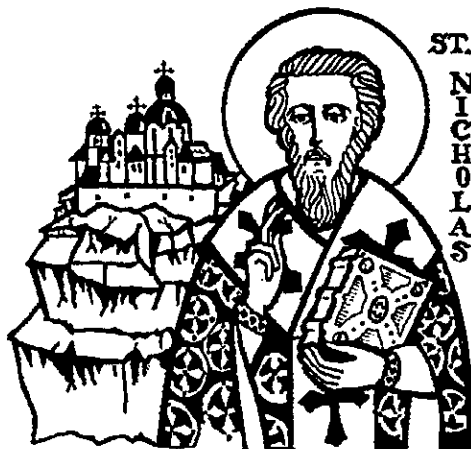




**Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Bulletin
And Holy Transfiguration Chapel**
A Parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
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We would like to welcome all of our visitors and friends to Saint Nicholas Orthodox Parish. We would like to ask all of our new visitors to please sign our register so that we might be able to keep in contact with you about Parish celebrations and events. Through the intercession of Saint Nicholas we hope and pray that our community might continue to grow in numbers and in service to the Lord. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and in love.

In case of an emergency, please call Father Stephen day or night at the above telephone number.

February 18, 2024
Volume 17: Number 07
Celebrating our 17th Year of Serving the Lord
Schedule of Services and Activities

Sunday, February 18 – Sunday of Zaccheaus – Tone 4
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Stephen

Sunday, February 25 – Sunday Publican and Pharisee – Tone 5
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Fast Free Week

Sunday, March 3 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son – Tone 6
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Sunday, March 10 – Meatfare Sunday – Tone 7
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Stephen

SCRIPTURAL READINGS

Sunday of Zachaeus – Matins: Luke 24:1-12; Liturgy: 1 Timothy 4:9-15; Luke 19:1-10

Monday - 1 Peter 2:21-3:9; Mark 12:13-17

Tuesday - 1 Peter 3:10-22; Mark 12:18-27

Wednesday – 1 Peter 4:1-11; Mark 12:28-37

Thursday – 1 Peter 4:12-5:5; Mark 12:38-44

Friday – 2 Peter 1:1-10; Mark 13:1-8

Saturday – 2 Timothy 2:11-19; Luke 18:2-8

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee – Matins: Matthew 28:16-20; Liturgy: 2 Timothy 3:10-15; Luke 18:10-14

Virgin Martyr Dorothy at Caesarea, in Cappadocia, and those with her
Commemorated on February 6/19

The Holy Martyr Dorothy, the Martyrs Christina, Callista and the Martyr Theophilus lived in Caesarea of Cappadocia and suffered under the emperor Diocletian in either the year 288 or 300.

Saint Dorothy was a pious Christian maiden, distinguished by her great beauty, humility, prudence, and God-given wisdom, which astonished many. Arrested upon orders of the governor Sapricius, she steadfastly confessed her faith in Christ and was subjected to tortures.

Failing to break the will of the saint, the governor sent to her two women, the sisters Christina and Callista, who once were Christians, but fearing torture, they renounced Christ and began to lead impious lives. He ordered them to get Saint Dorothy to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, but just the reverse happened. Saint Dorothy convinced them that the mercy of God is granted to all who repent, so they corrected themselves and returned to Christ. The tormentors tied them back to back and burned them in a vat of tar. Through martyrdom, Christina and Callista atoned for their sin of apostasy, receiving from God not only forgiveness, but crowns of victory.

Saint Dorothy was again subjected to tortures, but she gladly endured them and accepted the death sentence. She cried out with joy, thanking Christ for calling her to Paradise and to the heavenly bridal chamber. As they led the saint to execution Theophilus, one of the governor's counselors, laughed and said to her, "Bride of Christ, send me an apple and some roses from the Paradise of your Bridegroom." The martyr nodded and said, "I shall do that."

At the place of execution, the saint requested a little time to pray. When she finished the prayer, an angel appeared before her in the form of a handsome child presenting her three apples and three roses on a pure linen cloth. The saint requested that these be given to Theophilus, after which she was beheaded by the sword.

Having received the gracious gift, the recent mocker of Christians was shaken, and he confessed Christ as the true God. His friends were astonished, and wondered whether he were joking, or perhaps mad. He assured them he was not joking. Then they asked the reason for this sudden change. He asked what month it was. "February," they replied. "In the winter, Cappadocia is covered with ice and frost, and the trees are bare of leaves. What do you think? From where do these apples and flowers come?" After being subjected to cruel tortures, Saint Theophilus was beheaded with a sword.

