



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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December 4, 2022 - Glorification of the Priestmartyr Alexander Hotovitzky

December 6, 2022 - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

Troparion – Tone 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

Troparion – Tone 8

Let us honor the holy Martyr Barbara, for, as a bird, she escaped the snares of the Enemy,// and destroyed them through the help and defense of the Cross!

Troparion – Tone 8

O Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship, the enlightener of the universe and the adornment of hierarchs; all wise Father John, thy teachings have gleamed with light upon all things.// Intercede before Christ God to save our souls!

Troparion – Tone 6

In a time of fiery temptations for the Church of Russia, thou didst manifest Christ's love to thy flock through meekness and humility. As a good pastor thou didst lay down thy life for Him.// Pray for us, Hieromartyr Alexander, that our souls may be illuminated!

Kontakion – Tone 8

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam. Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,// and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

Kontakion – Tone 4

Singing the praises of the Trinity, thou didst follow God by enduring suffering; thou didst renounce the multitude of idols, O holy martyr Barbara. In thy struggles, thou wast not frightened by the threats of thy torturers, but cried out in a loud voice:// "I worship the Trinity in one Godhead."

Kontakion – Tone 4

Let us sing praises to John, worthy of great honor, the composer of hymns, the star and teacher of the Church, the defender of her doctrines: through the might of the Lord's Cross he overcame heretical error,// and as a fervent intercessor before God he entreats that forgiveness of sins may be granted to all!

Kontakion – Tone 2

Hieromartyr Alexander, thou didst bear labors and illness upon thy shoulders, and joyfully took the narrow path of suffering for Christ, through which thou didst attain the heavenly Kingdom.// Entreat God the Savior to grant us mercy on the Day of Judgment!

Prokeimenon – Tone 8

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God!

V. In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel.

Glorification of the Priestmartyr Alexander Hotovitzky

The New Martyr of Russia Alexander Hotovitzky was born on February 11, 1872 in the city of Kremenetz, into the pious family of Archpriest Alexander, who was Rector of the Volhynia Theological Seminary and would later be long remembered in the hearts of the Orthodox inhabitants of Volhynia as a good shepherd. Young Alexander received a good Christian upbringing from his parents, who instilled in him love for the Orthodox Church and for the people of God. The future pastor was educated at the Volhynia Seminary and the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy, from which he graduated with a Master's degree in 1895.

After graduation from the Academy, he was sent for missionary service to the Diocese of the Aleutians and North America, where he was assigned to the position of reader at the newly-established Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church in New York City. Following his marriage to Maria Scherbuhina, a graduate of the Pavlovsk Institute in Saint Petersburg, the Hieromartyr Alexander was ordained to the diaconate, and soon after, on February 25, 1896, to the priesthood by Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov) of the Aleutians, whom Father Alexander would always later remember with gratitude and love.

The ordination took place at the diocesan cathedral in San Francisco. In his address to the newly-ordained Father Alexander, Bishop Nicholas explained his selection of the new priest for ordained ministry in these words: "Your special sense of decency, your good upbringing, your noble idealism, and your sincere piety immediately caused me to look favorably upon you and compelled me to single you out among the young people, with whom you used to visit me in Saint Petersburg...I could see that you had that special spark from God, which makes any service an action truly done for God's sake, and without which a vocation becomes soul-less and dead work...Your first experience in preaching has shown you the power of this kind of inspiration: you saw how the people gathered around you and how attentively they stood and listened at length to your discourses... Why did these people listen to you rather than going to hear other preachers? Clearly the spark which burns within you attracts the hearts of these people like a magnet."

A week after his ordination, the young priest returned to New York to assume the pastorate of the parish where he had previously served as reader. From 1898 to 1907, the New Martyr Alexander served as a pastor under the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon. Saint Tikhon, who, in the tragic year of 1917, was to be elevated by Divine Providence to the primatial see as Patriarch of Moscow, valued highly Father Alexander's sincere piety, his gift of pastoral love, and his multifaceted theological erudition. The spectrum of his activity in the United States was quite broad and very fruitful. He was successful in missionary service, primarily among Uniates newly-emigrated from Galicia and Carpathian Rus. He was also one of the closest collaborators of the Orthodox archpastors in America and represented the Orthodox Church before American religious institutions and meetings.

