



A publication of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Youngstown, Ohio

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St. Nicholas Orthodox Church  
220 North Walnut St.  
Youngstown, OH 44503

# March 2020 Pastoral Message

By Rev. Fr. Joseph Z. DiStefano



## The Akathist Hymn

*“Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.”*

The Akathist Hymn is a long, lyrical, devotional poem, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in Constantinople, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proven so popular in the liturgical life of the Church that many other hymns have been written following its format. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, to the Holy Spirit and to many different Saints.

The Akathist Hymn consists of praises directed to the Mother of God. The word "akathistos" means "not sitting," (i.e. standing) and normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, some of them long, and some short. Each short stanza is written in prose and ends with the singing of "Alleluia." Each longer stanza ends with the refrain: "Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride." The service also contains two much-beloved hymns - the Kontakion: Τῆ ὑπερμάχῳ (*O Champion General*), and the Theotokion: Τὴν ωραιότητα (Seeing the beauty of).

The Akathist hymn is broken into four parts and each part is sung on the first four Fridays of Great Lent, within the service of the Small Compline. On the fifth Friday, the entire hymn (all four parts) is sung. On the first Friday, the priest reads from the Holy Gospel (John 15:1-7).

The first part of the hymn (the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday) is about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel. It describes Mary's surprise at the news, her visit to her mother and Joseph's doubts as to her innocence. The second part (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday) is about the birth of Christ, the worship of the Shepherds and Magi, the flight to Egypt and the visit to Saint Simeon in the Temple. In the third part (3<sup>rd</sup> Friday), the hymn directs our attention to the renewal of the world by Christ's coming, and the amazement of the Angels and the wise men at the sight of the Incarnation of God's Son. The fourth and the last part (4<sup>th</sup> Friday) is once more a consideration of the Virgin Mary, whom the poet adorns with the most beautiful of adjectives asking her to accept his poetical offering and to intercede for the salvation of human race from the earthly sin.

This year at St. Nicholas, we will be singing the Akathist hymn on the following five Fridays: March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3 at 7:00. We will begin each evening with a Lenten potluck dinner at 6:00. Hope to see you there!

Wishing You All a Blessed 40 Days!

*+Fr. Joe DiStefano*

Fr. Joe DiStefano

# ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

220 N. Walnut St. Youngstown, OH 44503 • 330-743-5493 • www.stnicksyou.com • We're on facebook!

## PRESBYTER

Rev. Fr. Joseph Z. DiStefano • 724-304-1230 • frjdistefano@yahoo.com

## PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

<b>President</b>	Socrates Kolitsos
<b>Vice-President</b>	Tom Mikulka
<b>Treasurer</b>	George Gulgas
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Mary Dimitriou
<b>Members</b>	Nick Catsoules
	Bill Dalambakis
	Larry Frangos
	Joseph Malactaris
	Brett Roberts
	Barb Senanefes
	Ruth Lynn Stillerman
	Kaliopy Vavoulas

## PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

<b>Philoptochos President</b>	Helen Mays
<b>Seniors</b>	George Mays
<b>Cantor</b>	Larry Frangos
<b>Altar Boy Director</b>	Nick Catsoules
<b>Religious Education</b>	Claudia DeRhodes
<b>Summerfest</b>	Bill Dalambakis
<b>Outreach/Evangelism</b>	Barb Senanefes
<b>Stewardship Committee</b>	Nick Catsoules
	Jamie Coutras
	Mary Dimitriou
	Sue Kalochorites
<b>Choir Director</b>	Dr. Nick Pappas

# Sunday Lenten Vespers 2020

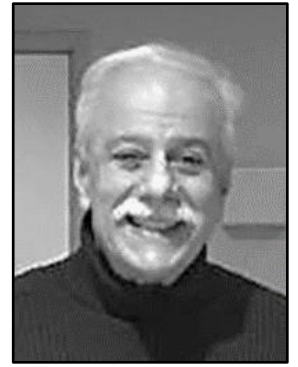
All Services Begin at 5 pm

*Featured Speaker & Lenten meal with fellowship thereafter*

<b>March 8</b>	<b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b>	<b>St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church</b> 305 Struthers Liberty Rd. Campbell, OH 44405
<b>March 15</b>	<b>Sunday of Gregory Palamas</b>	<b>Holy Ghost Orthodox Church</b> 18 Richview Ave. Youngstown, OH 44509
<b>March 22</b>	<b>Sunday of the Holy Cross</b>	<b>St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Church</b> 4955 Glenwood Ave. Boardman, OH 44512
<b>March 29</b>	<b>Sunday of St. John Climacus</b>	<b>Holy Trinity Orthodox Church</b> 626 Wick Ave. Youngstown, OH 44502
<b>April 5</b>	<b>Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt</b>	<b>St. Mark Orthodox Church</b> 3560 Logan Way Liberty Township, OH 44501

# From the Desk of the Parish Council President

## March 2020



Greetings of love to my family at St. Nicholas Church in Youngstown, Ohio.

