL MEMORIAL WEEKEND PILGRIMAGE	
FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016	
3:30 pm	Official Opening of the 112th Pilgrimage with Molioben to the Iveron Hawaiian Icon of the Mother of God.
4:00 pm	Vespers and Matins(Monastery Church) <i>All pilgrims are invited to dinner after.</i>
SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2016	
9:00 am	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
1:00 pm	74th Annual Academic Commencement of St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary
4:00 pm	Resurrection Vigil (Monastery Church) <i>All pilgrims are invited to dinner after.</i>
SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2016	
9:00 am	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy <i>All pilgrims are invited to dinner after.</i>
4:00 pm	Vespers and Matins(Monastery Church)
MONDAY, MAY 30, 2016	
7:30 am	Divine Liturgy – Monastery Church
10:00 am	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
12:15 pm	Veteran's Pannikhida and Memorial Service, All Saints Bell Tower
1:30 pm	Akathist to Saint Alexis Toth in the Monastery Church
2:30 pm	Molioben to the Most Holy Theotokos and Anointing of the Sick, Infirm and all Pilgrims at the Monastery Bell Tower
4:00 pm	Vespers and Matins(Monastery Church)

HOLY AND GREAT SYNOD OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Pan-Orthodox Council, officially referred to as the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church will take place in Crete from June 18 to June 27, 2016. This historic meeting is a planned synod of the bishops of all the universally recognized autocephalous local (national) churches of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. [By the way, *Bishop Gregory* is one of the delegates to the Council, a choice that many would consider unusual, since he is Bishop of such a small diocese.]

Why is this a big deal?

The Church has not held a meeting of all Orthodox Churches in over 1200 years. Many issues have come up over the years, especially in the modern world. The Church has recognized the need to come together in agreement over a number of issues which affect both the day to day life of the average Orthodox Christian, and the well-being of the Church as a whole. The initial movement to try to get a Council of all the Orthodox Churches began way back in the **1920s**. Serious discussion and preparation began in **1961**, at the 1st meeting in Rhodes. There, and in successive meetings, the leadership of the Church, under the guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarch (1st Athenagoras and now our present Patriarch Bartholomew), an agenda was hammered out for this

Pan-Orthodox Council. So, this meeting has been a long time in coming.

What are they going to talk about?

Originally, the agenda finally set in 1976 included the following ten topics of discussion:

- 1) Orthodox Diaspora – meaning Orthodox who live in non-Orthodox countries (like, us!), and how we should be organized and connected.
- 2) Autocephaly and the way of declaring it – which Churches are self-governing
- 3) Autonomy and the way of declaring it – which Churches are mostly self-governing (like, is our Diocese subject to the Greek Archdiocese, or do we govern ourselves?)
- 4) Diptychs – which are the ranking Churches, and who is in Communion with whom?
- 5) Calendar problem – All Orthodox care about this: Should everyone have to use the Old (Julian) Calendar, like most of the Orthodox world? Or, should everyone use the Revised Julian Calendar (“New” Calendar), with modern Christmas but Old Calendar Pascha? Or, should everyone use the really “New” Calendar, with both Christmas and Easter celebrated with all other Christians? It sounds trivial, but we all know that it is not.
- 6) Obstacles for marriage – Not only issues of Orthodox marrying non-Orthodox, but also Orthodox marrying non-Christians, also whether priests can marry again after being widowed, also whether married men should be eligible to become a bishop, and other issues.
- 7) Coordination of church decrees on fasting – it is very clear that we are all confused about fasting, with no one doing anything that resembles what others are doing. Too often, people just give up trying and quit fasting at all.
- 8) Orthodox Churches’ attitude to the rest of Christendom – are Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians really going to hell, as many Orthodox would say? Or are there legitimate connections we need to have with them?
- 9) Orthodoxy and the ecumenical movement – closely tied into #7. Again, many Orthodox claim that the Church should not have anything to do with the ecumenical movement, since they (non-Orthodox) are all just a bunch of heretics anyway, and we risk contaminating our Faith.
- 10) Contribution of Local Orthodox Churches to promoting Christian ideas of peace, freedom, brotherhood and love among nations and the elimination of racial discrimination. – Uhhh, yeah. Is this question on the radar of *any* Orthodox people that you know? Why not?

In March 2014, the Primates of local Orthodox Churches convened in the Fener, the residence of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, and reached a decision: “The Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church will be convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople in 2016, unless something unexpected occurs.”

In January 2016, at the invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Synaxis of Primates of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches was held at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland. The Primates of the local Orthodox Churches and three official delegations representing the Church of Antioch, the Church of Greece, and the Church of Poland, convened to finalize the texts for the Holy and Great Council. Due to the heightened tensions between Russia and Turkey, a decision was reached to hold the Council in Greece.

The items officially approved at the 2016 Synaxis for discussion by the Holy and Great Council are:

1. The Mission of the Orthodox Church in the Contemporary World; (#10 above)
2. The Orthodox Diaspora; Autonomy and its Manner of Proclamation; (#1, 3 above)
3. The Sacrament of Marriage and its Impediments; (#6 above)
4. The Significance of Fasting and its Application Today; (#7 above)
5. Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World. (#8 above)

Numbers 2, 4, 5 & 9 were taken off the agenda because there was way too much argument about them and so, rather than hold up the meeting of the Synod for another 10 or 50 years while trying to iron them out, these issues were removed from the agenda.