Father Alexander's missionary work was not without many temptations and sorrows. Archbishop, later Metropolitan, Platon (Rozhdestvensky) expressed gratitude for the Passion-bearer Alexander's labors in America in an address delivered at the Divine Liturgy on February 26, 1914. Bidding farewell to Father Alexander, the Archbishop said, "One morning, during the years we worked together, you came to my room and, without saying much, unbuttoned your shirt, revealing a very large, bluish, bloody abrasion on your chest. That wound from a fanatic, who in a fit of rage attacked you wildly with a stick, followed the meeting of Russian people at which you had encouraged your own ethnic brother to renounce the pernicious Unia with Rome... My entire being was shaken to the core and I was profoundly moved, for before me at that moment was a genuine example of witness for Christ."

Through Father Alexander's efforts, Orthodox parishes were established in Philadelphia, Yonkers, and Passaic as well as other large and small towns throughout North America. The parishioners of these churches were cradle Orthodox whom fate had brought to the New World, as well as Carpatho-Russians converted from the Unia and former Protestant converts to the Orthodox Church.

An important contribution to the witness of the truth of Orthodoxy before heterodox American society was made by the American Orthodox Messenger, which was published in English and Russian under Father Alexander's editorship. Articles by the editor regularly appeared in this journal.

The New Martyr Alexander actively participated in the establishment of an Orthodox diocesan mutual aid society and at various times, he served as treasurer, first secretary, and president of this organization. The society provided material aid to Austrian Carpatho-Russians, Macedonian Slavs, Russian troops in Manchuria, and to Russian prisoners of war in Japanese camps.

Father Alexander also took upon himself the ascetical burden of constructing the architecturally remarkable and majestic Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York to replace the small parish church. The cathedral was to become an adornment of the city. He visited Orthodox communities throughout America soliciting funds for the construction of the Cathedral. In 1901, he also traveled to his homeland, Russia, for this purpose. In the annals of Saint Nicholas Church, which in 1903 became the diocesan Cathedral, it is recorded that, "This Cathedral was established and constructed in the City of New York in North America, under the supervision and through the efforts and labors of the most honorable Archpriest Father Alexander Hotovitzky in the year of Our Lord 1902."

On February 26, 1906, Orthodox America celebrated the tenth anniversary of priestly service of Archpriest Alexander, one of its most remarkable pastors. Bishop Tikhon greeted the jubilarian with these words: "As you remember your ordination as a priest of God at this anniversary, you are doubtless unwillingly contemplating how you have used your God-given talents, and asking yourself if the Grace of God was bestowed on you in vain and how far you have advanced on the path of moral perfection. As you judge yourself in this way, you are at the same time the judge and the accused. In order for a judgment to be fair, the testimony of onlookers, the witnesses, must be heard. Now they are speaking before you—listen to them. Thanks be to the Lord! We just heard their eloquent and heartfelt testimony praising you. For myself as your superior, I can testify that you have proven to be trustworthy, and have justified the expectations which were hoped for at your ordination."

The sacrificial and dedicated pastoral service of the New Martyr Alexander in America was concluded on February 26, 1914, exactly eighteen years after his ordination to the priesthood. In his farewell address, Father Alexander said, "Farewell, American Orthodox Rus—my dear Mother, the Holy American Church. I, your ever-grateful son, bow fully to the ground before you. You gave birth to me spiritually, you nurtured me, from your depths you inspired me by your strength. Through the shining witness of your founders, through the enlightened apostolic teachings of your preachers, through the fervor of your faithful flock, you have given me the greatest possible joy—to be your son."

From 1914 to 1917, Father Alexander served as a priest in Helsinki, Finland, where the majority of the population was Protestant. Although Finland was then part of the Russian Empire, the Orthodox clergy there had to exert great efforts to protect the Orthodox Karelians from the proselytic expansionism of the Finnish Lutherans. In Finland, the New Martyr Alexander was a loyal, active, and dedicated assistant to his archpastor—Sergius (Stragorodsky), the future Patriarch.

In August 1917, Archpriest Alexander was transferred to Moscow and assigned as assistant pastor of Christ the Savior Cathedral. Here he was again under the direct guidance of Saint Tikhon, with whom he had already been closely associated in America.

