

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MAY 29, 2016

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

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 29 SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.
Monk Theodore.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Panachida for all who have died in the service
of our country.

Mon., May 30 MEMORIAL DAY. Apostles Andronicus
& Junia of the 70.
9:00 AM Grave Blessings – Parish Cemetery
10:30-ish AM Abington Hills
Noon-ish Fairview (in Elmhurst)
3:00 PM Nicholson

Sun., June 5 SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.
Myrrh-bearer Mary, wife of Clopas.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – special sheets
High School Graduation
Parish Board Meets.
Family Day at Camp Nazareth.

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 Tigue.

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

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

Eternal Light: Denise Sovitch by Laurence Czibik

PARISH STUFF

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.

Parish Board Meeting – the next Board meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 5.

High School Graduation: We will celebrate our new graduate, Stephen Barnett, next Sunday, June 5.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Breadbasket of NEPA *latest news!* 5 boxes of food were delivered to the Bread Basket on Wednesday. The workers were very happy to receive the food which is needed during the summer months. The school's free lunch program to children of low income families is not supplied during summer vacation.

The volunteers there also stated that they are fans of our pirohi, which they said are the best in the area and look forward to when we began making them again.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH

May 22, 2016

\$ 366.00	General Collection
\$ 74.00	7 Day Light
\$ 20.00	Renovation Donation in memory of Denise Sovitch
\$ 5.00	Holy Days
\$ 4.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 7.00	Eternal Light
\$ 11.00	Taper Candles
\$ 487.00	Total Collection

Renovation Donations to date: \$1020

MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST

Commemorated this past Wednesday

from OCA.org

This day's celebration is the midpoint of the fifty days between the Feasts of Pascha and Pentecost. St John tells us (John 7:14) that "in the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the Temple, and taught." The Feast in question is the Feast of Tabernacles (celebrated in September), not Pentecost.

The Church has appointed John 7:14-30 to be read for the Midfeast, thereby linking Pascha and Pentecost. In Chapter 8 of St John's Gospel, the Lord came to the Temple again and taught the people who came to Him. After leaving the Temple, he encounters the man born blind. We will hear about him on the Sunday of the Blind Man.

The Troparion of the Midfeast ("In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as Thou didst cry to all: If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink [John 7:37]. O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!") hints at the encounter of Christ and the Samaritan Woman in just a few days.

This day we perform the Lesser Blessing of Water, and the Blessing of Fields.

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!

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 Molieben 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	Molieben 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)

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.

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. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 320 Mifflin Ave. Scranton International Dinner Club is featuring "EASTERN EUROPEAN CUISINE" on June 9. The menu will start with Fresh Cabbage Soup with the Entrée of Chicken Paprikash over Kluski Noodles with a side dish of Zucchini served with cream Smetana Sauce. The dessert will be Cheese filled Crepes topped w/assorted berries. Coffee, Tea, Water and Soda are included with the meal and a Cash Bar is available. The cost is \$20.00 per person and you can make reservations by calling 570-343-5151 before June 6, 2016.

MEMORIAL DAY

COMMEMORATING ORTHODOX SOLDIERS

from http://orthodoxinfo.com/death/prayer_dead.aspx

Memorial Day, originally designated for May 30, was originally created to remember the dead from the Civil War, the greatest conflagration with the greatest number of dead ever experienced by the United States of America. Later, it became a day to remember all those who died in fighting for their country.

These types of commemorations are not uncommon in the world in general. So, are there any days on which the Orthodox Church prays for those who died in the service of their country? Read on.