The relics of Saint Dorothy are in Rome in the church dedicated to her, and her head is also at Rome, in a church of the Mother of God at Trastevere.

Greatmartyr Theodore Stratelates "the General"

Commemorated on February 8/21

The Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates came from the city of Euchaita in Asia Minor. He was endowed with many talents, and was handsome in appearance. For his charity God enlightened him with the knowledge of Christian truth. The bravery of the saintly soldier was revealed after he, with the help of God, killed a giant serpent living on a precipice in the outskirts of Euchaita. The serpent had devoured many people and animals, terrorizing

the countryside. Saint Theodore armed himself with a sword and vanquished it, glorifying the name of Christ among the people.

For his bravery Saint Theodore was appointed military commander [stratelatos] in the city of Heraclea, where he combined his military service with preaching the Gospel among the pagans subject to him. His gift of persuasion, reinforced by his personal example of Christian life, turned many from their false gods. Soon, nearly all of Heraclea had accepted Christianity.

During this time the emperor Licinius (311-324) began a fierce persecution against Christians. In an effort to stamp out the new faith, he persecuted the enlightened adherents of Christianity, who were perceived as a threat to paganism. Among these was Saint Theodore. Licinius tried to force Saint Theodore to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. The saint invited Licinius to come to him with his idols so both of them could offer sacrifice before the people.

Blinded by his hatred for Christianity, Licinius trusted the words of the saint, but he was disappointed. Saint Theodore smashed the gold and silver statues into pieces, which he then distributed to the poor. Thus he demonstrated the vain faith in soulless idols, and also displayed Christian charity.

Saint Theodore was arrested and subjected to fierce and refined torture. He was dragged on the ground, beaten with iron rods, had his body pierced with sharp spikes, was burned with fire, and his eyes were plucked out. Finally, he was crucified. Varus, the servant of Saint Theodore, barely had the strength to write down the incredible torments of his master.

God, however, in His great mercy, willed that the death of Saint Theodore should be as fruitful for those near him as his life was. An angel healed the saint's wounded body and took him down from the cross. In the morning, the imperial soldiers found him alive and unharmed. Seeing with their own eyes the infinite might of the Christian God, they were baptized not far from the place of the unsuccessful execution.

Thus Saint Theodore became "like a day of splendor" for those pagans dwelling in the darkness of idolatry, and he enlightened their souls "with the bright rays of his suffering." Unwilling to escape martyrdom for Christ, Saint Theodore voluntarily surrendered himself to Licinius, and discouraged the Christians from rising up against the torturer, saying, "Beloved, halt! My Lord Jesus Christ, hanging upon the Cross, restrained the angels and did not permit them to take revenge on the race of man."

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Going to execution, the holy martyr opened up the prison doors with just a word and freed the prisoners from their bonds. People who touched his robe were healed instantly from sicknesses and freed from demonic possession. By order of the emperor, Saint Theodore was beheaded by the sword. Before his death he told Varus, "Do not fail to record the day of my death, and bury my body in Euchaita." He also asked to be remembered each year on this date. Then he bent his neck beneath the sword, and received the crown of martyrdom which he had sought. This occurred on February 8, 319, on a Saturday, at the third hour of the day.

Saint Theodore is regarded as the patron saint of soldiers. He is also commemorated on June 8/21.

PREPARATION FOR LENT

1. THE DESIRE : SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS



Long before the actual beginning of Lent, the church announces its approach and invites us to enter into the period of pre-Lenten preparation. It is a characteristic feature of the Orthodox liturgical tradition that every major feast or season - Easter, Christmas, Lent, etc. - is announced and "prepared" in advance. Why? Because of the deep psychological insight by the Church into human nature. Knowing our lack of concentration and the frightening "worldliness" of our life, the Church knows our inability to change rapidly, to go abruptly from one spiritual or mental state to another. Thus, long before the actual effort of Lent is to begin, the Church calls our attention to its seriousness and invites us to

meditate on its significance. Before we can "practice" Lent we are given its "meaning". This preparation includes five consecutive Sundays preceding Lent, each one of them - through its particular Gospel lesson - dedicated to some fundamental aspect of repentance.