The Passion-bearer Alexander participated in the deliberations of the Church Council of 1917-18. When the Council discussed the drafting of a message to the Orthodox flock concerning elections to the State Council, he stated that, as the fate of Russia was at stake, the Church and the Council in particular should not shy away from the struggle to save the nation. Speaking about the efforts of the Council to upbuild the Church, he outlined his preliminary plans for order and healing in the internal life of the Church and stated with some bitterness, "It seems as if there were builders who were furiously preparing blueprints, plans and so forth for the construction of an edifice and at the same time were calmly observing the destruction brick by brick of this edifice by enemies."

During the difficult years of the Civil War, the New Martyr Alexander collaborated closely with Saint Tikhon in the administration of the Moscow diocese. In 1918, under the spiritual leadership of the rector, Father Nicholas Arseniev, and the assistant pastor, Father Alexander, a brotherhood affiliated with Christ the Savior Cathedral was established. As its first activity, the brotherhood issued an appeal to the Orthodox flock, which Father Alexander helped write.

This document stated, "People of Russia! Christ the Savior Cathedral, the adornment of Moscow, the pride of Russia, the joy of the Orthodox Church has been condemned to slow destruction. This glorious monument to the great exploits of Russian warriors, who gave their lives for their native land and the Holy Orthodox Faith, has been denied state support...People of Russia! Will you really surrender this wonderful church of the Savior to mockery? Is it really true, as is claimed by the persecutors of the Holy Church, that the people of Russia no longer need holy things—Churches, sacraments, services, because all this is outdated and superstitious? Respond, you faithful! All of you, respond as one! Rise up and protect your holy things! May the generous and well-intentioned donations of the rich be added to the precious pennies of the faithful poor. Moscow, you are the heart of Russia! Preserve your holy shrine—your golden-domed Church of the Savior!..." In response to this appeal, Orthodox inhabitants of Moscow joined the brotherhood of Christ the Savior Cathedral, and gave their alms to support the majestic church.

Pastoral service at that time was accompanied by much grief and danger. In May 1920 and November 1921 Father Alexander was arrested for brief periods. He was accused of violating the decrees concerning the separation of the Church from the state, and the school from the Church, by holding church school for the children.

In 1922, the Church was subjected to harsh tribulations when, under the pretext of helping the starving, ecclesiastical treasures including sacred vessels, icons, and other holy things were violently confiscated by the state. Heeding the appeal of Her holy primate, the Orthodox Church made generous donations to assist the starving. However, when Saint Tikhon issued a statement to his flock throughout Russia forbidding the cooperation of the clergy in surrendering sacred vessels for non-ecclesiastical use based on canon law, a slanderous campaign against the Church was begun in the press, Her primate was arrested, and a wave of court cases took place throughout Russia, in which servants of the Lord's altar were accused of counter-revolutionary activity. During these trials many faithful servants of the Church of Christ were sentenced to death and shed their blood as hieromartyrs and martyrs.

During this difficult time for the Church, Father Alexander was unwaveringly guided by the statements of the Holy Patriarch to his flock and also followed his directives. Funds to assist the starving were collected at Christ the Savior Cathedral. At the same time, measures were undertaken to protect the sacred objects of this church. Meetings of the clergy and parishioners of Christ the Savior Cathedral were held at Father Alexander's apartment in order to draft a resolution of the general parish meeting concerning the state decree.

A draft of the resolution, prepared by Father Alexander, protested against the violent confiscation of church valuables. A general meeting of parishioners was convened on March 23, 1922 at Christ the Savior Cathedral, presided by Archpriest Nicholas Arseniev. Father Alexander had already been arrested. This meeting adopted the final text of the resolution, which demanded guarantees from the state that all donations be used to save the lives of the starving. The participants in the meeting protest the poisonous publications against the Church as well as insults against the hierarchy. The drafting of this document was deemed by the authorities to be criminal counter-revolutionary activity.

