



The REAL St Valentine

The ancient martyrology of the Church of Rome marks February 14th as the remembrance of ‘the martyr Valentine, presbyter of Rome’.

The Martyrdom of the Saint in Rome, Saint Valentine lived in Rome in the third century and was a priest who helped the martyrs during the persecution of Emperor Claudius II the Goth. The great virtue and catechetical activities of the Saint had become familiar. For this he was arrested and brought before the imperial court.

“Why, Valentine, do you want to be a friend of our enemies and reject our friendship?” asked the emperor.

Continued on page 12



Inside Messenger

Calendar	Page 4
News and Announcements	Page 5-8
Sunday School	Page 9
Philoptochos	Page 10
Coffee Hour	Page 11
Cover Story Continued	Page 12-13
Building Committee	Page 14
Military Ministry	Page 15-18
Stewardship Ministry	Page 19-23
Bible Study	Page 24-28
Pro-Life	Page 29-32
Akathist	Page 33
Prosphora	Page 34-36
Hands of Love	Page 37-39
Flower Ministry	Page 40-42
Donations and Pledges	Page 43-44

Return to Church Policies

See news on page 5

St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

Tacoma, WA 98405

Phone: 253-272-0466

Parish Website: stnicholastacoma.org

E-Mail: mail@stnicholastacoma.org

Office Hours: Tuesday—Friday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm



Sunday Services

8:45 am Orthros

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Please join us for Social/Coffee Hour in our downstairs hall, following the Divine Liturgy



Fr. Seraphim Majmudar, Our Presiding Priest

For appointments, questions or urgent needs, Fr. Seraphim is available 24/7 on his cell phone.

Fr. Seraphim's Cell phone: 253-365-5817

Office Hours at St Nicholas
Thursdays 9:00am - 12:00 noon
Email: frseraphimm@gmail.com

Saint Nicholas Messenger is the official monthly newsletter of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church of Tacoma Washington

Editors: Carol MartinOki/Bill Samaras

Media team: Paula Karanasos, Fr. Seraphim

Saint Nicholas Messenger is published monthly on the last Sunday of the month. Contributors are encouraged to submit content by the 15th of each month to allow for timely compilation. *Saint Nicholas Messenger* is published in electronic format to the St. Nicholas web page www.stnicholastacoma.org, and in print for pickup at the parish on Sundays on or after the last Sunday of the month. Physical mailings are limited to shut-ins and special needs parishioners.

Submit content, comments, or corrections, addressed to the Editor at mail@stnicholastacoma.org

All contents copyright ©2022 St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church —Tacoma, Washington

St. Nicholas Ministries

AHEPA
Paul Apostle

Akathist Group Prayer
Kathy Rowley

Altar Servers
Dr Nick Themelis

Bible Study
Genevieve Eagle

Book Store
Dr. Nick Themelis

Building Committee
Bill Acker

Building, Grounds & Maintenance
Richard Heidal, John Pangis

Choir
Rebecca Primis

Hands of Love
Merrilee Pangis

Military Service
LTC Gus Chamales

Premarital Education
George Pirotis, Diane Pirotis

Stewardship
Maria Koumantaros
Gus Chamales

2021 Parish Council
Ronnie-Sue Johnson—President
David Frisk—Vice-President
Mark Robinson—Treasurer
Christina Leinneweber—Secretary
Maria Koumantaros, Alan (John) Means, David Orriss Jr., Kathy Johnson, Klaudia Cedeno, Zach Karanasos, Fenia Mavromichali, Tony Panagiotu

Greek Folk Dance
Evy Kontos — Chair & Intermediate dancers
Dr. Anastasia Fyntrilakis—Treasurer & Teen dancers

Krisann Firth — Costume Director
Julie Kotsali — Board Member
Presbytera Sophie Majmudar — Board Member

Kelly Rosati — Beginner dancers

George Pirotis — Adult Group Instructor

Coffee Hour
Zach Karanasos

IT, etc.
Bill Samaras

Philia
Diane Pirotis

Pro Life
Genevieve Eagle

Vitos Scholarship
Ronnie Sue Johnson

Flowers & Church Decorating
Kathy Rowley

Daughters of Penelope
Fenia Mavromichali — President
Olga Manos— Vice President
Evy Kontos - Treasurer
D. Lord/H. McClure - Secretary

Maids of Athena
Zoe Matteson-President
Alexandra Lord -Vice President
Katie McClure -Treasurer
N. Serhan/A. Matteson - Secretary
Ingrid Chamalas - Advisor
Virginia McClure - Advisor

Philoptochos Society
Jane Evancho - President
Hoddi Motz - Vice-President
Merrilee Pangis - Secretary
Ingrid Chamales - Treasurer

Sunday School
Sheila Auter, Director

Greek School
George Pirotis

Lazarus Group
Dean Hamos

Pilgrimage
Zach Karanasos

Prosphora Baking
Deborah Talbot

Welcome
Ronnie Sue Johnson

Parish Council

Parish Council meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.
February 8, 2022

February 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 Photos of the Great Sunday of the Canaanite Woman 8:20am-8:40am Akathist to St Nikephoros the Leper 8:45am-10:00am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy w/ Blessing of Throats (St Blaise) 11:30am-11:45am Sampson memorial	7 Luke the Righteous 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 5:10pm-6:10pm Akathist to St Nikephoros the Leper 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers	8 Theodore the General 6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy: St Haralambos 10:00am-11:00am Fr. S at WOCA: Holy Resurrection 5:10pm-6:10pm Akathist to St Nikephoros the Leper 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers & Orthros: Leavetaking & St Haralambos 7:00pm-8:00pm Parish Council	9 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Leavetaking of the Presentation of the Lord	10 Priest Martyr Haralambos 5:30pm-6:30pm Modern Greek	11 Blaise, Bp of Sebaste Fast: Wine & Oil ok 10:00am-12:00pm No Bible Study this week	12 Meletios, AB of Antioch 6:00pm-7:00pm NO VESPERS TONIGHT
13 Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee 8:45am-10:00am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy 11:30am-12:30pm Memorial: Chrysoula Vaichis 12:45pm-1:45pm Orthodoxy 101	14 FAST FREE WEEK! Martyr Valentine of Rome 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 5:30pm-6:00pm Vespers 6:00pm-7:00pm Maria Theodorescu Memorial	15 Anthimos of Chios FAST FREE WEEK! 6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy 10:30am-1:00pm Fr S at Vicariate Clergy Group 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers w/ life of St Nikolai of Japan	16 FAST FREE WEEK! Nikolai of Japan 6:00pm-7:00pm Paraklisis	17 FAST FREE WEEK! Theodore the Soldier 5:30pm-6:30pm Modern Greek	18 FAST FREE WEEK! Pope St Leo of Rome 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 10:00am-12:00pm Bible Study 6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers: St Philothei 6:45pm-7:45pm Evening Liturgy: St Philothei	19 FAST FREE WEEK! Philothei of Athens 6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers
20 Sunday of the Prodigal Son 8:45am-10:00am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy 12:45pm-1:45pm Orthodoxy 101	21 Timothy the Righteous	22 Elwin of Cornwall	23 Polycarp of Smyrna	24 Finding of the Head of St John the Baptist 5:30pm-6:30pm Modern Greek	25 Tarasios, Patriarch of Cnople	26 St Arcadius, son of St Xenophon 6:00pm-7:00pm No Vespers Tonight
27 Ephraim of Katoounakia Sunday of the Last Judgment/Meatfare 8:45am-10:00am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy 12:45pm-1:45pm Orthodoxy 101	28 FAST: No Meat/Dairy ok every day John Cassian	Notes:				

The most up to date calendar is always found at the St. Nicholas web page: www.stnicholastacoma.org

News and Announcements

Returning to Church

St. Nicholas is fully open and we look forward to seeing you all! Here is the current status:

1. No sign up is necessary. We are able to fill to full capacity.
2. Sit wherever you like. All pews are available.
3. Coffee hour has resumed!
4. We will continue live streaming.
5. The Metropolis is asking parishioners to please consider wearing a mask while attending services until the COVID disease rates decline to low levels of transmission as defined by the CDC.

Although this directive is voluntary, we are strongly encouraging our parishioners to wear masks while at Church. Also, please note, this is only an indoor directive and does not apply to outdoor places.

We will not be re-establishing social distancing and the sign-up reservation system for attending services.

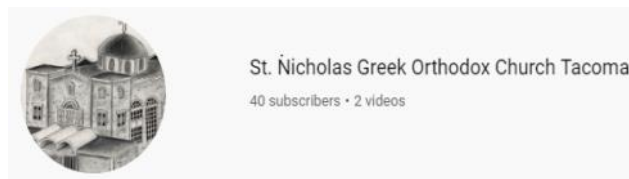
Per His Eminence's guidance, we will not ask anyone about their vaccination status.

Watch Services From Home, Live

Although you might not be able to be at St. Nicholas in person, you can watch services at home from any device capable of connecting to YouTube. This is free and is available for most services. Here's how to do it:

1. First, find the schedule when a service is being broadcast. This is called Live Streaming. Look at the calendar on the previous page, or better, look at the calendar on the St. Nicholas Web page. www.StNicholasTacoma.org. There is a Live Streaming link at the church calendar.
2. You can simply click [here](#). If there is a service underway, press the button. You will see and hear the service.
3. Watch on any device. Open **YouTube** (you may have to start a browser like Chrome). In the *YouTube search bar*, type; *St Nicholas Tacoma*

Click on this selection;



If a service is being broadcast, click the **LIVE NOW** button.

4. Some TV's allow direct connection to YouTube. You can connect as above.

Bill Samaras—

News and Announcements

St. Anthony's Monastery (Florence, Arizona)

Grape Pruning & Vineyard Bud-break 2022

Christ Is Born ~

Christ is Baptized ~

Note: Participating in Grape Pruning etc. is a wonderful way to experience Saint Anthony's Monastery. (just my opinion of course)

Pruning of grapes begins around February 15th with much vineyard work to accomplish before bud-break and continuing through the end of March. All are welcome for any length of time.

The work completed during this short window is critical for a good harvest.

- Vineyard:
 - Pruning
 - Planting Cuttings & Grafting
 - Canopy Managements & Trellis Work
 - Clean-up, Organizing & Tool Care
 - Fertilizing
- Wood Shop
- Hydroponic Greenhouse
- Incense Plantation

[Though the above work is primarily in the men-only section of the monastery there is much work to be accomplished by women elsewhere at St. Anthony's Monastery.]

Please ask those interested in laboring with us to contact me by email, phone or text with questions or to arrange housing and transportation. (I would particularly like to hear soon from anyone planning on driving, or renting a car at the airport, that might be able to offer a ride to others.)

Please forward this note to anyone who might be interested.

Thanking you in advance for your help in getting the word out this year!