The very announcement of Lent is made the Sunday on which the Gospel lesson about Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) is read. It is the story of a man who was too short to see Jesus but who **DESIRED** so much to see Him that he climbed up a tree. Jesus responded to his desire and went to his house. Thus the theme of this first announcement is **DESIRE**. Man follows his desire. One can even say that man **IS** desire, and this fundamental psychological truth about human nature is acknowledged by the Gospel: "Where your treasure is," says Christ, "there will your heart be." A strong desire overcomes the natural limitations of man; when he passionately desires something he does things of which "normally" he is incapable. Being "short", he overcomes and transcends himself. The only question, therefore, is whether we desire the right things, whether the power of desire in

us is aimed at the right goal, or whether - in the words of the existentialist atheist, Jean Paul Sartre - man is a "useless passion".

Zacchaeus desired the "right thing"; he wanted to see and approach Christ. He is the first symbol of repentance, for repentance begins as the rediscovery of the deep nature of all desire: the desire for God and His righteousness, for the true life. Zacchaeus is "short" - petty, sinful and limited - yet his desire overcomes all of this. It "forces" Christ's attention; it brings Christ to his home. Such, then, is the first announcement, the first invitation: ours is to **DESIRE** that which is deepest and truest in ourselves, to acknowledge the thirst and hunger for the Absolute which is in us whether we know it or not, and which, when we deviate from it and turn our desires away, makes us indeed a "useless passion". And if we desire deeply enough, strongly enough, Christ will respond.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY - is expressed to the following Subdeacon Kevin Minnich, 2/11. May God grant him a very happy birthday and keep him for many, happy and blessed years!

REDNER FULL SALE SLIPS - are still being collected. Please save the whole slip.

READER MINISTRY:

February 18 - Subdeacon Kevin Minnich

February 25 - Kris Scholl

March 3 - Christina Mentis

March 10 - Margaret Perkins

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL - Metropolitan Antony, Father Geroge Bazylevsky, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Constantine Christo, Father Vasyl Dovhan, Father Oleh Hucul, Father Mark Leisure, Father John Nakonachny, Father James Norton, Father Paul Pappas, Father John Perich, Father Volodymyr Wronskyj, Pani Matka Lilly Lemar, Matushka Laura Odell, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Jamison, Mikey Arntz, Wakako Alexander, Theresa Barnes, Paul Calistor, Joe Chas, Rita Cook, Dmitra Cookson, Davis William Doty; Steve Forte, Thomas Holt, Dot Howell, Norma Husnick, Walter Katolic, Judith Kocinski, Kristina Koutsoudes, Olympia Koutsoudes, Gina Louk, Frederick McCarthy, Bruce McGloan, Patricia McGloan, Stephen McNulty, Chritina Mentis, Connie Mentis, John Moniodes, Olga Moniodes, Margaret Perkins, Barbara Perrigina, Natassia Perrine, Robert Perrine, Michael Previte, Sandra Ramondi, Carolynn Ritter; Jim Saturno, Clay Seman, Gail Sherman, Lorraine Sherman, Gerald Sovinski, Diane Staples, Nicholas Taylor, Kathy Theodorakos, Merryl Trader, Ralph Vurgich, Cheryl Zabowski, Edward Zabowski, Markos Zerefos.



GOD KEEPS A PROMISE



According to the law of Moses, all Hebrew parents were required to bring their first-born son to the Temple on the 40th day after his birth. This was done in remembrance of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt and their freedom from slavery -- when their first-born sons were protected from the "angel of death," -- who slew the young male children of the Egyptians. It was customary to bring a sacrifice to the Temple that day in thanksgiving to God.

Obedient to the precepts of their people, Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem 40 days after His birth. As their sacrifice, they brought two young doves with them. While there, they encountered the Righteous Simeon -- a pious man who was advanced in years. God promised him that he would not die until he saw the coming of the Messiah. When Simeon came upon Christ and His parents, he knew that this was the One for Whom the world had waited: the Light Who would enlighten the Gentiles. Indeed, Simeon knew that he could now "depart in peace." Simeon blessed them and proclaimed that: "this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel." (Luke 2:34)

Before returning home, Mary, Joseph and Jesus also met Anna, a prophetess who had lived in the Temple some 84 years as a widow. She, too, recognized the true identity and mission of the young Child.

This event is celebrated as the FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD by our Holy Orthodox Church in February each year. To further emphasize the coming of the "Light" into a darkened world, candles are blessed on this holy day.