After two court cases against the Church, in Petrograd and Moscow, which resulted in the executions of hieromartyrs and martyrs, a new highly visible trial of clergy and laity began in Moscow on November 27, 1922, during which they were accused of supposedly "attempting to retain in their hands possession of church valuables and, through the resulting starvation, to topple the Soviet regime." On trial in this case were 105 clergy and laity. Among the main defendants were Archpriest Sergius Uspensky, dean of the second district of forty churches in Prechistenka, Archpriest Nicholas Arseniev, dean of Christ the Savior Cathedral, Archpriest Alexander Hotovitzky, assistant pastor of this Cathedral, Ilya Gromoglasov, priest of Christ the Savior Cathedral, Lev Evgenievich Anohin, warden of this Cathedral, and Archpriest Simeon Golubev, rector of Saint John the Warrior Church.

The most significant part of the indictment submitted to the Court concerned the activity of the clergy and laity of Christ the Savior Cathedral. The indictment stated, "The main organizers and leaders of this criminal activity were Priest Hotovitzky, chairman of the council of parishes in this area, Priest Arseniev, rector of the Cathedral, Priest Zotikov, Priest Gromoglasov, former lawyer Kayutov, former deputy minister Shchepkin, the merchant Golovkin, and engineer Anohin. When the decree of the Supreme Central Executive Committee concerning the confiscation of church valuables was issued, they began their preliminary activities under the leadership of the priest Hotovitzky, who repeated to secretly gather the above named people at his apartment in order to plan with them the measures which they proposed to enact to achieve their criminal intentions."

The case was in court for two weeks. After the detailed indictment was read, questioning of the defendants began. Father Alexander remained cool and calm during the questioning as he tried to protect the other defendants. He did not admit any

guilt, stating, "I consider that it is not counter-revolutionary to ask for a corresponding amount of metal in return for church valuables."

Following the interrogation of all the defendants and witnesses, at the Court session on December 6, the later infamous, sinister prosecutor Vishinsky delivered the concluding statement for the prosecution. He asked the court for a sentence of capital punishment for thirteen defendants including Archpriests Alexander Hotovitzky, Nicholas Arseniev, Sergius Uspensky, Priest Ilya Gromoglasov, Abbess Vera (Pobedinskaya) of the Novodevichii Women's Monastery and L.E. Anohin. Vishinsky requested that the other defendants be sentenced to prison terms of varying length.

On December 11, defendants were given an opportunity to say a final word to the court. In his comments, Father Alexander attempted, first of all, to obtain the court's leniency and mercy for his brother clergy, "I direct your attention to those who were at the meeting in my apartment: some of them are old and the others are very young and guilty of nothing. This was a completely ordinary meeting, it was not counter-revolutionary and it cannot by any means be characterized as a shady plot."

The lengthiest final comments were delivered by the professor and priest Ilya Gromoglasov. This defendant attempted to gain the favor of the court by expounding on his former opposition to the Holy Synod. Concerning the conclusions of the prosecution, he said that he "knew nothing of the criminal organization headed by Hotovitzky."

On December 13, the verdict of the revolutionary tribunal was announced. It was milder than the bloodthirsty verdicts delivered at previous trials held in Petrograd and Moscow in conjunction with the confiscation of church valuables. Each of the main defendants—Abbess Vera (Pobedinskaya), Archpriest Sergius Uspensky, and Archpriest Alexander Hotovitzky were sentenced to ten years in prison, the confiscation of their personal property and the deprivation of their civil rights for five years. The others were sentenced to lesser terms of imprisonment. Appeals for pardon, made by those who were sentenced to the longest terms of imprisonment, including that of Archpriest Alexander, were rejected by the presidium of the Supreme Central Executive Committee on February 16, 1923.

After the holy Patriarch Tikhon resumed his administration of the Church and made several statements regarding loyalty to the governmental authorities, many hierarchs, clergy, church leaders and laity, who had previously received sentences from the judiciary in conjunction with the confiscation of church valuables, were granted amnesty. Father Alexander was among those freed in October 1923. Following his liberation, he was not assigned to a parish but served by invitation at various churches in Moscow.

He remained free for only a short time. Already on September 4, 1924, E. Tuchkov, head of the 6th section of the Department of State Political Management, compiled a list of thirteen clergy and church leaders of Moscow and recommended that they be subjected to administrative exile. The New Martyr Alexander, who was included in the list, was characterized as follows in this document, "A priest and preacher with a post-graduate education, very active, zealous and influential among the Tikhonites. His outlook is anti-Soviet."