Days of Commemoration

Aside from days designated for the general commemoration of all the departed, the Holy

Orthodox Church has instituted two days for the commemoration of Orthodox soldiers and all that have laid down their lives in battle for faith and fatherland. These are:

August 29th

On this day, the Church remembers the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner. Those that lay down their lives for faith and fatherland and all that die on the field of battle are like unto this righteous man who suffered for the truth. Thus, the Holy Church considers it proper to pray on this day, August 29th, for all Orthodox soldiers. This commemoration was instituted in 1769, during the reign of Empress Catherine II, at the time of the war with the Turks and Poles. *[It is perhaps appropriate that, on the Julian Calendar, August 29 is on the same day as September 11 on the civil calendar, which has become a day of national mourning for those who died in the 9/11 attacks].*

The Saturday of St. Demetrios (the Saturday before October 26th)

On this day, the Holy Church commemorates all Orthodox Christians killed in battle; it was established by Great Prince Dimitry Ivanovich Donskoi on his patron saint's day, in 1380. When he had gained his famous and glorious victory over the wicked Tartar prince Mamai on the field of Kulikovo (beyond the River Npnyadva in the present-day province of Tula), he made a pilgrimage to the Lavra of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius from which he had gone forth to that battle at which two warrior monks of that monastery (the former boyars Oslyabya and Peresvyet) fell. Having commemorated all that fell in the war, he decided later to make this commemoration annually on the Saturday before October 26th, St. Demetrius' day. Subsequently, Orthodox Christians began to commemorate on this Saturday not only those Orthodox warriors that laid down their lives on the field of battle for faith and fatherland, but also all Orthodox Christians that have died in the faith.

Examples of the Efficacy of Prayers Offered for the Dead at the Liturgy and of the Church's Prayers for the Dead

St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome, sets before us a remarkable example of the effectiveness of prayer and the bringing of offerings for the departed, which took place in his monastery.

"One brother," he says, "for breaking the vow of poverty, was deprived of a church funeral and prayers after his death for a period of thirty days, in order to strike fear in the hearts of the others. But later, out of compassion for his soul, the Bloodless Sacrifice and prayers were offered up for him for the space of thirty days. On the last of these days, the deceased appeared in a vision to his brother, whom he had left among the living, and said: 'Until now it has gone badly for me, but now I am at peace, for today I received communion.'"

This same holy Father, in his dialogues with the Deacon Peter, tells of the apparition of a dead man who begged a priest to help him by praying for him to God. "From this it is obvious," he concludes, "how profitable the Sacred Sacrifice is for souls; for the souls themselves ask it of the living, and indicate the means by which they are cleansed of sins."

St. John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria, often celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the dead, and stated that it is a great aid to their souls. To corroborate this, he cites the following:

"There was a certain prisoner whose parents, considering him dead, had the Liturgy served three times a year for him—on Theophany, Pascha and Pentecost. After he had been released from captivity, returning unexpectedly to his parents, he recalled that on those very days a certain man of glorious appearance came to him in prison carrying a torch. The fetters fell from his hands and he was freed; the rest of the days he was again in chains as a prisoner."

St. Gregory the Dialogist also relates that during the lifetime of St. Benedict of Nursia there lived two women who had the unfortunate habit of judging their neighbors, speaking evil and reproaching others. Learning of this, the Venerable Benedict said to them: "Curb your tongues, or I will have to excommunicate you from the Holy Mysteries." But, all the same, they did not cease their evil habits and even said nothing in reply to the saint's paternal admonition. Several days later both women died in their virginity and were buried together in the church. When the Divine Liturgy was served and the deacon exclaimed: "Catechumens, depart!", many Christians beheld the two virgins leaving their tombs and the church, for they were unable to remain there during the Divine Liturgy. This occurred at each Divine Liturgy. When

St. Benedict discovered this, he took pity on them and, taking a prosphora, he commanded them to take it to the church and to remove a particle from it for the repose of their souls. He also ordered them commemorated during the performance of the Mysteries of Christ. After that, none of the Christians saw them leaving the church. From this, all understood that, owing to the Holy Church's prayer for the departed and the offerings, the departed virgins had received forgiveness from God.