Andrew Simons
aksimons53@gmail.com
773-965-5200

News and Announcements



Instant Church Directory™

Our Church Directory is now available to stewards in digital form which can be accessed on your computer or through an app on your mobile device. It's safe, easy to use and quite economical, saving us time and money in keeping our directory up-to-date in an instant!

A few details you'll want to know:

- Access to the online directory is only available to parishioners who have filled out a stewardship card for the current year. This contributes to keeping our directory safe and secure.
- Need to update your stewardship? Pledge cards are available in the Lower Hall. There's also a copy included in every monthly Messenger and on our church's website.
- All information in the online directory is secure. It can only be accessed by stewards who have been granted permission by one of our own parish administrators.
- There are plans in place to distribute a printed version of our church directory once we have built up the online one. We'll see you posted!

Need Help?

Members of the Directory Committee will be available during Coffee Hour to answer your questions, help you get registered or even upload a picture. You may also call the church office to request being added.

Submitted by Sheila Auter, Kathy Johnson, Klaudia Ceden and Despina Kipelidis

Continued Next Page...

News and Announcements

Keeping In Touch With Our Parish Family

Our Church Directory

Over 40 individuals and families have already been added to our digital directory, and it is quickly becoming an effective tool for parishioners to contact others and stay connected.

We offer a big thanks to those who already have their entries set up and have uploaded a photo. It's such a joy to open it up and see the faces of St. Nicholas GOC! All stewards are invited to be included in this wonderful resource.

Here's Why

When we originally began searching for a way to keep our parish family connected during a time of isolation, we had no idea we would still find ourselves in a similar position two years later. Now more than ever, we need to find ways to connect beyond our church walls. Our digital directory helps us do just that, making it easy to make a phone call or send a card to let others know they matter to us.

One More Bonus

With Instant Church Directory, we have the capability to produce a professional church photo directory that can be printed, bound and offered to parishioners. Directories like this become great mementos, marking time in our parish history. We hope to keep adding more individuals and families over the next few months so everyone has a chance to be included in our printed version.

So Don't Be Left Out

Get connected and be part of our efforts in building community! If you are a parishioner (you've been baptized and chrismated according the rites of the Orthodox Church) of St. Nicholas GOC, simply follow these steps:

1. Turn in your 2022 Stewardship Pledge Card.
2. You will then receive an email from one of our Directory Admins (Sheila-Monica Auter or Kathy Johnson) with further instruction. Feel free to call the Church Secretary if you are not contacted in a timely manner.



Sunday School

Sunday School News

Children in the Church

The following was taken from the book, Children in the Church Today, An Orthodox Perspective, written by Sister Magdalen.

“Children in our church are full members of the body of Christ. We do not have a special children’s service because we realize that our experience of the church is not merely rational. Even if a child cannot yet understand all that is happening, he or she can see, hear, smell, taste, touch and experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. We must not deprive our children of this experience; we must prepare them to appreciate it, to look forward to it, and to participate in it by prayer and in as many other ways as possible. Children should prepare for and look forward to receiving Holy Communion from the earliest possible age.

Children who suffer from boredom in Church overcome it more easily if they are not afraid to talk about it. It can be mentioned as a temptation which affects adults too. (Children see them looking at their watches or starting to gossip...) One can also encourage a child to tell Christ about his own problems and joys during a service if he finds himself becoming tired or distracted - even talk to Christ about his boredom and ask God to help him appreciate the service. (When we -"cannot pray" we should tell God first of all, because it may be a sign of spiritual sickness.) Young children may need to be taken out for a while or given something to look at or hold, or have explained to them what is happening, or be shown something in the Church . . .

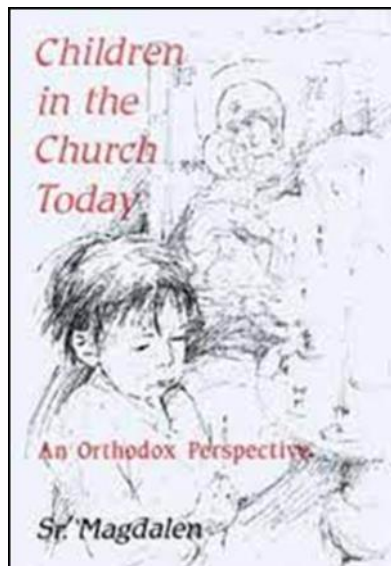
When we consider the question of church attendance, Holy Communion, and prayers at home, we must have in mind not only the immediate result but also a long term view:

What is the best preparation for this child to live a Christian life in this world?

What will sow in the child a spiritually healthy attitude to Christ, to the Church, to the Sacraments?

What will help my child preserve to adulthood the desire to know Christ and have communion with Him?"

—Submitted by: Sheila Auter



Philoptochos News

PHILOPTOCHOS

President's Message

Philoptochos Membership - Our year starts in January and runs through December. Annual membership renewal requests have been mailed to all current members. Please consider renewing your membership. We welcome new members as well. There is a lot of satisfaction in doing things for the common good and helping our church and the less fortunate among us.

Annual dues are \$30/year. Please contact Carol in the church office at 253-272-0466 if you would like the membership form.

Philoptochos Member Meetings - The chapter member meetings will continue to be held monthly by Zoom. The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2022, from 5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M. Zoom information will be emailed to those members who have provided email. If you would like more specific information about how to participate, please call the church secretary and she will ask a Philoptochos board member to contact you. Topics will include outreach for potential community and parishioner needs. We invite members and interested parishioners to join these meetings and share their thoughts. The calendar of events will be posted in the Messenger as we determine when we can resume our activities safely.

The Philoptochos recent activities in January/February to give back to our community are described below.

Donations to St. Basil's Academy - Our church's tradition in January is to have the cutting of the vasilopeta. This is a fund raiser for St. Basil's Academy, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need, in New York. Philoptochos members baked and served the vasilopita on January 9. In addition, five loaves were auctioned off, resulting in collections of \$1,318 as of Jan. 21.

Soup Coffee Hour & Pie Sale Coffee Hour - Traditionally Philoptochos has held two coffee hours in January and February with funds for these events to benefit the Archdiocese National Cancers Fund, Social Services Fund and Children's Autism Fund. Philoptochos members are hesitant to present food at church until the Covid variant is down. Donations will be made to these charities from the budget. Please send checks to the church, attention Philoptochos, if additional donations would like to be made to these charities.

Outreach to others - Please take a few minutes to call and support the older members of our community during the pandemic. Human contact and interaction is so important during these trying COVID-19 times.

Thanks for your Support!

Jane Evancho

Coffee Hour



COFFEE HOUR MINISTRY

MISSION

- ◆ To extend the Holy Eucharist to social/coffee hour
- ◆ To express and manifest our faith by extending the hospitality we proclaim and by acknowledging the grace we have received during the Divine Liturgy
- ◆ To promote fellowship
- ◆ To connect with fellow parishioners, to welcome guests and to invite new faith seekers to our Church

REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN THE MINISTRY

A servant's heart and a sense of love and care that is penetrating, engaging and inspiring.

TEAM SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY:

2/6/2022	Sampson's Memorial
2/13/2022	Team Karanasos
2/20/2022	Community Coffee Hour*
2/27/2022	Men's Team

***Community Coffee Hour:** Parishioners are encouraged to bring cookies, pastries, chips, etc. Just be aware that during fasting periods (Great Lent, Apostles, Panagia & Nativity) the items need to be vegan.

TEAMS:

- **Team Karanasos:** Daphne Karanasos, Leader, Anna Wilson, Christina Gretty, Zach Karanasos, Angie Wilen, Ann Koopman, John Kouklis and Pres Maria Armatas
- **Team Johnson:** Joseph Johnson, Leader, Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Fenia Mavromichali, Barbara Phillops, Sandra Ciarochi, Yvonne Brandvild, Maro Kouklis and Yanni and Sophia Charitou
- **Team Pres Sophie:** Pres Sophie Majmudar, Leader, Evy Kontos, Irene Misiewicz, Gloria Brown, Deborah Talbot, Savina Frisk, Claudia Cedeno and Scott and Rachael Parrell
- **Men's Team:** Ed Winskill, Leader, Dr. Fred Ehret, Bill Samaras, John Cook Hugh Winskill, Andrew Phillips, Alex Misiewicz, and Dale Sokratis Frisk

Cover Story Continued

The Saint replied "My lord, if you knew the gift of God, you would be happy together with your empire and would reject the worship of idols and worship the true God and His Son Jesus Christ."

One of these judges stopped the Saint and asked him what he thought about Jupiter and Mercury, and Valentine boldly replied, "They are miserable, and spent their lives through corruption and crime!"

The judge furiously shouted, "He blasphemes against the gods and against the empire!"

The emperor, however, continued his questions with curiosity, and found a welcome opportunity to finally learn what was the faith of Christians. Valentine then found the courage to urge him to repent for the blood of the Christians that was shed. "Believe in Jesus Christ, be baptized and you will be saved, and from this time forward the glory of your empire will be ensured as well as the triumph of your armory."

Claudius became convinced, and said to those who were present: "What a beautiful teaching this man preaches."

But the mayor of Rome, dissatisfied, began to shout: "See how this Christian misled our Prince."

Then Claudius brought the Saint to another judge. He was called Asterios, and he had a little girl who was blind for two years. Listening about Jesus Christ, that He is the Light of the World, he asked Valentine if he could give that light to his child. St. Valentine put his hand on her eyes and prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ, true Light, illuminate this blind child." Oh the great miracle! The child saw! So the judge with all his family confessed Christ. Having fasted for three days, he destroyed the idols that were in the house and finally received Holy Baptism.

When the emperor heard about all these events, he initially thought not to punish them, thinking that in the eyes of the citizens he will look weak, which forced him to betray his sense of justice. Therefore St. Valentine along with other Christians, after they were tortured, were beheaded on 14 February in the year 268 (or 269).



Saint Valentine: Patron of Lovers

The Saint had a reputation as a peacemaker, and one day while cultivating some roses from his garden, he heard a couple quarrel very vigorously. This shocked the Saint, who then cut a rose and approached the couple asking them to hear him. Even though they were dispirited, they obeyed the Saint and afterwards were offered a rose that blessed them. Immediately the love returned between them, and later they returned and asked the Saint to bless their marriage. In addition, one of the charges against Valentine was that he did not adhere to the command of the emperor which stated that men who had not fulfilled their military obligations were not allowed to marry; meanwhile the Saint had blessed the marriage of young Christian soldiers with their beloveds. Because of his connection to the sacrament of marriage, St Valentine served as the inspiration for the Late Medieval Western literary foundations for what would by the nine-

teenth century evolve into today's popular, secular Valentine's Day.

Continued next page...

