



Weekly Bulletin

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 42 Years

Father Andrew Clements, Pastor

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Number 6

Sunday	Feb 11	<i>36th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 3 / Meatfare Sunday / The Last Judgment</i>	
		9:00 am	Church School
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy Pre-Lenten Brunch
Saturday	Feb 10	<i>Great Martyr Theodore</i>	
		5:30 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday	Feb 18	<i>37th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 4 / Cheesefare Sunday / Forgiveness Sunday</i>	
		Readings:	Rom 13:11-14:4 Mt 6:14-21
		9:00 am	Church School
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy Coffee Hour
		5:30 pm	Forgiveness Vespers / Rite of Forgiveness

ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / Feb 4

Attendance: (Adults 101, Children 37)	138
Operating	\$5,020.00
OCA Assessments	852.00
Uganda Children	64.00
Charities	51.00
Icons	70.00

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, Feb 15 at 7:00 pm.

CHURCH CLEAN-UP FOR PASCHA

We are in need of someone to head up, and workers to thoroughly clean the church for Pascha. Dewaxing the carpet, windows, ledges, etc. Please let Fr A know if you can be part of this project. This is a great opportunity for students to get Service Hours.

ADVENT PROJECT UPDATE

Dear Children, Parents, & Teachers,

Thanks so much for your generosity through the St. Nicholas parish Advent Project. This year you raised \$1,092.00 and we bought new Christmas clothes for fifty-seven children. They all wore their new outfits when they attended our annual Christmas party for primary school children.

With love and appreciation in Christ,

Peter & Sharon

(Check out the pics in the foyer of the children in their outfits.)

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS

Be planning now to be together on Sunday, Feb 18 at 5:30 pm for the beginning of Great Lent at the Forgiveness Sunday Vespers. The beautiful hymns followed by the Rite of Forgiveness offer each of us an opportunity to 'begin the fast with joy' and embark on the Lenten Journey with a firm resolve.

PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Eleanor Alexander (Tom's mom), Perry (Capitan), Sbdcn Leonard, Kathy (Denise F's sis), Jim (Ruth's dad), Michael (Chongris nphw), Ted Geletka, (Fr's frnd), Alex Dzura, infant Julian, John Clements, Willie (Elena G's son), Sarah Crivella, suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Birthdays: Anastasia Schelkanov (2/9), George Tintor (2/13), Pamela Roth (2/14), Calin Lechintan (2/16), Laura Abernathy, Evangeline Kingsbury (2/17).

Newborns: Nina Margret (Matt & Krista), Andrew James (James & Lisa).

Expecting: Fred & Faith, Matt & Michelle, Tom & Miranda, Mitch & Winnie, Brian & Nicole, Jon & Larissa, Cole & Sarah.

Our Seminarian: Brian Crivella & Family.

Our Missionaries: Peter & Sharon.

Memory Eternal: Connie (Linda Darrah's friend).

Meat-Fare Sunday

by Fr Alexander Schmemmann

On the eve of Meat-Fare Sunday (Meat-Fare Saturday), the Church invites us to a universal commemoration of all those who have “fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection and life eternal.” This is indeed the Church’s great day of prayer for her departed members. To understand the meaning of this connection between Lent and the prayer for the dead, one must remember that Christianity is the religion of love. Christ left with his disciples not a doctrine of individual salvation but a new commandment “that they love one another,” and He added: “By this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

The new life given by Christ and conveyed to us by the Church is, first of all, a life of reconciliation, of “gathering into oneness of those who were dispersed,” the restoration of love broken by sin. Praying for the dead is an essential expression of the Church as love. We ask God to remember those whom we remember and we remember them because we love them. Praying for them we meet them in Christ who is Love and who, because He is Love, overcomes death which is the ultimate victory of separation and lovelessness. In Christ there is no difference between living and dead because all are alive in Him. It is truly our love in Christ that keeps them alive because it keeps them “in Christ,” and how wrong, how hopelessly wrong, are those Western Christians who either reduce prayer for the dead to a juridical doctrine of “merits” and “compensations” or simply reject it as useless. The great Vigil for the Dead of Meat-Fare Saturday serves as a Pattern for all other commemorations of the departed. It is love again that constitutes the theme of “Meat-Fare Sunday.” The Gospel lesson for the day is Christ’s parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable answers: love—not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous “Poor,” but concrete and personal love for the human Person, any human person, that God makes me encounter in my life. This distinction is important because today more and more Christians tend to identify Christian love with political, economic, and social concerns; in other words, they shift from the unique person and its unique personal destiny, to anonymous entities such as “class,” “race,” etc. Not that these concerns are wrong. Christians are called to care, to the best of their possibilities and understanding, for a just, equal, and in general more humane society. Christian love is the “possible impossibility” to see Christ in another man, whoever he is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a “good deed” or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself. For, indeed, what is love if not that mysterious power which transcends the accidental and the external in the “other”—his physical ap-

pearance, social rank, ethnic origin, intellectual capacity—and reaches the soul, the unique and uniquely personal “root” of a human being, truly the part of God in him? If God loves every man it is because He alone knows the priceless and absolutely unique treasure, the “soul” or “person” He gave every man. Christian love then is the participation in that divine knowledge and the gift of that divine love. There is no “impersonal” love because love is the wonderful discovery of the “person” in “man,” of the personal and unique in the common and general. It is the discovery in each man of that which is “lovable” in him, of that which is from God.

In this respect, Christian love is sometimes the opposite of “social activism.” To a “social activist” the object of love is not “person” but man, an abstract unit of a not less abstract “humanity.” But for Christianity, man is “lovable” because he is person. There Person is reduced to man; here man is seen only as person. The “social activist” has no interest for the personal, and easily sacrifices it to the “common interest.” Christianity may seem to be, and in some ways actually is, rather sceptical about that abstract “humanity,” but it commits a mortal sin against itself each time it gives up its concern and love for the person. Social activism is always “futuristic” in its approach; it always acts in the name of justice, order, happiness to come, to be achieved. Christianity cares little about that problematic future but puts the whole emphasis on the now—the only decisive time for love. The two attitudes are not mutually exclusive, but they must not be confused. Christians, to be sure, have responsibilities toward “this world” and they must fulfill them. This is the area of “social activism” which belongs entirely to “this world.” Christian love, however, aims beyond “this world.” It is itself a ray, a manifestation of the Kingdom of God; it transcends and overcomes all limitations, all “conditions” of this world because its motivation as well as its goals and consummation is in God.

The parable of the Last Judgment is about Christian love. Not all of us are called to work for “humanity,” yet each one of us has received the gift and the grace of Christ’s love. We know that all men ultimately need this personal love—the recognition in them of their unique soul in which the beauty of the whole creation is reflected in a unique way. We also know that men are in prison and are sick and thirsty and hungry because that personal love has been denied them. And, finally, we know that however narrow and limited the framework of our personal existence, each one of us has been made responsible for a tiny part of the Kingdom of God, made responsible by that very gift of Christ’s love. Thus, on whether or not we have accepted this responsibility, on whether we have loved or refused to love, shall we be judged. For “inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me. . . .”