The Greek Emperor Theophilus lived carelessly and did not concern himself with the salvation of his soul. Death found this sovereign in the midst of his sinful life. The Empress St. Theodora, Theophilus' consort, was horrified at the heavy lot that would befall her husband in eternity. At her behest, prayers were increased in the churches, alms were distributed, good works were performed. And what was the result? The prayers of the Church reached the Lord. Theophilus was forgiven, to the spiritual joy of his grieving spouse and to the consolation of the Church, which has so merciful and mighty a Lord, Who gives life to the dead and leads them forth from the abyss of hell, not only bodily, but spiritually.

"But who can number," asks St. John of Damascus, "all of the testimonies found in the biographies of holy men, in the accounts of the lives of the holy martyrs and the divine revelations, which clearly indicate that even after death tremendous benefit is rendered to the departed by prayers, Liturgies and the distribution of alms for them. For nothing given to God perishes in return, but is rewarded by Him with the greatest interest."

Examples of the Efficacy of Prayers for the Dead

St. John of Damascus relates: "A certain holy man had a disciple who was living heedlessly. And what happened? Death found him in the midst of his carelessness. The merciful Heavenly Father, roused by the tears and cries of the elder, revealed to him the youth burning in flames up to his neck, like the merciless rich man mentioned in the parable of Lazarus. And when the saint subjected his flesh to strict mortification, fervently beseeching God for the forgiveness of his disciple, he beheld him enveloped in flame up to his waist. Finally, when the holy man had increased his ascetic labors yet more, God revealed him in a vision to the elder, removed from

the flame and completely free."

The holy martyr Perpetua relates: "One day, at the time of general prayer in prison, I unexpectedly uttered the name of my dead brother Dinocrates. Struck by this unusual occurrence, I began to pray and sigh for him before God. On the following night I received a vision: I saw Dinocrates come forth, as though from a dark place. He was in intense heat, tormented by thirst, filthy in appearance and pallid. On his face was the wound from which he had died. Between us yawned a deep crevasse, and we were unable to approach each other. Beside the place where Dinocrates stood there was a full cistern, the lip of which stood much higher than my brother's stature, and Dinocrates stretched, trying to reach the water. I was filled with pity, for the height of the rim prevented my brother from drinking. Immediately after this I awoke and realized that my brother was in torment. But believing that my prayer could help him in his suffering, I prayed all day and night in the prison, with cries and lamentations, that Dinocrates be treated mercifully. And on the day on which we were kept in chains, I received a new vision: the place which before I had seen had been made bright, and Dinocrates, with a clean face and beautiful apparel, was enjoying its coolness. Where he had had a wound, I saw only a trace of it. The rim of the cistern was no higher than the waist of the young man, and he was able to draw water from it without effort. On the rim of the cistern stood a golden cup full of water. Dinocrates approached it and began to drink from it, but the water in it did not decrease. Satisfied, he stepped away from it and began to rejoice. With this the vision ended. I then understood that he had been released from punishment.

One day the Venerable Macarius of Egypt was walking about the desert and found a dried-out human skull lying on the ground. Turning it over with his staff, the saint heard a sound, as though from a distance. Then Macarius asked the skull: "What manner of man wast thou?"

"I was the chief of the pagan priests that dwelt in this place," it replied. "When thou, O Abba Macarius, who art full of the Spirit of God, pray for us, taking pity on them that are in the torments of hell, we then receive a certain relief."

"And what manner of relief do ye receive?" asked Macarius. "And tell me, what torments are ye

subjected to?"

"As far as heaven is above the earth," replied the skull with a groan, "so great is the fire in the midst of which we find ourselves, wrapped in flame from head to toe. At this time we cannot see each others' faces, but when thou prayest for us, we can see each other a little, and this affords us some consolation."

On hearing this reply, the venerable one wept and said: "Cursed is that day when man broke the divine ordinance!" And once again he asked the skull: "Are there any other tortures worse than yours?"

"Beneath us, much farther down, there are many others," it replied.

"And who are found in such unbearable torments?" asked Macarius.