Cover Story Continued

With the increasing secularization of western society, the liturgical commemoration of the holy Martyr Valentine became skewed to include snapshots from pagan mythology, such as cupid, with the focus of the day only on romantic love, with phrases such as, "Be My Valentine." Cards with hearts and little poems on them. Candy and flowers given to someone one we love. Young and old alike expressing their affection for their sweethearts. February 14th, for our culture, means cards, candy and flowers.



In reality, St Valentine's day commemorates a great martyr of Christ, who risked his life to perform the sacrament of marriage for faithful Christian couples—who themselves, were risking their own lives in receiving the sacrament of marriage "illegally" according to the persecuting Roman authorities.



Fr. Seraphim

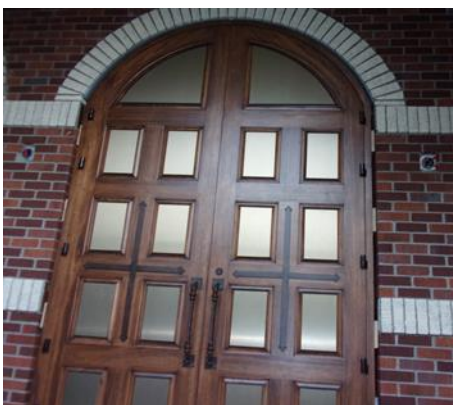
Building Committee



STILL THE DOORS

The final inspection for the Narthex Renovation project was signed off by the City of Tacoma Building Department on January 7th. While the project is officially complete as far as the building officials are concerned, there still are some odds and ends to finish up.

The most obvious items concern the two sets of custom double doors. First, laminate accent work on the interior set of doors that lead into the Sanctuary was deficient, to the extent it will fully be removed. Instead of removing the laminate, the wood surfaces underneath, (at the request of the design team), will be sanded, stained & varnished a slightly darker color. This will create the image of a cross on the doors in a more stately manner. This work will be done by a specialized craftsman from the door supplier, who unfortunately will not be available to do the work until around the end of February. He will also be installing arched door casing trim at the exterior doors. Interior door casing trim will be installed as well.



Additionally, there are water repellents to apply over the new exterior brick work when dry weather occurs over the course of at least a few weekdays, and some other loose ends to take care of.

Starting off with COVID disruptions in 2020, and then other events that have occurred along the way, this project has been a long and bumpy ride, but thank God for the gift of resiliency, abundance, second chances, good will and resourcefulness.

Military Ministry News

by Gus Chamales

A few years ago (2015), John Majmudar and I travelled to Ft. Benning, GA to watch the United States Army's 34th annual Best Ranger competition. It is a two-man team competition where Ranger Qualified officers and enlisted soldiers compete in a grueling continuous 62 hour competition consisting of various tests of physical fitness, obstacle courses, and military skills ranging from first aid, and hand grenade throwing, to knife throwing and pistol/rifle marksmanship. To illustrate just how physically demanding the competition



was, the internationally renown Spartan Race that is the world's leading obstacle race series held in places all around the world, was only a four hour portion of that year's 62 hour continuous competition. The competition events change yearly, with 50 teams from across the active Army and the Army National Guard beginning the competition on day 1. Only the top 25 teams are allowed to go forward from day 2 until the end.



When John and I went we took time off from the competition to attend the Sunday Liturgy service at Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church, located close to the heart of the Columbus metropolitan area. The neighborhood is a lot like our own Hilltop area. We entered into the narthex and were greeted by a couple of very friendly parishioners who were presumably members of their greeter/welcoming ministry. After venerating the icons and lighting our candles, we entered into the sanctuary.

The sanctuary of the church is about half the size of ours but it was beautifully decorated with iconography reminiscent of the Orthodox churches and monasteries we saw during the 2018 pilgrimage led by Father Seraphim to the Holy Land and on the island of Cyprus.

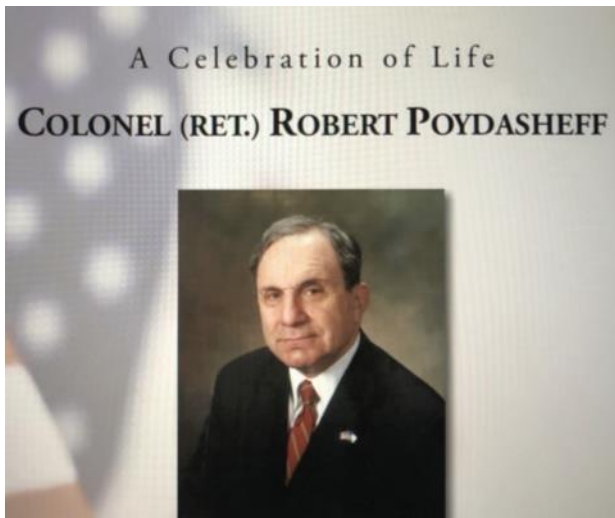
During the announcements at the end of the service, Father Steven acknowledged the presence of two new people in the pews, and asked us to introduce ourselves. Immediately John stood up and in a very confident and distinguished manner introduced us both, informed the parishioners that we were from St. Nicholas, in Tacoma, WA, where his father, Father Seraphim, is our parish priest. He very eloquently shared that we were in the area attending the Best Ranger Competition, but that we were compelled to take time out from the morning's events to attend liturgy at their church. I was very impressed by the way John handled that moment and I know that Fr. Seraphim and Presbytera Sophie would have been proud.

Afterward, we were invited to their dining hall where we all enjoyed a delicious baked salmon luncheon and heartfelt fellowship. One of the parishioners that introduced himself to us was a very distinguished gentleman, and a retired Army Colonel. COL(R) Roy Poydasheff took note that we were there attending the Best Ranger competition. He was very kind and made us both feel welcome as he

Military Ministry News

proudly shared with us the very impressive history of their church, that was built largely through the “sweat equity” of their parishioners. I remember how he made us feel so welcome. It is exactly how everyone should be made to feel whenever or wherever they may have an opportunity to visit God’s home. He clearly demonstrated the epitome of the Greek word **“philotimo.”**

This year we sent COL(R) & Mrs. Poydasheff our Christmas card and we received theirs. Sadly, Mrs. Poydasheff informed us that COL Poydasheff passed away earlier this year. I was saddened to hear the news and I am certain that the Columbus/Ft. Benning, GA, and Greek Orthodox communities have lost a great leader, a true gentleman, and a loyal friend.



I would like to take this opportunity to share with you through this ministry a little more about this truly remarkable retired Army officer, and fellow Orthodox Christian.

Robert S. Poydasheff was born in February of 1930 and raised in Bronx, New York. His education was extensive. He earned a BA in political science from the Citadel in 1954, a J.D. from Tulane University Law School in 1957, an M.A. in international relations from Boston University’s Graduate Program in Berlin, Germany in 1967, and attended The Hague Academy of International Law in The Netherlands.

He served in the United States Army from 1955-1979. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry branch of the United States Army but served in that capacity for just a short time. After going on leave without pay to attend law school, he was reassigned to the Judge Advocate General Corps. He served in a variety of assignments as an Army lawyer and as a chief counsel for soldiers of all ranks including high ranking officers, and he graduated in 1976 from the United States Army War College. He was so highly regarded as a soldier and a military lawyer that in 2012 the Army War College Foundation named Colonel Poydasheff an Outstanding Alumnus in recognition of his wide-ranging service.

After retiring from the Army the COL and Mrs. Poydasheff settled in Columbus, GA. Eventually he got involved in local politics and served on the Columbus city council for many years before being elected mayor in 2002. A Republican, COL(R) Poydasheff believed in supporting the best candidate for any position and he publicly supported subsequent mayoral candidates from both parties after retiring from political office.

Colonel Poydasheff died on 24 September 2020 after a brief illness. **May his memory be eternal!**

Continued on next page....

Military Ministry News

Located at Fort Benning, GA is the home of the United States Army Ranger School and the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade. The Ranger course has changed little since its inception in 1950 and its mission is to train soldiers in small unit tactics under extremely arduous conditions, in order for them to engage the enemy in close combat and direct fire battles. The school has been producing exceptionally highly motivated officers and enlisted men for over 70 years, and graduates are awarded the coveted black and gold RANGER tab. The course instills in its graduates a sense of leadership and fighting spirit that has been proven in battles and wars throughout our country's history. Most of the men who have risen to the highest officer and enlisted ranks in the United States Army are proud graduates of this course, as are most of the Army's highest decorated soldiers.

Also located at Fort Benning is the United States Army Ranger Hall of Fame. Only a handful of remarkable people are admitted every year into this prestigious group. Among those selected are people such as Medal of Honor recipients Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart and Master Sergeant Gary L. Gordon, who died while attempting a rescue operation during "Black Hawk Down." Also Monsignor Joseph R. Lacy who landed in the lead boat on Omaha Beach and ignored heavy fire as he ministered to the dying on the beach. More recently, General Colin Powell, Tom Hanks of "Saving Private Ryan," and in 2016, COL Robert S. Poydasheff. Excerpts from the citation admitting him to this prestigious group include comments as follows:



Colonel Robert S. Poydasheff has provided effective professional support of Rangers for more than fifty years....exemplary accomplishments as an officer and his successful career in law and government at the highest levels....freely shared his time and knowledge helping Army Rangers...preventing and solving problems in law and regulations ranging from personal matters, to major legal and military justice issues. In landmark trials of soldiers accused of crimes, he refused to leave a fallen comrade and conducted a skillful and effective defense, gaining recognition from the Secretary of the Army for the extraordinary skill exhibited...the highest standards in personal and official conduct in every office...was a unifying force in his leadership as a Councilman and then as Mayor of Columbus, GA....foresight, planning, organizational skills and energy lead directly to...warding off loss of the 75th Ranger Regiment in the Base Realignment and Closure study that will benefit the Army and national security for decades to come. He assisted in the formation of the U.S. Army Ranger Association, Inc. and the National Ranger memorial Foundation...assisted retired Rangers in the fight against drugs in a local neighborhood...served as the Army liaison to the Congress and the Department of Defense in the management of the Defense Dependent School

Continued on next page....

Military Ministry News

System. In Berlin...he assisted in an intelligence operation involving a defector, taking charge of him...in Vietnam, he received a citation from the Central Intelligence Agency for exemplary assistance to their operations. Colonel Bob Poydasheff has exemplified the Ranger Creed in thought, word and deed in supporting Rangers, Ranger families, Ranger Associations, and the Ranger Memorial Foundation.