On September 9, 1924, the New Martyr Alexander was subjected to an interrogation. "In my religious convictions," he said at that time, "I consider myself to be a Tikhonite. My relations with the Patriarch are intimate rather than just strictly administrative, but lately, I have avoided meeting with Patriarch Tikhon, as I felt that this might inconvenience him due to my conviction in conjunction with the confiscation of church valuables. I have never expressed an opinion concerning the restoration of the former government and such a thought has not even crossed my mind."

By a decision of a special meeting of the administration of the Department of State Political Management, the New Martyr Alexander was exiled to the Turuhan region for a period of three years. His already failing health was further weakened by his sojourn in the far north. Following his return from exile, Father Alexander was raised to the rank of protopresbyter and became one of the closest assistants of the Deputy Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan (later Patriarch) Sergius, who knew him well since the time of his service in Finland.

In the 1930s, Protopresbyter Alexander served as rector of the Church of the Deposition of the Robe on Donskoy Street. One of the parishioners of this church recalls, "In 1936, Father Alexander did not preach, as he was apparently forbidden to do so. In 1936-7, I was present many times when Father Alexander served. He was a tall, gray-haired priest with gentle facial features, who looked extremely intelligent. Gray, trimmed hair, a small beard, very kind gray eyes, a high-pitched, loud tenor...pronounced exclamations distinctly and with inspiration...His appearance reminded me of many priests who were exiles from the western regions...Father Alexander had many parishioners who greatly revered him...Even today, I remember

Father Alexander's eyes. It seemed as if his glance penetrated your heart and embraced it with affection. I had the same feeling when I saw the holy Patriarch Tikhon...The same light also shining in Father Alexander's eyes was testimony of his sanctity."

In the fall of 1937, the New Martyr Alexander was arrested again. The documentary evidence about him at our disposal ends with this; however, a majority of oral reports testify to his death as a martyr. The Orthodox Church in America, on whose territory Protopresbyter Alexander served as a priest until 1914, venerates him as a passion-bearer, whose life as a confessor ended with sufferings for Christ. The place of his burial is unknown.

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara in Asia Minor. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruthlessly persecuted Christians, Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. The prisons were so full of bishops, priests, and deacons, there was no room for the real criminals—murderers, thieves and robbers. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. He died December 6, AD 343 in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where a unique relic, called manna, formed in his grave. This liquid substance, said to have healing powers, fostered the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration, St. Nicholas Day, December 6th (December 19 on the Julian Calendar).

Through the centuries many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These accounts help us understand his extraordinary character and why he is so beloved and revered as protector and helper of those in need.

One story tells of a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value—a dowry. The larger the dowry, the better the chance that a young woman would find a good husband. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry. This poor man's daughters, without dowries, were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home—providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes the story is told with gold balls instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for St. Nicholas. And so St. Nicholas is a gift-giver.

One of the oldest stories showing St. Nicholas as a protector of children takes place long after his death. The townspeople of Myra were celebrating the good saint on the eve of his feast day when a band of Arab pirates from Crete came into the district. They stole treasures from the Church of Saint Nicholas to take away as booty. As they were leaving town, they snatched a young boy, Basilios, to make into a slave. The emir, or ruler, selected Basilios to be his personal cupbearer, as not knowing the language, Basilios would not understand what the king said to those around him. So, for the next year Basilios waited on the king, bringing his wine in a beautiful golden cup. For Basilios' parents, devastated at the loss of their only child, the year passed slowly, filled with grief. As the next St. Nicholas' feast day approached, Basilios' mother would not join in the festivity, as it was now a day of tragedy. However, she was persuaded to have a simple observance at home—with quiet prayers for Basilios' safekeeping. Meanwhile, as Basilios was fulfilling his tasks serving the emir, he was suddenly whisked up and away. St. Nicholas appeared to the terrified boy, blessed him, and set him down at his home back in Myra. Imagine the joy and wonderment when Basilios amazingly appeared before his parents, still holding the king's golden cup. This is the first story told of St. Nicholas protecting children—which became his primary role in the West.

Another story tells of three theological students, traveling on their way to study in Athens. A wicked innkeeper robbed and murdered them, hiding their remains in a large pickling tub. It so happened that Bishop Nicholas, traveling along the same route, stopped at this very inn. In the night he dreamed of the crime, got up, and summoned the innkeeper. As Nicholas prayed earnestly to God the three boys were restored to life and wholeness. In France the story is told of three small children, wandering in their play until lost, lured, and captured by an evil butcher. St. Nicholas appears and appeals to God to return them to life and to their families. And so St. Nicholas is the patron and protector of children.