"We who did not know God, yet experience the mercy of God a little," answered the skull. "But they that knew the name of God, yet rejected Him and did not keep His commandments, undergo much heavier and worse torments below."

After this St. Macarius took the skull, buried it in the ground and departed thence.

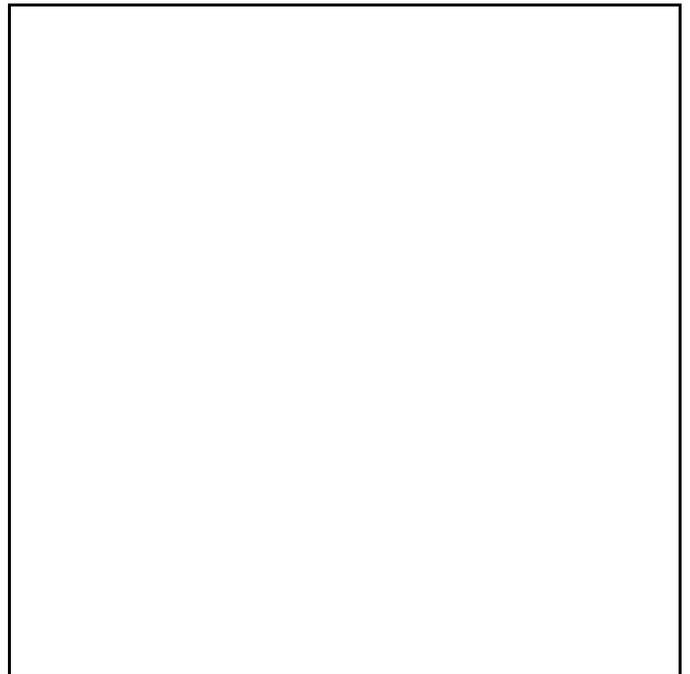
Examples of the Efficacy of Alms Distributed in Memory of the Dead

The Blessed Luke relates that he had a brother who, having, become a monk, concerned himself little with his soul and died, not having prepared himself for death. The holy elder wished to discover what his brother had been accounted worthy of, and he began to entreat God to reveal his lot. One day, during his prayers, the elder beheld the soul of his brother in the hands of demons. Meanwhile, money and costly things had been found in the cell of the deceased, from which the elder understood that the soul of his brother was suffering, among other reasons, for breaking the vow of poverty. All the money that had been found the elder gave to the poor. After that, he again began to pray, and beheld the judgment seat of God and the radiant angels contending with the demons for the soul of his brother. The demons cried out to God: "Thou art just! Judge Thou! This soul belongs to us, for it hath done our deeds!" But the angels said that the soul of the dead man had been freed by the alms which had been distributed for it. To this the evil spirits objected, saying: "Did the deceased distribute the alms, or did this elder distribute them?", indicating the Blessed

Luke.

The elder was terrified by this vision, but nonetheless summoned up the courage to say: "It is true that I distributed the alms, but not for myself, but for this soul." The outraged spirits, hearing the elder's reply, straightway vanished, and the elder, consoled by this vision, ceased to doubt and grieve over the fate of his brother.

The holy Abbess Athanasia of Aegina stipulated in her testament that the sisters of her convent prepare meals for the poor in her memory throughout the forty days following her demise. But the nuns carried out this command only until the ninth day, and afterwards ceased. Then the saint appeared to them with two angels and said: "Why have ye forgotten my bequest? Know ye not that alms given for the soul until the fortieth day and the feeding of the poor move God to mercy as well as the prayers of the priests? If the souls of the departed were sinful, God granteth them remission of sins; and if they were righteous, the charity performed on their behalf serves for the salvation of them that perform the charitable works." Having said this, the Venerable Athanasia drove her staff into the ground and vanished. The next day the sisters saw that her staff had sprouted. Then they gave glory to God, the Creator of all things.



The above blank space is offered to you for your rest and meditation.