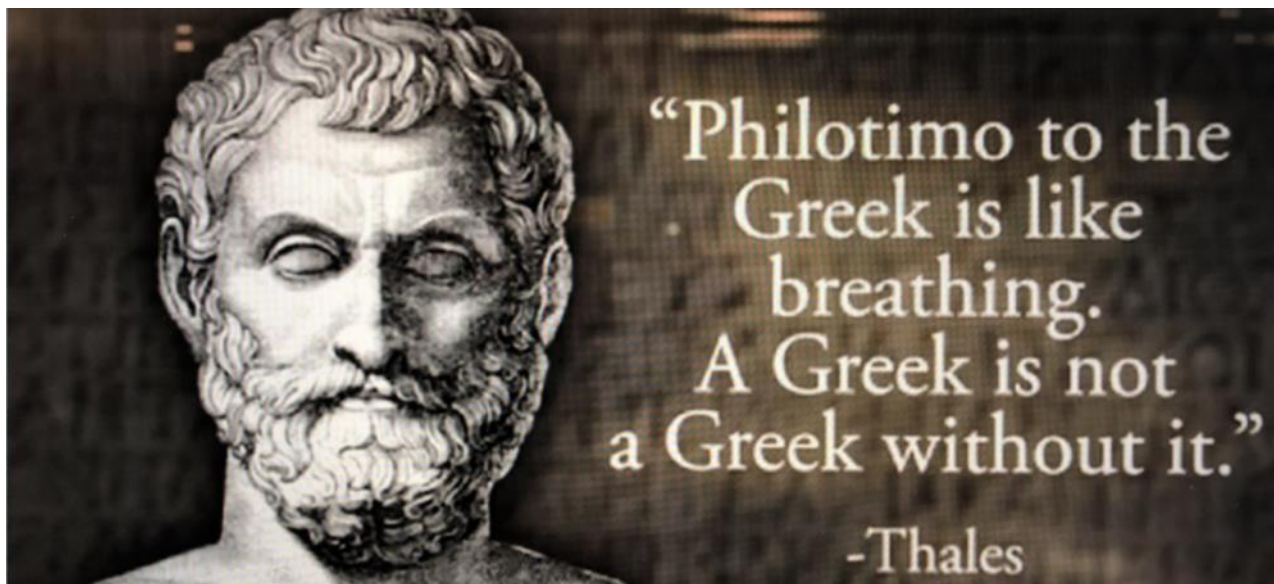
Colonel and Mrs. Poydasheff were founding members of their Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church and tremendous supporters of the military and civilian community of the Fort Benning/Columbus, GA area. In May 2021 Representatives Sanford Bishop and Drew Ferguson proposed legislation (H.R. 3475) to name the new Veterans Affairs clinic in Columbus, GA after Colonel Poydasheff, and on November 12, 2021, the bill was signed into law by President Joe Biden. Construction of the new clinic is expected to be completed in March of 2022.

The motto of the United States Army Rangers is "RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!" Colonel Robert S. Poydasheff lived that motto every day of his life, and it was a true honor for both John and me to make his acquaintance while attending services at Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church in Columbus, GA.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned how Colonel Poydasheff made us feel so welcome in God's home. Shortly after returning from that trip I was asked to be a part of the Greeter/Welcoming Ministry that was then being led by Diane Pirotis. I have been a member of that ministry ever since and I have always tried to emulate Colonel Poydasheff's style and manner of making new people feel welcome in God's home here at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. I have often thought of Colonel Poydasheff while performing my duties as a greeter at our church, and I regret not sharing with him the strong impact he had as an example of "philotimo," long before I learned from George Pirotis' Greek class, exactly what it was. I think he knows now.

"And now you know, the rest of the story."

"Good day!"

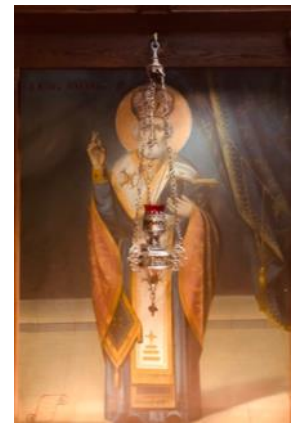


Stewardship Ministry News

Dear Parishioners of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church:

We hope you had an enjoyable holiday season with your family and friends, and we wish you all the best in the coming year.

For those who have been reading our previous articles in the Messenger, you know that we greatly appreciate your generosity of time, talent, and treasure. It is because of your kindness that St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church is a loving house of worship, and a parish that strives to spread the word of God as part of our daily mission.



This month we would like to share with you a recent article from Father Stavros, who is the Parish Priest at St. John the Baptist Church, in Tampa, Florida. Father Stavros writes a daily article as part of his Prayer Team Ministry, and it is free for people of all faiths to subscribe and learn about the Orthodox Faith, and the word of God. Several St. Nicholas parishioners enjoy following his ministry and occasionally Gus likes to share his “words of wisdom”, when his article helps to emphasize the meaning of stewardship, and how we can all become better disciples of Jesus Christ.

If you enjoy the below article, you can sign up to join his Prayer Team Ministry and learn more about the Orthodox Faith. Simply log onto the internet and type in [Father Stavros, PrayerTeam365](http://FatherStavros.com). That will take you to his website where you can subscribe to his daily writings.

Before handing you off to Fr. Stavros, we want to again express our sincere thanks for all you do for our beloved St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church! We would also like to extend an invitation to join us if you are looking for a ministry in which to share some of your God given talents. We welcome your thoughts and comments and would appreciate having you as a part of our Stewardship team. Please contact the church office at (253) 272-0466 to learn more about the Stewardship Ministry and become a Disciple of Jesus Christ at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

And now, below is Father Stavros' message from January 10, 2022.

Prayer Team

The Prayer Team, Monday, January 10

Kick-Starting My Faith in the New Year—Stewardship

As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. I Peter 4:10

Good Morning, Prayer Team!

Every year in our parish, we choose a word to define our year. I also encourage people to choose a word to define their year. It's not too late to do this. It's only January 10, so if you haven't chosen a word for 2022 to define your year, I encourage you to do this. The advantage of choosing one word, over making a long list of new year's resolutions, is that it's hard to not only keep a long list of

Continued on next page....

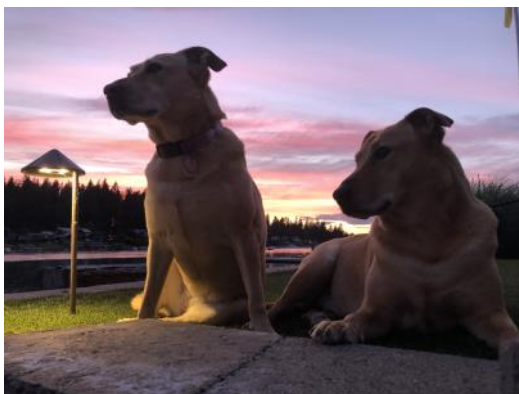
Stewardship Ministry News

resolutions, but it's also hard to remember them. We can check in with one word on a daily basis, and it's easy to remember. If your goal is to diet and exercise, maybe you want to choose the word "health," and each day, you can check in with that word. The word for our parish this year is "stewards," And our verse is today's verse from **I Peter 4:10: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."**

There are several elements in this verse. First, "each has received." Each of us has received something from God, some gift (and usually more than one). Each received something "varied." Not everyone has the same thing. Not everyone gets married or has children. Not everyone with children gets three or four—some have one or two. Some don't have children. Not everyone gets to lead a corporation or become a millionaire. The obsession with everyone needing to have the same thing is not only impractical, it is anti-scriptural. God has given each of us something, and that something is varied.

What has God given us? According to this verse, **He has given each of us two things—a gift, and grace.** A gift is something offered freely out of love, not something given out of a sense of obligation. A gift is supposed to be received with gratitude, not entitlement. So, God gave each of us a gift. My gift is to serve as a priest. Should I not be grateful for that? Should I complain to God "Why didn't you make me a surgeon? Why didn't you give me a career where I could be rich?" I accept god's gift and (on most days) see it as a privilege. If you completed this sentence—"I see (fill in the blank what you do for a living) as a privilege" - would that be a truthful statement?

Another gift we receive from God is grace. God's grace perfects what is imperfect. It's what allows ordinary to become extraordinary. It's what allows each person in their ordinary-ness to become extraordinary in some way. A good friend of mine, who is on the prayer team, is not married, live in a



small apartment, and has a job which allows her to put bread on the table, but which is not going to make her rich. What makes her extraordinary is that she has a love for animals, which is infectious. She takes care of dogs, trains service dogs, and her efforts bring comfort and joy to many people. On top of that, she is kind, compassionate, and very God-centered. That's extraordinary! Why? Because most people are not as excited about anything, and are not as kind, compassionate, or God-centered. We (including me) tend to obsess about acquiring things, belonging to groups, and worrying

about security. Is this being a good steward of God's varied grace?

This brings me to the last point that is made in this verse, which is that we are to employ our gifts and our varied grace "for one another." We are to love God by serving one another, Many times, we tend to think of our jobs as the vehicles by which we make money, or we think of the financial gain first. We don't think of them as the vehicles by which we serve one another.

Continued on next page....

Stewardship Ministry News

We've muddied the word **"steward"** by associating it primarily with money and how much money one gives to the church. This is not what steward means at all. **Good stewardship is taking care of the gifts God has given to you.**

The first and foremost gift each of us who is reading this message has, is life. **You are alive today. That is a gift!** What are you going to do with that gift? Waste it in front of a television set? Spend it on social media? Have you made a plan for how you are going to employ God's gifts today for the benefit of others? It is true that we are stewards of our money—and as good stewards, we should offer money in support of both the church and charity. And each church should offer some of its money in charity as well.

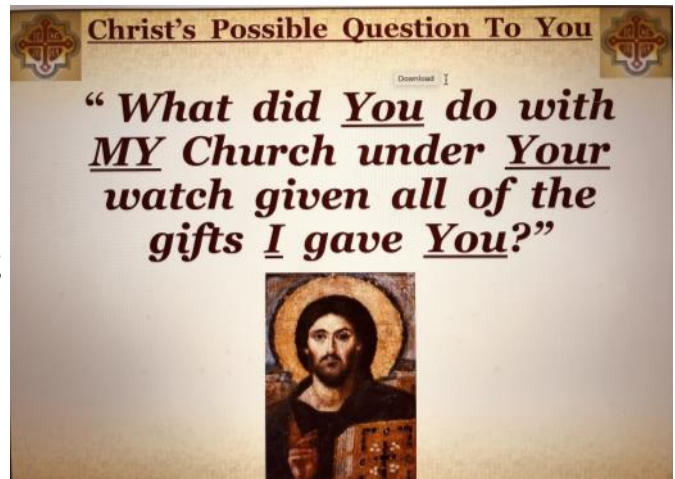
We're going to spend this week reflecting on ways to kick-start our faith in the new year. Many of us are "zipping along" in our faith, and if that describes you, hopefully these reflections will encourage you to keep doing what you are doing. However, many of us are struggling or in need of some encouragement or just a new start. Hopefully, these reflection will give you something to think about in this new year, and some practical ways to feel more joy and purpose in your Christian walk.