Several stories tell of Nicholas and the sea. When he was young, Nicholas sought the holy by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There as he walked where Jesus walked, he sought to more deeply experience Jesus' life, passion, and resurrection.

Returning by sea, a mighty storm threatened to wreck the ship. Nicholas calmly prayed. The terrified sailors were amazed when the wind and waves suddenly calmed, sparing them all. And so St. Nicholas is the patron of sailors and voyagers. Other stories tell of Nicholas saving his people from famine, sparing the lives of those innocently accused, and much more. He did many kind and generous deeds in secret, expecting nothing in return. Within a century of his death he was celebrated as a saint. Today he is venerated in the East as wonder, or miracle worker and in the West as patron of a great variety of persons—children, mariners, bankers, pawn-brokers, scholars, orphans, laborers, travelers, merchants, judges, paupers, marriageable maidens, students, children, sailors, victims of judicial mistakes, captives, perfumers, even thieves and murderers! He is known as the friend and protector of all in trouble or need.

Sailors, claiming St. Nicholas as patron, carried stories of his favor and protection far and wide. St. Nicholas chapels were built in many seaports. As his popularity spread during the Middle Ages, he became the patron saint of Apulia (Italy), Sicily, Greece, and Lorraine (France), and many cities in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Russia, Belgium, and the Netherlands (see list). Following his baptism, Grand Prince Vladimir I brought St. Nicholas' stories and devotion to St. Nicholas to his homeland where Nicholas became the most beloved saint. Nicholas was so widely revered that thousands of churches were named for him, including three hundred in Belgium, thirty-four in Rome, twenty-three in the Netherlands and more than four hundred in England.

Nicholas' tomb in Myra became a popular place of pilgrimage. Because of the many wars and attacks in the region, some Christians were concerned that access to the tomb might become difficult. For both the religious and commercial advantages of a major pilgrimage site, the Italian cities of Venice and Bari vied to get the Nicholas relics. In the spring of 1087, sailors from Bari succeeded in spirited away the bones, bringing them to Bari, a seaport on the southeast coast of Italy. An impressive church was built over St. Nicholas' crypt and many faithful journeyed to honor the saint who had rescued children, prisoners, sailors, famine victims, and many others through his compassion, generosity, and the countless miracles attributed to his intercession. The Nicholas shrine in Bari was one of medieval Europe's great pilgrimage centers and Nicholas became known as "Saint in Bari." To this day pilgrims and tourists visit Bari's great Basilica di San Nicola. Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be venerated by Catholics and Orthodox and honored by Protestants. By his example of generosity to those in need, especially children, St. Nicholas continues to be a model for the compassionate life.

Widely celebrated in Europe, St. Nicholas' feast day, December 6th, kept alive the stories of his goodness and generosity. In Germany and Poland, boys dressed as bishops begged alms for the poor—and sometimes for themselves! In the Netherlands and Belgium, St. Nicholas arrived on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. December 6th is still the main day for gift giving and merrymaking in much of Europe. For example, in the Netherlands St. Nicholas is celebrated on the 5th, the eve of the day, by sharing candies (thrown in the door), chocolate initial letters, small gifts, and riddles. Dutch children leave carrots and hay in their shoes for the saint's horse, hoping St. Nicholas will exchange them for small gifts. Simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Epistle: Hebrews 13:7-16

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

Gospel: Luke 12:32-40

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Service Schedule for the week of December 4

Sunday December 4 – 9:45 AM Hours; 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

Monday December 5 – **ST. NICHOLAS** Vespers with Litya 7:00 PM

Tuesday December 6 – **ST. NICHOLAS** Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM

Saturday December 10 – 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Confession

Sunday December 11 – 9:45 AM Hours; 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

Upcoming Holy Day Service Schedule for 2022

Saturday December 24 – 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Supper (potluck Lenten) in Daria Hall followed by Great Compline with Litya at 7:00 PM. ***A sign-up sheet for the Supper is on the table in the back of the church.***

