

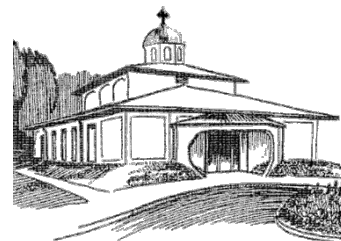


St Nicholas Orthodox Church

*A Parish of the Diocese of the Midwest
of the Orthodox Church in America*

9650 Johnnycake Ridge Road, Mentor, OH 44060

<https://saintnicholas-oca.org/>



Parish Rector: Fr Mark Therrien + (252) 813-6993 + fr.mark.therrien@gmail.com



Services & Events for the Week Starting February 4, 2024

- Sunday, February 4** *35th Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 2, Post-Feast of the Meeting, Venerable Father Isidore*
(Readings: Colossians 3:12-16; Matthew 25:14-30)
9:00a Church School
9:45a Third Hour || 10:00a Enrollment of Catechumens & Divine Liturgy || Coffee hour
- Friday, February 9** *Apodosis (Leave-taking / Giving-back) of the Meeting*
9:30a Home school co-op
- Saturday, February 10** 4:30p Confessions || 5:30p Great Vespers
- Sunday, February 11** *36th Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 3, Hieromartyr (Bishop-Martyr) Blaise*
(Readings: 1 Timothy 1:15-17; Matthew 15:21-28)
9:00a Church School
9:45a Third Hour || 10:00a Divine Liturgy || Coffee hour



Attendance & Stewardship for January 28, 2024

Attendance: 150; Operating: \$4,773; Maintenance: \$85;
Holy Day: \$25; Icons: \$5; Diocesan Dues: \$958; Candles:
\$62; Uganda: \$30; Parish Charities: \$85; Seminary: \$10

“Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do
good works in this holy and all-venerable temple . . .”
(from the final petition of the Augmented Litany)

Thank you for your generosity!



NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

The Cross Inscribed on the Heart: Some Mullings on Christian Life

As I announced last Sunday, today in our parish—by God’s grace—we will enroll three people as into the catechumenate to prepare for entrance into the holy Church: Nick & Abrea Monda, and Dalton Moses. The rite that we will use for this purpose is simple: Either after Great Vespers or, in our case, before Divine Liturgy, the priest will meet the three of them in the back of the

church (in the area of the *narthex*—the traditional place where the non-baptized would stand during the liturgy). Two prayers will then be read over them. The first is the prayer for making a catechumen as found in the service of holy baptism. The second is a prayer that is currently found in the service for naming a child on the eighth day, but which is, in fact, a very ancient prayer used to enroll a catechumen who is beginning an extended period of formation for reception into the Church.

The beginning of this second prayer is, I think, striking. It says: “O Lord our God, we entreat You, and we supplicate You, that the light of Your countenance be signed on these, Your servants, . . . , and that the Cross of Your Only-begotten Son be signed in their heart and understanding, so that they may flee from the vanity of the world and from every evil snare of the enemy, and may follow after Your commandments...”

As we know, as Orthodox Christians we are very much into the cross. We put crosses in our homes; we adorn our churches with crosses. According to custom, we bestow a neck cross upon those who are newly baptized. In some traditions, priests were crosses. Vestment

patterns are filled with crosses. In short: If there is a surface, we are sure to find a way to put a cross on it. And of course, during the services, we make the sign of the cross upon our bodies almost innumerable times.

All of that is good. But in the midst of it all, we must also remember this (and here I echo comments made by Vladyka Daniel in a sermon that he gave last September for the Feast of the Exaltation): As we read in this prayer, the first cross that each of us bears—the first cross that marks each of us as belonging to Christ—is the cross that was inscribed upon our heart either when we were a child and were first brought to the temple, or when we decided to embark upon the catechumenate for reception into the Church later in life.

And so, this is the first cross that we are called to bear as Christians: the cross within our heart. How do we bear it? Concretely, we do so in the ways indicated in this prayer: We bear it by fleeing from the vanity of the world (i.e., the empty allure of things that distract us from God). We bear it by fleeing from every evil snare of the enemy (i.e., by denying the evil one influence over us by refusing to engage in sinful activities). Positively put, we bear it by following after Christ's commandments (i.e., by making his teaching actual in our lives).

But above all, we bear this cross by offering our heart—that center of our personal being where we think and will—as fully and completely to God as we can, just as Christ offered his heart (his will and understanding) to the Father upon his own cross. For, as we know from the Scriptures, this is, ultimately, the one sacrifice that our God truly desires from us beyond anything else. As it says at Hebrews 10:6–7 (verses that we read this past Wednesday, in fact, as part of our cycle of daily readings): “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come – in the volume of the book it is written of Me – *to do Your will*, O God.’”



Keeping the Feast at Home This Week

During this coming week, we will continue celebrating the Lord's Meeting (Encounter) until the leave-taking of the feast on February 9. This is not necessarily typical: Depending on when the Fast begins, the Encounter can sometimes be a very short feast (the leave-taking can take place as early as at Vespers on February 2). This year, however, because Pascha will be relatively late, we are blessed to celebrate this feast for the full length of time.

This week, then, I encourage everyone to do what you can at home to keep the feast going. Using the

Troparion and **Kontakion** before and after meals is a good practice (or using these as part of daily prayers). Another way of keeping the feast at home would be to sing the **Song of St Symeon**. Regardless of what it is, it is important to find something to keep in mind this feast and its message that, in Christ, we have found the one who enlightens us by delivering us from our darkness.



Parish Prayer List

If you know of someone who is in special need of prayer, please email me so that I might add the person to the prayer list. In the meantime, please remember especially:

Perry Capitan, Julian, Sarah Crivella, Joella (LuAnn Dzura's daughter), **Emily Finazzo**, (friend of the Rendas), **David Campbell** (Debbie Clements' brother), **Patrick Leahy** (Dave K.'s brother-in-law), **Rick Wagner** (Merrick and Mia's grandfather), **Patricia** (Rosemary Bagley's mother), **Bruce** (Kristen Moore's father), **Joseph Chuppa, Ronald** (in baptism, **Thomas**) (Collin Moore's father), **Bruce** (Kristen Moore's father), **Mary Ann Sheranko, Helen** (Jan Ursinyi's mother [in hospice]); **Kevin, Declan, and Teagon** (husband and children of the newly-reposed Kristen); **Christina** (Mike Brzozowski's sister); **Alan; LuAnn Dzura; Rich Cook** (Cindy Renda's brother); **the suffering Christians of Ukraine, the Middle East, and Armenia**

Birthdays this week: 2/5: **Emily Horabik**; 2/6: **Amanda Heim, Anna Chongris**; 2/9: **Anastasia Schelkano**

Anniversary this week: 2/6: **Fr Drew & Debbie**

Expecting: **Greg & Grace, Jairus & Riley, Weston & Rachel, Joseph & Venessa, Jon & Alexandra, Patrick & Katherine**

Newborn: **Esther** (Stephen & Rebecca)

Catechumens: **Dalton Moses, Nick & Abrea Monda**

Newly departed: **Paris Anthony Santone** (Debbie Covelli's nephew), **Joseph Demanski, Cathy Ubancic** (friend of the Rendas), **Patricia** (Michael Abernathy's grandmother), **Nun Elizabeth** (of Holy Transfiguration Monastery), **Kristen** (Michelle Hoover's cousin)



Doings in the Deanery

On Saturday, March 9, there will be an evening celebration at St Michael's in Broadview Heights in connection with the educational ministry of St Tikhon's Seminary. For information, please see: <https://allthegood.stots.edu/>.