Perhaps the best way to live the Christian life is to focus on being a good steward of today. After all, as we read in **Psalm 118:24, "This is the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."** So, reflect on the gifts that God has given you, and reflect on them with gratitude and purpose, with gratitude for what you have rather than sadness for what you don't have: and with purpose, with a desire to employ your gifts for the benefit of others.

Lord, thank You for Your many gifts. Thank You for the gift of this day. Help me to see this day as a gift that You have given to me. Thank You for the gifts You have given that are unique to me (list them). Help me to use these gifts to give glory to You and to serve others today and always. Amen.

One of the easiest ways to kick-start your faith is not to be sad over the failures of yesterday, or the dreams of tomorrow (that might not be realized). Instead, **focus on the opportunities today to use your varied gifts of God's grace to show love for god, and in service to one another.**

+Fr. Stavros



Submitted by: Gus

Stewardship continues next page...

Stewardship Ministry News

Stewardship

Offering Our Time, Talent and Treasure To God

Stewardship Message

Dear Parishioners of St. Nicholas:

On behalf of the Stewardship Ministry we would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals listed below. Everyone who is listed has either made a donation or has signed a 2022 stewardship card on file. If your name has a • after it, this means we have a 2022 stewardship card on file for you. THANK YOU to all those listed below. We are only completing the first month of the year, and already have 76 family names listed. If you have not submitted a 2022 stewardship card, please complete one as soon as possible. The 2022 stewardship card can be found at the end of the Messenger.

In addition, we live in an age where several parishioners are making their contributions by way of automatic withdrawal from their bank account into the church's bank account, credit card payment, withdrawal from their Charitable IRA account, and a traditional check. If you are paying by way of automatic withdrawal or credit card, please check your statements to make certain the correct amount has been withdrawn and the expiration date for your credit card has not expired.

Below are the names of those who have made donations or stewardship commitments as of January 25, 2022.

Donations and or Stewardship Commitments

William and Mary Acker •	Maria and Kosta Aggelidakis •
Patra Alatsis •	Anonymous
Sonny and Irene Angelos •	Tony and Lori Apostle •
Tyler and Lexi Balsler	Chrysanthe and SFC(R) Wiley Barnes
Ricardo Aaron Bottino •	Yvonne Brandvold •
Gloria and Peter Brown •	Anne and Don Calcote •
Klaudia Cedeno •	C.G. and Ingrid Chamales •
Steven Chamales	Yianni and Sophie Charitou •
Anthony and Sandra Ciarochi	Dina Deliyianides •
Genevieve Eagle •	Frederick Ehret and Anastasia Fyntrilakis •
David and Savina Frisk •	Dayle Sokratis Frisk
Christina Gretty •	Sally Hallis •
Daniel and Ekaterini Hanson •	Natalya Harpe
Timothy and Kathleen Harvey •	Magdaline Hatzikazakis and Reginald Williams •
Richard and Kathleen Heidal •	William Frederick Lincoln Horton •
Joseph and Ronnie-Sue Johnson •	Kathy Johnson •
Hariklia (Rikki) Kapes •	Anna Karanasos
Paula Karanasos	Zachary and Daphne Karanasos •
Sharon Kennedy •	Naser and Catalina Khalaj •
Claudia Kieszling •	Maria Koumantaros •

Stewardship Ministry News

Stewardship

Offering Our Time, Talent and Treasure To God

Donation and Stewardship commitments continued from previous page...

- Anne Ruth Koopman •
- John Kouklis •
- Robert and Anne Latz •
- Fr. Seraphim and Sophie Majmudar •
- Chris and Susan Manthou •
- Katherine and Gregory Mason •
- Helen McClure •
- Alan and Sheilagh Means •
- Derek Olsen
- John and Merrilee Pangis •
- George and Diane Pirodis •
- Andrew and Rebecca Primis
- Katherine and Mike Rowley •
- Andy and JoAnn Stergachis •
- Jacob Swain •
- Deborah Talbot •
- Samuel Torvend
- Michael Jane White
- Kalitsa Xitco •
- Elia and Micheline Lakkis
- Mary Leonard •
- Olga Manos •
- Mathew John Manthou •
- Iphigenia Mavromichali •
- Virginia McClure •
- Tatyana Mikeladze
- David and Katrina Orriss •
- John Payne •
- Steve and Kathleen Politakis •
- Martin J. and Lorissa C. Reiter III
- Olympia Stafford •
- Rob and Lea Sullivan
- James & Jenise Sweeney •
- Nick and Becky Themelis •
- John Voklert
- Ed Winskill •

Contributed by: Maria Koumantaros



Bible Study

ST. NICHOLAS BIBLE STUDY
THE REVELATION

DANIEL CHAPTER 7

The beast

- Ancient of Days
- The beast's war on the saints
- Triumph of the Ancient of Days

Revelation 13:11 “And I saw another beast which rose out of the earth and it had two horns like a lamb, and it was speaking like a dragon.”

This beast, some say ⁷⁰¹is the Antichrist, but to others his two horns seemed to hint at the Antichrist and the false prophet.⁷⁰² Since it is admitted that the false prophet also is to come in his own person, we think it is not absurd to understand that the dragon is Satan, that the beast rising out of the sea is the Antichrist, and that the one present, according to the opinion of the Blessed Irenaeus ⁷⁰³is to be understood, as the false prophet rising out of the earth, that is out of the earthly and groveling way of life, ⁷⁰⁴having horns like a lamb, because he completely covers with sheep's skin the hidden murderous character of the wolf,⁷⁰⁵and because of his appearance of piety in the beginning, concerning which Irenaeus says, speaking thus verbatim: “About the adjutant⁷⁰⁶ which he also calls ‘false prophet, he speaks,’ it says, ‘like a dragon.’”⁷⁰⁷ To him, it says, will be given the power so that he makes signs and wonders, going before the Antichrist, preparing for him the way which leads to perdition.⁷⁰⁸ The healing of the wound of the beast we said⁷⁰⁹ is the apparent union for a short time of the divided kingdom,⁷¹⁰or the restoration through the Antichrist of the destructive tyranny of Satan for a short time, or the false resurrection from the dead of one of his close associates. This one is to speak like a dragon, it says, for he will both act and speak the things of the devil, the source of evil.

We can see that St. Andrew (and St. Irenaeus) have identified the following: Satan is the dragon – Antichrist is the beast rising out of the sea – the False Prophet is the beast rising out of the earth. Even though the language of the **Book of Revelation** is extremely symbolic, and therefore confusing, it doesn't mean it is a “psychedelic imaginary” of symbols. There is enough concrete relationship between the symbols and real historical figures that renders this Book not just symbolic. Saints have described the **Book of Revelation** as the entire story of creation and, at the same time also, an organized text that corresponds to history unfolding sequentially. Referring to that kind of concept, now we have one of these concrete descriptions. We see that the dragon, the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth are not all one entity; and furthermore, there is a core concept here when it comes to what Satan does. His fundamentally operating method is to counterfeit. The Lord says, **John 8:44** “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” He can't produce anything on his own. These three figures are in a relationship of lying to the world. The source is Satan (the dragon). He's not incarnate and doesn't have flesh and blood. This doesn't mean he can't form a physical appearance and manipulate the world. The false prophet

Bible Study

and Antichrist are both incarnate and are flesh and blood. Christ, however, has both divine and human natures. Satan discovered this truth too late, as St. John Chrysostom says, *“hades swallowed a man, and lo discovered God”*. The devil is so envious of God that he attempts to counterfeit his own incarnation story, even though he can't actually do it. Therefore, he is going to falsify his incarnation through Antichrist (Αντίχριστος). He wants to be worshipped as Christ is worshipped. As Panagia willingly accepted the Holy Spirit, Antichrist will willingly accept Satan. Satan will not take over Antichrist's body (like a puppeteer).

St. Andrew continues:

Revelation 13:12-13 *“It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its [142] inhabitants in order to worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³And it works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men.”*

The forerunner⁷¹¹ of the rebellious false Christ will perform all things, it says, through sorcery for the deception of people, to consider the Antichrist to be God, by the working of these marvels giving testimony⁷¹² and receiving indisputable glory in imitation of the Baptist, who brought believers to the Savior. For the lie, to deceive people, strives eagerly to imitate the truth.⁷¹³

Therefore, there is nothing unreasonable for even the adjutant of the Antichrist, working through demons to make an image for the beast and show it speaking, and to prepare and to destroy those who do not worship it. And the mark of the destructive name of the Apostate he will earnestly endeavor to put on all: on the right hand in order to cut off the doing of good works, and on the forehead in order to teach the deceived ones to boldly speak in error and darkness. But the ones marked with divine light on their faces will not accept it. And he will make it his business to extend the symbol of the beast everywhere, in both buying and selling so that a violent death will be suffered from lack of necessities by those who do not receive it.

Colonel Chamales (retired) on the term “Adjutant”:

The adjutant is a subordinate officer who handles administrative duties for the commander. Usually he is two ranks below the commander. His position comes with great power. He's the commander's right-hand man when it comes to administrative things, therefore anyone who wants something done by the commander, generally has to go through the adjutant to get to the commander. Similar to the secretary (or office administrator) of a corporate routine, he will make decisions on his own without troubling his executive, many times when the adjutant has been in the position long enough to get a feel for the commander's superior. (Gus said his adjutant even had a stamp with his signature to sign necessary documents.) The commander has to have a lot of trust in his adjutant.

Father Seraphim: It's interesting where St. Andrew picks up on the relationship between the false prophet and Antichrist and compares to a commander and his adjutant. So, in Greek we call Antichrist, Αντίχριστου, then we would call his false prophet, αντιπροδρομος (in lieu of forerunner). Therefore, the adjutant is going to be appearing before Antichrist. The educated Christian will be asking, “Is this powerful new world figure the forerunner of Antichrist?” We can't overlook the importance of Antichrist's forerunner. If Antichrist appears prematurely, will his deception prevail? The timing of the Lord's Incarnation was perfectly set at the exact moment in history – to be completely effective, Antichrist and his forerunner's appearances will have to be perfectly timed. Just like the Lord's Plan of Salvation was unfolding for that exact moment in Nazareth, so too, the devil is now working against the Plan of Salvation on his “counter-plan” to deceive the world. A stumbling block for his plan, though is, every time people practice righteousness and repentance, it sets his timing off. One of the reasons the evil one attacks priests and bishops is if you don't have the clergy liturgizing then you are not introducing this tangle in Satan's timing. Satan's plan depends on a huge degradation and perversion of mankind so that his deception will work. His deception will not work on the “Elect” because their love for God and for others enhances their discernment to the point where they recognize Satan's attempt at a counterfeit. We must be strong and unified in the Body of Christ to gain this discernment. A clear lens of the soul (nous) will be able to tell the difference between the Divine Light of God and the false light of Antichrist.

Fran: When I worked at the University of Washington, I was perplexed because there was a strong push to use “preferred pronouns” instead of calling a boy “he” and a girl “her”. Like this example, the devil won't be content until he gets everyone to participate in the lie. People in Canada are going to jail for refusing to use pronouns that don't correspond to biological reality.