Sunday December 25 – **NATIVITY** 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Monday December 26 – **SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS** 9:30 Divine Liturgy

Saturday December 31 – **FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION** 5:00 PM Vespers with Litya

Sunday January 1 – **FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION** 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Thursday January 5 – **FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY** 7:00 PM Great Compline with Litya

Friday January 6 – **FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY** 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Great Blessing of Water

Saturday January 7 – **SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST** 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy; 5:00 PM Vesper

Weekly Giving

November 27 – 71 adults, 27 youth, \$2,949

Parish Announcements

On Christmas Eve, the parish will have a potluck Lenten supper in Daria Hall at 5:00 PM. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the back of the church. Please sign up and also indicate what Lenten dish you will bring to share.

There will be a FOCA Club meeting next Sunday during Coffee Hour.

The Ladies Altar Society is raffling the following items. Chances are \$1.00 each.

Today - Adult Christmas basket

December 11 – "The Lemonade Stand", part of the Lenox collection; an original work of art by renowned artist Lynn Bywaters – includes certification.

December 18 – Platter of delicious homemade cookies and fudge...just in time for Christmas!

Today the parish children will decorate the Christmas tree in Daria Hall.

Yolka rehearsals with the children will take place every Sunday during Sunday School. Parents, please bring your children so they become familiar with the program.

The Sunday School Yolka will be held in Daria Hall on Sunday, December 18 during Coffee Hour. Please plan on attending to support the youth of our parish!

Please remember to partake of the Sacraments of Confession and Communion prior to the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Contact Father Volodymyr if you need to set up a time for Confession other than after Saturday evening Vespers.

Parishioners who are interested in becoming a member of the Parish Council should speak with Father Volodymyr prior to December 31. Elections will be held during the Annual Parish Meeting on January 29, 2023.

Catechism classes will begin Thursday January 12 at 7:00 PM in the church basement. Classes will be taught on a rotating schedule by Father Volodymyr, John Cassar, Herman Meyer, and Alan Berck. Everyone is invited to attend, but classes are mandatory for those wishing to convert to Orthodoxy. Classes will be finished before Pascha, at which time the Catechumens will schedule services to become Orthodox.

Please remember to sign-up for on-line giving, if you are interested. See a member of the Parish Council if you have any questions!

Youth and adults of the parish are invited to Bible Study classes during Coffee Hour. The classes are taught by Alan Berck.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK:

Anna Brasowski – December 7

Have a blessed birthday and may God grant you many years!

If you do not see your birthday listed above during your birthday week, please let Darice know and she will add it to the schedule!

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE – Coffee Hour Preparation Instructions are available in the Daria Hall kitchen

Dec. 4 **FAST DAY** Paul Denko, Francine Brady, Herman Meyer
Dec. 11 **FAST DAY** Olga & James Bates, Awet Tesfa
Dec. 18 **FAST DAY** Father Volodymyr & Matushka Oksana, Awet Tesfa
Dec. 25 CHRISTMAS – no Coffee Hour
Jan. 1 Matthew & Kris Bohush, Darice Keyes
Jan. 8 Sami Bachir, Nancy Mitsos
Jan. 15 Matthew & Nana Barrett, Nina Laushell
Jan. 22 Sophie Dumas, Melissa Braun, Darice Keyes
Jan. 29 Blake & Jessica Kilgore, Alla Strauss
Feb. 5 Anna Brasowski, Francine Brady
Feb. 12 FOCA Club - Breakfast Fundraiser
Feb. 19 Carmen & Cezar Mateiescu, Darice Keyes
Feb. 26 **NO MEAT** Manuel & Lourdes Montiel, Awet Tesfa
March 5 **FAST** Melody Stavisky, Darice Keyes
March 12 **FAST** Awet Tesfa, Nebiat Tesfa
March 19 **FAST** Alan & Mimi Berck, Francine & Herman
March 26 **FAST** John Cassar, Nina Laushell
April 2 **FAST** Anne Cheslock, Nancy Mitsos
April 9 **FAST** Francine Brady, Herman Meyer, Alla Strauss
April 16 **PASCHA** – No Coffee Hour
April 23 Madeleine Sekulich, Mark McDevitt, Nancy Mitsos
April 30 Fiyori Habtesilasse, Awet Tesfa