Finally, it should be noted that all approved documents of the Council are to be published. This way, all Orthodox people will have the opportunity to read and understand what the Synod has discussed and decided.

This may be the *most important event* in the Orthodox Church in the last 100 years. If it goes well, it may point the way to further Councils to deal with the many concerns of all Orthodox Christians which still need to be addressed. Pray that the Holy Spirit guide the Fathers of the Council in their leadership of the Church.

The following is the official announcement of the convening of the Council:

Patriarchal and Synodical Encyclical on the Convocation of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (March 18, 2016)

Prot. No.: 314

† B A R T H O L O M E W
BY THE MERCY OF GOD ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE,
NEW-ROME, AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH,
GRACE AND PEACE FROM GOD

Our holy Orthodox Church, adorned in purple and fine linen by the blood of her martyrs, the tears of her Saints, and the struggles and sacrifices of her confessors of faith, celebrates today her nameday. Following a century-long struggle, this day was appropriately identified as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, marking the day in which truth shone and triumphed over falsehood through the veneration of holy icons as the bearers of the personal presence and divine grace of the incarnate Son and Logos of God and of His saints. In this way, it was acknowledged and proclaimed for all time that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), honoring and sanctifying material creation and our body in order to render them partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter, 1:4), partakers in divine grace and life.

On the way to this great and salvific truth—which was attacked by those who refused to venerate holy icons—the triumph of truth over falsehood treaded along the same path followed by the Church from the beginning of her history, namely the truth of conciliarity. The distinction between truth and falsehood—orthodoxy and heresy—is not always easily discernible. Even heretics believed, and continue to believe, that they possessed the truth; moreover, there will always be some who shall consider those who do not agree with their position as “heretics.” The Orthodox Church, in this case, recognizes only one authority: the Council of her canonical hierarchs. Beyond a conciliar decision, the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy is not possible. The Church’s dogmas and holy canons bear the seal of conciliarity. Orthodoxy is the conciliar Church.

The Orthodox Church has always emphasized this ecclesiological authority, and implements it faithfully on the local level. For centuries, this has also occurred on an ecumenical or pan-orthodox level; however, for historical circumstances, it has been interrupted for quite some time. Today, we find ourselves in a position to officially announce from our ecumenical throne that, by the grace of God, and with the consent of all the Primates of the Holy Orthodox Churches, that we will realize a decision taken more than fifty years ago and convene the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church on the island of Crete on June 18-27, 2016. The Council shall begin its work with a pan-Orthodox celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Church of Saint Menas, Heraklion, Crete, on the great and auspicious Feast of Pentecost. Deliberations shall proceed at the Orthodox Academy in Kolymbari, Chania. Our Modesty shall preside over the Holy and Great Council,

with the other Primates of Orthodox Churches at our side; other hierarchs shall participate as members of the Council through the official delegation of these Churches.

The foremost and most important goal of this Pan-Orthodox Council shall be to teach that the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, united in the Sacraments—especially in the Holy Eucharist, in the Orthodox faith, but also in conciliarity. To this end, ongoing planning for the Council has occurred through a series of Preparatory Committees and Pre-Conciliar Conferences, ensuring the unanimous spirit of the Council’s decisions and that her message is conveyed in one voice and in one heart. The issues—already delineated on a pan-orthodox level by the time the convocation of the Council was decided—that shall be reviewed by the Holy and Great Council primarily focus on matters relating to the internal operation and life of the Orthodox Church; for this reason, they must be immediately resolved. Moreover, there are issues pertaining to the relations of Orthodoxy with the rest of the Christian world, as well as the mission of the Church in our time. We certainly recognize that the world awaits to hear the voice of the Orthodox Church on many pressing problems that humanity faces today. However, it was deemed necessary that the Orthodox Church should first settle internal matters before speaking to or addressing the world, which is still considered her obligation. The fact that Orthodoxy will express its conciliarity on a global level after the passing of so many centuries constitutes a first and most decisive step that, by the grace of God, is expected to lead to the convening of further Pan-Orthodox Councils, soon thereafter.

Beloved brethren and children in the Lord,

Great historic events are guided by the grace of God, Who, ultimately, is the Lord of History. We might sow and labor; however, only God multiplies (1 Cor. 3:8). The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church indeed constitutes a historic event and we therefore place our hope in God for its realization. We call upon the Orthodox faithful in the world—clergy and laity—to pray to the Triune God that He may crown this event with His blessings, fortifying His Church to the glory of His name. We live in critical times and the unity of the Church must serve as the example of unity for a humanity torn apart by divisions and conflicts. The success of the Holy and Great Council concerns every member of the Church, who are invited to share their interests thereon. The texts that have been agreed upon on a pan-orthodox level and which have been submitted to the Holy and Great Council have already been made publicly available to every faithful of good will. These texts are not only intended to inform and update the faithful, but to also elicit their opinions and expectations of the Holy and Great Council.

Having announced this to the plenitude of the Orthodox Church throughout the world on this auspicious day, we pray that the lord God bestow upon His Church and all of you His abundant grace and blessing, and to the world peace at all times in all ways (2 Thes. 3:16).

20 March, in the year of our Lord, 2016

- † Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople Your fervent supplicant to God
- † Metropolitan John of Pergamon, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Iakovos of the Prince Islands, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Joseph of Prikonisos, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Nikitas of the Dardanelles, supplicant in Christ † Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Maximos of Selymbria, supplicant in Christ
- † Metropolitan Amphilochios of Adrianopolis, supplicant in Christ