Father Seraphim: First of all, we are in a war and have been since the Lord asked Adam, “Where are you?” We

Bible Study

must realize this first and foremost so that we don't panic when realization dawns after reaching the point of no return. When we accept Baptism, we become soldiers of Christ. The Orthodox Baptism ceremony is patterned after the Roman army initiation. The early Church saw the ritual of making a civilian into a soldier who was dedicated to the will of the emperor as a desired format to turn new believers into soldiers of Christ.

John P: If you pan the logic out, about the timeline and how we effect the devil's "plan", in theory, if enough people repented and loved their neighbor, could we postpone Antichrist's coming indefinitely? Do any of the Holy Fathers comment on that?

Father Seraphim: I'm not aware of any Holy Fathers who have. The current is so strong against us (the analogy of salmon swimming upstream) that it will take the most dedicated to stay the course and fight that current. It will be a small number (the Elect). On the other hand, there will be a Divine Liturgy on the last day of history. One of the saints said that there will be so few Divine Liturgies in the "end times", perhaps only one. The reason is because there will be so much apostasy and so many of the clergy falling away.

Dimitri A: A lot of neo-pagans believed that Lucifer brought light down to the earth. But it is a false light and he can only manipulate it because he is not working with Uncreated energies. A lot of people are being duped by paganism because they are worshipping the creation instead of the Uncreated Light and it is easy to fall for the deception if you don't have discernment.

Father Seraphim: Exactly, and the organ of discernment is the nous. Our spiritual and physical behavior either clears the nous and makes it more clarified and translucent or clouds the nous and leaves us open to deception because we lack discernment.

Father Seraphim: Regarding St. Andrew's statement, "*there is nothing unreasonable for even the adjutant of the Antichrist, working through demons to make an image for the beast and show it speaking, and to prepare and to destroy those who do not worship it.*", this is a core piece that will fall into place at the right time (if we are alive at the time). What we need to do is populate our souls with all of this Patristic data and in the meantime, the practice of humility, constant self-emptying and love for Christ at all costs, will be the most actionable things we can do; and when and if we find ourselves in the time of the forerunner of Antichrist, they will make our souls clear enough to discern these data points. To reiterate, it won't be through the collection of data, but through the humility that illuminates the data at the right time. One sign we can look for is that it will effect commerce (to buy and sell). For example in today's economy, people will have to show proof of vaccination (COVID), in New York and San Francisco to purchase anything. Not saying that the COVID vaccination is the "mark of the beast", but we are being "readied" or conditioned now for an either/or scenario. Whether vaccinated or not, we will have to deal with the fact that in some parts of the country, people are having to show proof of their vaccination status.

Father Seraphim: As Christians, we need to recognize that we are going down a real slippery slope if we make conditions for the acquiring of necessities.

Nektarios O: Isn't the concept of currency, itself, a condition?

Father Seraphim: There is a move towards getting rid of "cash" (bills and coins) and to not print and coin any more currency and making all economic transactions digital. Then the power to transact resides in Citibank, for example. The idea of cash, is you are not dependent on anyone, except the government of which you are a citizen, whose officials you elected. Right now you are outsourcing that to those you didn't elect and who don't have any authority through the electoral process. All these matters come into focus when it comes to evaluating current events in light of what we are studying.

Roberta N: Sometimes we become so insulated in America, that we miss what is happening globally.

Father Seraphim: The farther you get from interconnected wealthy western society, as in Kenya, it's amazing how raw and alive the Holy Spirit is in the lives of so many people. They speak with their guardian angels and see Panagia as a matter of course. I wouldn't be surprised to see that the remnant of believers who resist Antichrist, will be in Africa and similar places that are totally disconnected.

St. Andrew continues:

[143] **Revelation 13:14b-17:** ^{14b}"Saying to those who dwell on earth to make an image for the beast who has the wound of the sword and (yet) he lived. ¹⁵And it was allowed him to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶Also, it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be given a mark on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast

Bible Study

or the number of its name.

It has often been learned historically, both from Apollonius⁷¹⁶ and others, that demons speak through wooden statuettes, animals, trees and water by means of sorcery, I think [144] even through dead bodies just as Simon Magus showed to the Romans a dead person moving in the presence of Peter, even though the apostle refuted the deception to himself.

Dr. Jeannie Constantinou:

⁷¹⁶Apollonius of Tyana, a first century philosopher, whose life was told by Flavius Philostratus in *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Origen mentions in passing the view of one “Moeragenes” that Apollonius was not only a philosopher but also a magician (*Against Celsus* 6.41). In the early fourth century, the Roman governor of Alexandria, later Bithynia, Hierocles compared Apollonius to Christ in a treatise entitled, “To the Christians”, in order to discredit Christian claims that the miracles of Jesus proved His divinity. Eusebius of Caesarea countered, remarking that Hierocles “among all those who have ever written against, has produced a formal contrast and comparison of Apollonius with our Savior.” (*Against Hierocles* 1.1 Philostratus: *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, trans. Christopher P. Jones, 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library series, vols. 16, 17 and 458. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005-6] 3:157. Volume 458 contains the letters of Apollonius, ancient testimonia and Eusebius’ treatise, “The reply of Eusebius”, pupil of Pamphilus, to the work of “Philostratus on Apollonius”, concerning the comparison between him and Christ handed down by Hierocles Eusebius’ attack on the “Life of Apollonius” in his “Reply to Hierocles” specifically ridiculed accounts of talking trees (Reply to Hierocles 30 and 38), among other fantastic occurrences.

About the Name of the Antichrist

Revelation 13:18 “Here is wisdom: let him who has a mind reckon the number of the beast, for it is the number of a human. And his number is six hundred and sixty-six.”

[145]The exact sense of the numerical cipher, as well as the rest of the things written regarding this, time and experience will reveal to those who live soberly. For, as some of the teachers say, if it were necessary to know clearly such a name, the one who had beheld it would have revealed it.⁷¹⁸ But divine grace was not well pleased to set down the name of the destroyer in the divine book. As in exercises in logic, many names are to be found contained in this number, according to the blessed Hippolytus and others, both proper nouns and common nouns. First, proper nouns, such as “Lampetis”⁷¹⁹ “Teitan,”⁷²⁰ through the diphthong τενώ, forming the future of the verb,⁷²¹ according to Hippolytus, and likewise “Lateinos”.⁷²² Just as “Benedict” is interpreted (to mean) “one who is blessed” or “blessed” perhaps in imitation of the truly blessed one, Christ our God. Then common nouns⁷²³ “wicked guide”,⁷²⁴ “real harm”,⁷²⁵ [146] “slanderer of old”⁷²⁶, “unjust lamb”⁷²⁷ – these he will be called by those opposing his deception, rendering the appropriate opinion in shame.⁷²⁸

St. Andrew of Caesarea makes a clear distinction between Antichrist and his forerunner. There are three dark figures who we will have to keep straight. 1) Satan 2) Antichrist 3) Forerunner of Antichrist or False prophet. We need to remember that Antichrist is “in lieu” of Christ, he is just a copycat. He is incapable of producing new material. The Lord, in the Gospels, called the devil “Father of Lies”. For a lie to work it must depend on the truth. It is not productive or creative. It is a fabrication that alters the truth by taking away from or adding to it. The important part about an effective lie is for it to be based on raw truth.

The devil presents his temptations by convincing us, through rationalization, that it is okay to act on our passions. If we track a rationalization, it is a pretty safe bet that it is the devil trying to get us to accept a λογισμός - logismos a reasoning: such as is hostile to the Christian faith, because he can’t make us commit the sin. The longer it takes to figure something out, the less likely it is to be from God. The devil will try and alienate us from our hearts and coerce us to not live in a heart-centered way, which is directly responsive to grace, but convince us to live in the brain or by our impulses.

The preparation for the appearance of Antichrist will be conducted by his forerunner, who himself, will most likely have global stature. He will spread the news about this “wonderful” person who can solve all the world’s problems when it seems no one else is capable of such feats. When the time is right, Antichrist will make his entrance with electrifying excitement, undeniable charm and unheard of abilities. The issue of Enoch and Elijah and the reconciliation of the Jews (during Antichrist) will snap together with **Daniel 7** (from their perspective). It’s a passage

Bible Study

that is remarkably related to **Revelation 13**'s imagery of the beast. God has seeded all these holy texts in the Old Testament so that when we are in real time situations as described in **Daniel 7**, we will remember that God is sending us an important message that we can be at peace amidst the turmoil. The simple message is: No matter how rough things get, the victory is already Christ's. The practice of self-emptying will give us the strength to resist the mark that Antichrist will use to lure people to him.

We, as laity, have a responsibility to be vigilant and alert to anything toxic or heretical that threatens the Church. The clergy and hierarchy are not immune to temptation and deviation, so it is up to us to remain watchful and keep things in check. The onus is on the laity to fulfill their ministry. For example, ninety-eight percent of the hierarchs and clergy of Byzantium signed on the "dotted line" to enter into union with Rome (even though Rome wasn't willing to repent of their theological errors) and it was St. Mark of Ephesus plus all the people who came together to remind the clergy that this would be a false union. It was the laity (led by St. Mark) who are responsible for the stability of the Orthodox Church today.



MARTYRDOM

Or Idolatry

Submitted by: Genevieve Eagle

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY MARCH FOR LIFE



Happy 2022 from the Washington State March for Life!

It's been a difficult few months for our organization, with illness and other challenges for our board members. We have seen harder times, but we know it has been a very hard season for so many. We thank you for your prayers.

We are putting plans in place for a hybrid event for 2022. The lobbying and legislative parts of the March for Life will mostly have to be virtual, but we will be working with amazing partners in the state to find some ways for people to gather. While plans are still in motion, we are tentatively planning for February 4 as our main date. Stay tuned for more details.

This timing allows for people to be at the National March for Life and other rallies and bring back a lot of energy and ideas to our state. We will still be in our legislative session, and it will be a great time for your legislators to hear from you!

We are optimistic that this may be the last time we need to mark the January 22 Roe vs. Wade date, so we are looking toward what the next chapter will be for our movement. No matter what happens, women and babies will need us more than ever!

Thanks for your ongoing support and enthusiasm for sharing the message that every life is infinitely valuable!

*** STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES ***

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY



The Future We Envision: We march because we envision a future world where the beauty and dignity of every human life is valued and protected



The Mission We Embrace: We promote the beauty and dignity of every human life by working to end abortion – uniting, educating, and mobilizing pro-life people in the public square.