It has only been a few weeks and yet not a day has gone by without my thinking of you and truly missing you. I realize how important family is, our personal family, our church family, our family in the brotherhood of man. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and how important and vital that blessed connection is.

Another Super Bowl Sunday has come and gone and our fundraiser was again a success thanks to Tom Mikulka and his crew and all who joined that crew and helped in some way and supported our churches efforts.

Now we begin the long journey of Lent and during this journey, the Philoptohos is starting to prepare for the 36<sup>th</sup> annual Summerfest July 9-10-11 and 12<sup>th</sup> and they need your help.

Please do yourself a favor and participate in the services our church offers and the pot-luck dinners every Friday evening during Lent and the Sunday services that the clergy association has that include a short lecture and then a reception at various orthodox churches throughout our area. They will be a great blessing to you and your family. Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> (forgiveness Sunday), (Orthodox Sunday) helps us begin our journey of Lent which officially begins the next day, March 2<sup>nd</sup> (clean Monday).

Follow the fast the best you can, only you know you can do it, or cannot, for health or age reasons. Do your best, it is good for you in so many ways; health, spiritually, emotionally and etc. You get closer to God, you do his will, you pray more and through your prayers and bible readings you recognize and become more thankful for all God is to you and has done and is doing for you and your family.

“Love one another”. No love could ever be as great as the Lord’s for us. Think what Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy week, Good Friday and Easter are all about. Love beyond compare, no matter who or what we are, Jesus loves us! He looked for one that would comfort him and found none! The mob mentality took Over! Yet, he loved and loves us with an unending love!!! Think how much we love our Mother, Father, Brother, Sister, Godchild, Godparent, Spouse, our Child. Love is God, living in us. “It is love that shows who is the true Shepherd, for by reason of love the great Shepherd was crucified.” St. John Climacus

“The time of repentance is short; the kingdom of heaven has no end”. St Ephraim the Syrian. Please don’t spend another day in regrets (woulda, coulda, shoulda). Yes, I wanted to but I forgot or this happened or that happened. Start with this Lenten period to follow the path and plan God has prepared for you. To make you more Christ like, a true follower of Christ, a Christian and pleasing to God.

Ask yourself how can I do this? How and where can I help the church in all they do? All that you do and say must be to the glory of God. As you know, nothing just happens! We need your talent, your time, your ideas, your involvement, your dedication, your commitment. You are the missing ingredient in this ancient recipe.

Do you really care if anyone notices? Number 1 and most important...God notices and knows. Your parents, Spouse, Children, Godchildren, your Neices and Nephews and other young people notice in quiet. You are mentoring and preparing the future. They will learn from your example!

I have received a few phone calls while being here in Florida, all commenting on how warm and receiving our parishioners are and I felt good about that fact. These individuals visited our church and were impressed. I realize that some of us are more welcoming than others and I ask for all of us to step up and be as you would want others to be toward you. There is no xenos (stranger) who enters our church but a brother/sister in Christ, a new friend to be, a new partner to live for our God, our creator. Be more welcoming, smile, help make people feel at home, in God's home and soon to be a part of our family of God. Invite all to join us in our church family coffee hour and our events.

While I have been in Florida I received a call to interpret something in Greek and to my surprise it was a graduation certificate for a young lady who had forgotten she even went to Greek school here at St. Nicholas and was advanced from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The certificate was signed by the very Reverend Father George Hadgis.

We have been attending St. Michael the Archangel Church in Lecanto. The church is 10 years old and almost paid off because of dedicated parishioners and grand benefactors, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Cantonis. 140 parishioners and approximately 40 who are heavenly involved and the others strongly support all church events. Two festivals, one in February and the other in October, a weekly fish fry, and bake sales, hall and special event rentals.

We have helped at the fish fries and the February festival. (we both feel St. Nicholas's Summerfest food and homemade pastries are far superior).