National March for Life History



January 1973

The Supreme Court of the United States invalidates 50 state laws and made abortion legal – on demand – throughout the United States in the decisions of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*



January 1974

The first March for Life walks on Washington to lobby Congressional leadership to find a legislative solution to the Supreme Court’s decision. Soon after realizing congressional protection of the unborn was not on the horizon, Nellie Gray decides to hold a March for Life every year until *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

January 1987

A blizzard strikes Washington D.C., yet 10,000 people still march up Constitution Ave through the snow on behalf of the unborn.

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY



August 1995

Norma McCorvey – a.k.a. “Jane Roe” – publicly quits her job at an abortion clinic and begins her long career as a leading pro-life advocate.



January 1998

On the 25th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, three former pro-abortion activists – Dr. Bernard Nathanson, founder of NARAL, Norma McCorvey, Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade, and Sandra Cano, Mary Doe of Doe v. Bolton – speak at the March for Life.

January 2002

The March for Life is held just months after the September 11th terrorist attacks on America. thousands courageously make the journey to Washington, D.C. to march for life despite the uncertainty and fear the attack brought upon the American people.



August 12

Pro-lifers mourn the passing of March for Life foundress Nellie Gray by honoring all she had accomplished in organizing and running the March for Life for nearly 40 years.

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY



November 2012

Jeanne Mancini is chosen as the new leader of the March for Life, months before the organization's 40th anniversary.



January 2017

Vice President Mike Pence speaks at the March for Life



February 18, 2017

Norma McCorvey dies after spending her lifetime working to reverse the Supreme Court decision that bears her name.



January 2020

President Donald Trump becomes the first U.S. President to speak at the March for Life.

ST. NICHOLAS AKATHIST MINISTRY

Ministry of Akathist, Prayers for the Departed

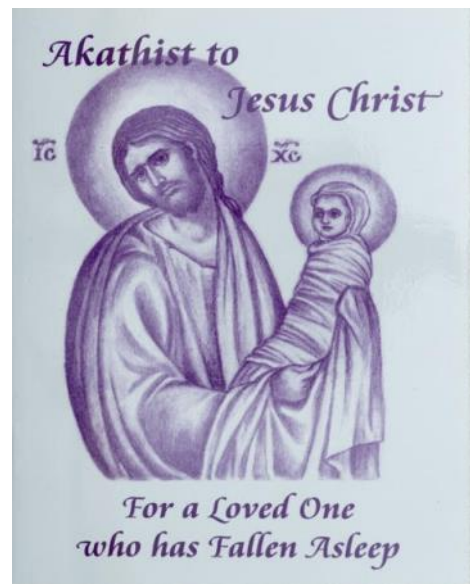


Thank you to all who are involved in this wonderful ministry at Saint Nicholas. In offering the gift of praying the Akathist to Jesus Christ for a Loved One who Has Fallen Asleep, it is a great comfort to family and friends of the departed ones.

When we offer these prayers for the newly departed, it also helps us in many ways. **May God bless your gift of prayer.**

If you are interested in knowing more about this ministry, or would like to be involved, please contact the church office.

Thank you again,
Kathy Rowley



PROSPHORA

PROVIDING PROSFORO

Your own of your own we offer unto You, on behalf of all and for all.

Despina Ampatzis brings the offering the first Sunday of every month.

James Horton brings the offering the second Sunday of every month.

Please know that you who are not on the baking rotation are welcome to bring the prospora and/or artoklasia for an occasion (for instance your name day, or a big feast day such as St. Nicholas or Dormition). The procedure would be to contact Father Seraphim and discuss it with him before the actual day, and to have the offering there in time.



Seal from the Monks at St. Anne's Skete on Mt. Athos, a gift to St. Nicholas Church in Tacoma, WA.

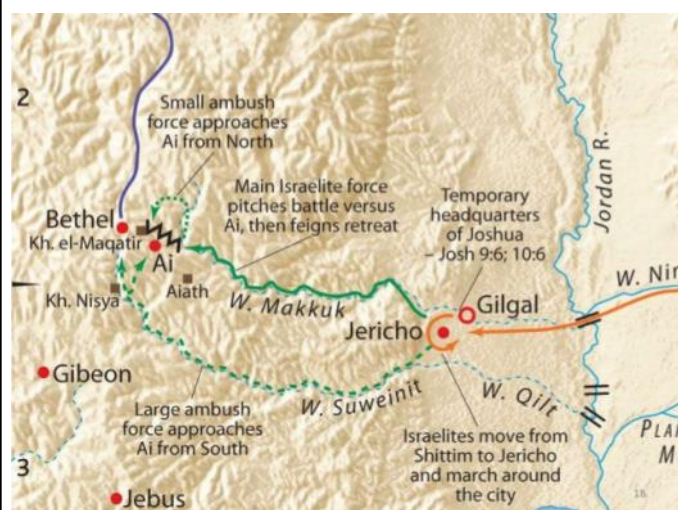
PROSPHORA

LECHEM-ARTOS-BREAD

Following the Word Through Scripture

The Book of Joshua is the biblical record of Joshua leading the children of Israel into the promised land. The book names the battles they fought and the enemies they slew, as well as the enemies they did not slay. The names Joshua and Jesus are from the same Hebrew root, which means *salvation*. As Joshua led the children into the promised land, so Jesus leads us into His kingdom, and we also must fight our battles and slay our enemies. When we fail to identify the enemy, we end up entangled with the enemy, as you will see below.

In Joshua chapter four the Israelites cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. Of significance, Joshua chapter five records that after crossing over the males were circumcised at Gilgal, and then the children of Israel kept Pascha there, west of Jericho. At Pascha they ate of the unleavened and new wheat of the land, and it was on that day the manna ceased and Israel no longer had manna. Only after these things did the Israelites go on to battle. They conquered two cities, Jericho and Ai.



There were some other people in the land, the Gibeonites who are said to be descendants of Noah's son Ham. The Gibeonites feared for their lives, and in order to avoid being annihilated as the people of Jericho and Ai had been they made a plan that we read about in chapter nine. This story is the only time we find bread mentioned in the Book of Joshua.

Joshua 9:10b-19 (Septuagint text): *They [the Gibeonites] took old sacks on their shoulders and old, torn, and patched bottles of wine. The upper part of their shoes and sandals were old and crudely patched on their feet; and the clothing they wore was worn out. The **bread/lechem/artos** of their provision was dry, dirty, and moldy. Then they came to Joshua at Israel's camp in Gilgal and said to Joshua and Israel, "We have come from a far land. Now then, make a covenant with us." The children of Israel answered, "Perhaps you live among us. How then can I make a covenant with you?" So they replied to Joshua, "We are your servants...your servants have come from a very distant land in the name of the Lord your God; for we heard of His name and everything He did in Egypt, and everything He did to the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan...We are your servants. Now then, make a covenant with us." These are the loaves of **bread/lechem/artos**, and we took them hot for our journey on the day we left to come to you; but now they are dried and have become moldy. These are the wineskins we filled when new; but they are torn, and our clothing and shoes are old because of the very long journey."*

Note that they brought *bread* and *wine* and asked for a covenant. The rulers of Israel made the covenant and swore an oath not to harm the Gibeonites. Three days later the Israelites discovered the Gibeonites were near neighbors. They went to the Gibeonite cities and spoke to them about their deceit. The Gibeonites answered, "It was reported to us what the Lord your God ordered His Moses, to give you this land and to destroy us and all who dwell in it from before you."



PROSPHORA

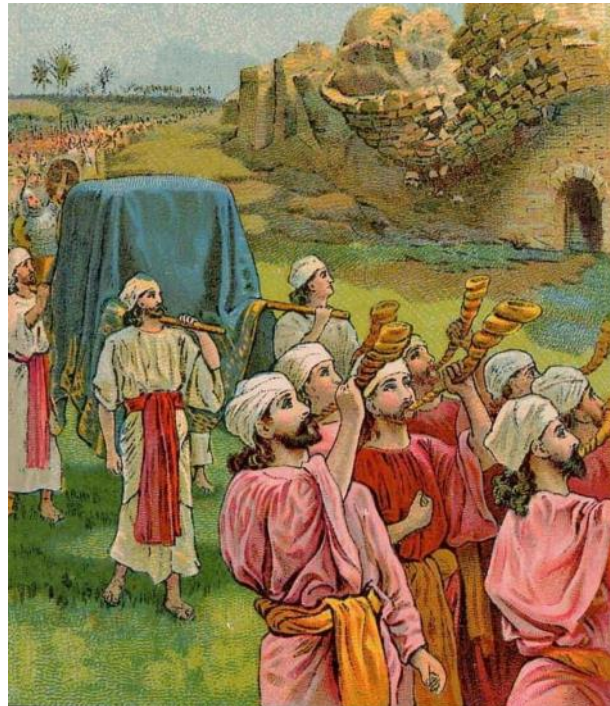
Thus we did this thing, because we feared greatly for our lives before you. Now behold, we are in your hands, do to us as it pleases you and as it seems good to you." So on that day Joshua spared their lives because of the covenant he had made, but he appointed them to be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire congregation and for the altar of God.

The study bible notes say that the Gibeonites prefigure the sinners and outcasts who will humble themselves before Christ and receive salvation, and that the torn and patched condition of their belongings describes the state of the soul that seeks salvation in God.

Joshua chapter ten recounts how, due to this covenant, the Israelites had to come to the rescue of the Gibeonites when five other kings in the land came against them for joining the Israelites. This was the battle in which *the sun and the moon stood still until God brought vengeance against their enemies (Joshua 10:13)*. The leader of these five kings was Adoni-Zedek which translates from the Hebrew as Lord of Righteousness. He was the king of Jerusalem*.

To be continued...

Deborah Talbot--



*Compare this battle to the one recorded in Genesis 14, involving five kings battling four kings, after which another king of Jerusalem, Melkizedek (translates King of Righteousness), came out to meet Abram with bread and wine.

the walls of Jericho tumbling down

HANDS OF LOVE MINISTRY

HANDS OF LOVE MINISTRY

The Hands of Love Ministry finished out 2021 with a Craft Sale Event that ran November 28, December 5, 6, 12 and 19 after Divine Liturgy each Sunday (and St. Nicholas Feast Day) during coffee hours. Thanks to our beloved parishioners, \$1,555.50 in sales was gifted to St. Nicholas Church.

**Here are some of the items crafted for this event:
(Thanks to Father Seraphim who graciously volunteered to be our model)**



Continued Next Page...

HANDS OF LOVE MINISTRY



Continued Next Page...

HANDS OF LOVE MINISTRY

I want to thank someone who is very near and dear to my heart!! Out of the generosity of her heart, Robin Derby, my little sister, graciously donated 40 afghans (37 baby afghans and 3 adult-size afghans) that she knit to benefit St. Nicholas Church. Robin loves to knit (a tradition handed down through several generations of our family), especially baby afghans. Words are not enough to express my gratitude.