I look forward to seeing you soon. Thank you for joining in God's work. Holy week is April 12 thru the 19<sup>th</sup>.....Easter Sunday. Yes, we are one week after the other Christian faiths. Respect one another and love one another.

*Socrates Kolitsos*

Parish Council President

P.S. "The devil does not have any power over a believer who goes to church, confesses, takes communion. The devil only paws at such a person, the same as a toothless dog". St. Paisios, the Athonite.

## **St. Nicholas Vision**

Expand on the Orthodox Christian foundation set by our forefathers and prepare for the next 100 years by continuing to build Faith, Family and Community, in Christ.

## **Mission Statement**

Education    Application    Participation    Dissemination

To educate ourselves in the teachings of Christ and the Traditions of the Orthodox Church, to practice what we learn and uphold those Traditions, to participate in the Sacraments, and to share those teachings, Traditions and Sacramental grace, with those outside our parish.

# Family Fun Lock-in

Food! Games! Movie! Snacks! Sleep-over!

Friday  
March 20-21 ★ 6 PM – 9 AM ★ Social Hall

An evening of faith and family entertainment.

Lenten Pot-luck - 6-7 pm

Akathist Hymn - 7-8 pm

Lenten Presentation w/ Fr. Joe - 8:30-9 pm

Movie - 9-10:30 pm Lights Out - 11 pm

Breakfast in the Morning

Disney · PIXAR  
**TOY  
STORY  
4**



# ΚΑΛΗ ΣΑΡΑΚΟΣΤΗ!



Clean Monday, the beginning of the 40-day Lenten fast, is a public holiday in Greece and Cyprus, where it is celebrated with outdoor excursions, the consumption of shellfish and other fasting food, a special kind of bread, baked only on that day, named "lagana" (Greek: λαγάνα) and the widespread custom of flying kites.

## **St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church invites you to begin your Lenten Journey with us on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**

**We will begin with Church services that morning:  
Orthros 9:00am / Divine Liturgy 10:00am.**

After the Divine Liturgy service, we will make kites  
that we will fly outdoors that day.

**The Forgiveness Vespers Service will be that evening at 5:00pm.**

*Please call or txt Kaliopy Vavoulas at 330-318-2867, so that we can  
prepare properly for the number of people planning to participate.*

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

# March 2020

February '20							April '20							May '20						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1							1							1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	26	27	28	29	30	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare) Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Kite Flying after Church Forgiveness Vespers 5PM	<b>2</b> Clean Monday (Lenten Fast Begins) Great Compline 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>5</b> Strict Fast	<b>6</b> Lenten Potluck 6:00 PM 1st Stanza of Akathist 7:00 PM Strict Fast	<b>7</b> 3rd Saturday of Souls Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Wine Allowed
<b>8</b> Daylight Saving Sunday of Orthodoxy Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Lenten Vespers 5PM at St. John the Baptist Wine Allowed	<b>9</b> Great Compline 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Lenten Potluck 6:00 PM 2nd Stanza of Akathist 7:00 PM Strict Fast	<b>14</b> Wine Allowed
<b>15</b> St. Gregory Palamas Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Philoptochos Memorial Lentern Vespers 5pm at Holy Ghost Church	<b>16</b> Great Compline 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>17</b> Strict Fast	<b>18</b> Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>19</b> Strict Fast	<b>20</b> Lenten Potluck 6:00 PM 3rd Stanza of Akathist 7:00 PM Strict Fast	<b>21</b> Wine Allowed
<b>22</b> Sunday of Holy Cross Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Lenten Vespers 5PM at St. John the Forerunner Wine Allowed	<b>23</b> Great Compline 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>24</b> Strict Fast	<b>25</b> Annunciation Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Strict Fast	<b>26</b> Strict Fast	<b>27</b> Lenten Potluck 6:00 PM 4th Stanza of Akathist 7:00 PM Strict Fast	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> St. John Climacus Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Lenten Vespers 5PM at Holy Trinity Church Wine Allowed	<b>30</b> Great Compline 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>31</b> Strict Fast	<b>1</b> Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 PM Strict Fast	<b>2</b> Strict Fast	<b>3</b> Lenten Potluck 6:00 PM Full Akathist Hymn 7:00 PM Strict Fast	<b>4</b> Wine Allowed
<b>5</b> St. Mary of Egypt Orth 9AM / Liturgy 10AM Lenten Vespers 5PM at St. Mark Church Wine Allowed		Notes				