Ευχαριστώ Αγαπητέ

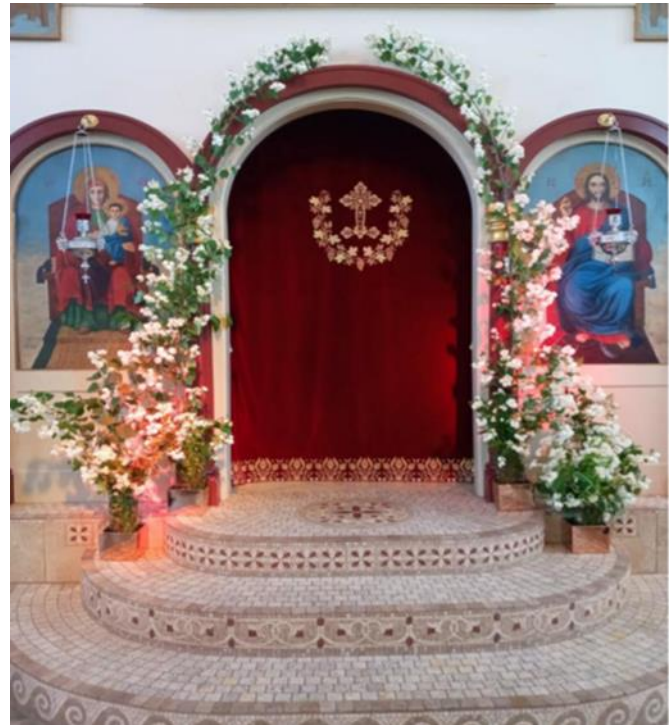
Submitted by: Genevieve

FLOWER MINISTRY

ST. NICHOLAS FLOWER MINISTRY 2021 in Review



GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA



PENTACOST – Mock Orange flowers & greenery
Denoted by Mrs. Georgeopolis and Anna Bolaris



PRESENTATION (ENRANCE)
OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE



ST. KATHERINE'S DAY - THANKSGIVING

Continued Next Page...

FLOWER MINISTRY

St. Nicholas Flower Ministry 2021 in review, continued...



ST. NICHOLAS FEAST DAY

Continued Next Page...

FLOWER MINISTRY

St. Nicholas Flower Ministry 2021 in review, continued...



CHRISTMAS DAY—THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Thanks to our generous parishioners for donations of funds, plants and flowers to St. Nicholas Flower Ministry! As you can see, we were able to put together so many beautiful arrangements in 2021. I also want to give a big thanks to my best friend, Kathy Rowley, who brought so much beauty into our lives this past year.

I have been so blessed to work with Kathy, the brains and talent behind these glorious arrangements. Before helping in this ministry, I never had any experience in arranging flowers (other than taking store-bought flowers out of their plastic wrap and dumping them in a vase). Kathy patiently worked with me and showed me the basics of putting the right colors together, the importance of greenery and focusing on the showstoppers without detracting from the supporting cast.

The Flower Ministry is looking for volunteers to help in this new year of 2022. If you love flowers (who doesn't?), and the camaraderie that comes with being around fun and creative people, this is the ministry for you. As I mentioned before, Kathy is very patient and is willing to educate and train those who want to awaken their "inner creativity". We are also looking for those who just want to be "worker bees". Many times Kathy creates and I haul, gather, sort and clean. Even the most mundane chores are fun when you're with people you love. Please contact Kathy Rowley or Genevieve Eagle if you would like to join this ministry or if you would just like more information please email us at stnicholaszoom@gmail.com.

Kathy and I also want to thank Deborah Talbot and John Payne who volunteered to take down all the Christmas decorations and flowers while we were both out sick. It was a huge job and we are very appreciative!

Submitted by: Genevieve

Donations and Pledges

On line Donations now possible

ON-LINE DONATIONS

The donation section of the Church’s website has been revamped to include a link to a new on-line donation form. The form allows one-time donations, setup for automatic recurring donations, and selection of donation purpose. There is also a note section to inform Church accounting of special handling needs, such as memorial donations or address changes. Church on-line donations are directed to the Church through WePay (a Chase Bank Affiliate) and Aplos Software, LLC. Donors contributing on-line receive an email thanking them for their donation. In addition, through a link in the donation notification, each donor can setup their own Aplos account to view a list of on-line donations, manage recurring donations, and to view and print a contributions statement.



Please be aware that in converting to this software I noticed multiple duplicative account names. In some instances, I will need to merge duplicate accounts so the contribution statement accurately combines into one statement both the on-line donations and check and cash donations. The unique identifier for this purpose is a valid email address.

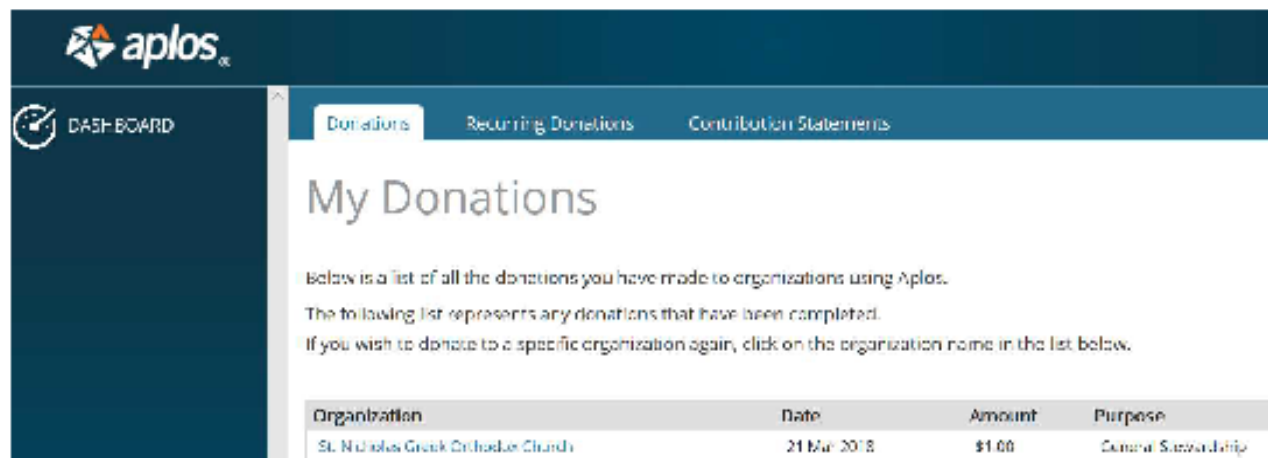
I want parishioners to enjoy greater flexibility in making Church donations and receiving an accounting of their annual to date contributions at any time of the year. Many of you have asked and inquired about the possibility of accounting for your donations automatically on-line. It is now a reality. If you have any problems or questions with this new service, please let me know. As your treasurer, I am here to serve you!

In Christ,

Mark Robinson

On-Line Contribution Instructions:

- 1) On a computer or mobile device, go to the Church’s website – www.stnicholastacoma.org
- 2) Select the  button. This takes you to the Church’s donate page!
- 3) Select the gold colored donate  button at the bottom of the page.
- 4) You will now be taken to the page to make your donation. Simply complete the form.
- 5) From the contributions email you receive, select the link to setup your own Aplos account. An account history page will be available. The first tab will show only on-line donations, the second tab allows accounting for recurring donations, and the third is for contribution statements listing on-line, check, and cash donations.



OUR MISSION

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church proclaims and teaches the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith; sanctifies the faithful through God's grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy, and other sacraments; enhances parishioners' spiritual life; and adds to the faithful by receiving individuals into the Church through instruction, baptism, and/or chrismation.

COMMIT YOUR TIME AND TALENT TO ASSIST WITH GOD'S WORK

St. Nicholas has several ministries that exist to fulfill our parish mission and serve our community. Giving of our time and talent through these ministries is just as much an act of stewardship as giving financially. If you would like to contribute your time and talent through one of our ministries, please visit our website to see a list of active ministries: stnicholastacoma.org/ministry-center.

HOW TO RETURN THIS CARD

BY MAIL:

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
 Attn: Church Treasurer
 1523 S. Yakima Ave.
 Tacoma, WA 98405

AT CHURCH:

Drop your completed card into the secured dropbox on the stewardship table in the downstairs hall.

Stewardship contributions can be fulfilled with cash, check, credit card, or through online donations at stnicholastacoma.org/donate. For more information, please visit: stnicholastacoma.org/stewardship.

Please PRINT your information clearly

Name (F/M/L):

DOB (M/D/Y):

Email:

Telephone:

Spouse:

DOB (M/D/Y):

Email:

Telephone:

Household Information

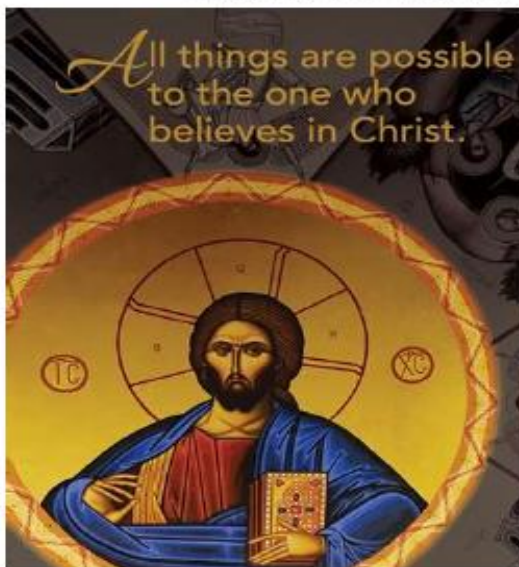
Address

City/St/Zip

Dependent Children

Name (F/MI/L)	DOB (m/d/y)	Orthodox
.....(Y/N)
.....(Y/N)
.....(Y/N)
.....(Y/N)

2022 STEWARDSHIP CARD
ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
TACOMA, WASHINGTON



"Stewardship is an opportunity to examine our priorities and values, to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves, and to grow in grace. It allows us to participate in the work of God. Giving is not a substitute for commitment - it is an expression of our commitment."
Fr. Seraphim Majmudar

"Those who seek the Lord shall never want for any good thing." (Psalm 34:10)

OUR DONATIONS ARE IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS CONTINUED BLESSINGS GIVEN TO US. OUR DONATION REFLECTS HOW MUCH WE ARE BLESSED AND HOW THANKFUL WE ARE; HOWEVER, WE ARE AWARE THAT GOD EXPECTS US TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY TO HIS WORK.

2022 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

Stewardship contributions cover all of our parish operating expenses. An average contribution of approximately \$2000/year from each family would enable our parish to meet its operational expenses without depending on Festival revenue.

I/We offer a minimum stewardship pledge of \$...../year or \$...../month in 2022 to support God's work.

I/We understand that by participating in supporting our parish financially and by committing my/our Time and Talents, I/we shall be a member(s) in good standing at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

SIGNATURE.....

Saint Nicholas Messenger

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

Tacoma, WA 98405

Address Service Requested

