

Northern Lights

Quarterly Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona
 P.O. Box 2164 • Flagstaff, AZ 86003-2164 • Tel. (928) 774-8279 • <http://www.gomona.org>
 Fr. Nicholas Andruchow, Priest

Volume 1, No. 30

Winter 2004

~ Lenten Renewal Program ~

Our Bishop Metropolitan Anthony has asked us to participate in a Lenten program so that as individuals and families, we can best benefit from this Lenten time. Each person is challenged to commit themselves during this Lenten period in the following areas according to the tradition of the Orthodox Church:

- Attend the Clean Monday service and dinner on February 23rd at 6:30 PM.
- Attend Divine Liturgy every Sunday during Lent.
- Fast during the entire 40 days of Lent or at least on every Wednesday and Friday.
- Attend the Presanctified Liturgy at least on Thursday March 11th, if not on every Thursday.
- Read and reflect on the assigned scriptural readings twice a week.
- Pray the Lenten Prayer once a day.
- Attend the Holy Thursday, and Friday services of Holy Week.
- Participate in the Joy of the Resurrection service on Holy Saturday at Midnight.
- Participate in the Sacrament of confession at some period during Lent.
- Help another person in need through an act of mercy.

The readings will be provided weekly and the Lenten prayers will be given to all participating. This program is designed to engage the entire congregation from our children to the elders of the church, so let us all come and begin together on Clean Monday February 23rd, at 6:30 PM. To defray the printing costs of the weekly readings \$10 will be asked of each person who participates. If you have any question please contact me at the office 774-8279. May God guide all of our paths to the Light who illumines all.

Your Pastor in Christ, *Fr. Nicholas Andruchow*

Worship Services

Presanctified Liturgy

Every Thursday Evening,
 6:30 PM during Great Lent
 Followed by a Lenten Potluck

Divine Liturgy

Sunday Mornings, 10:30 AM

Orthos

Sunday Mornings, 9:15 AM

Great Vespers

Saturday Evenings, 6:00 PM
 Confessions after Vespers or by appt.

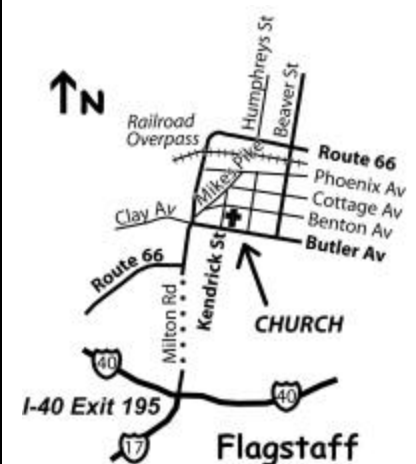
Religious Education

Sunday Church School

Young Adults 9:30 AM
 Children 10:00 AM

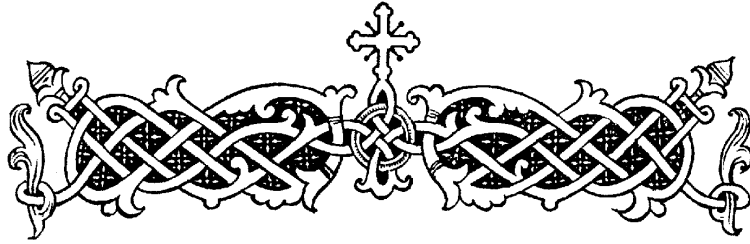
Bible Study

Paraklesis and Bible Study will continue
 after Lent on April 28th.



Unless noted, Services and Classes are held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church • 224 S. Kendrick Street

Directions from Interstate Highways: From I-17N proceed into Flagstaff. From I-40, take Exit 195 into Flagstaff. Once in Flagstaff, continue north on Milton Rd. Pass through five lights. The sixth light will be at Butler Av. Turn right onto Butler Av. Go one (short) block and turn left onto Kendrick Street. Our Lady of Guadalupe will be on your right.



The Orthodox Medicine

Fr. Nicholas Andruchow

In our society one of the most discussed political issues is Health Care benefits. Within that debate the covering of prescriptions and medicine expenses is at the forefront. The cost of medicine continues to increase and so doesn't the demand for proper medicine to cure ailments. With this in mind, to be prescribed the proper medicine is that much more vital in order not to waste money, and avoid any harmful side effects. The correct medicine needs to be given in order to encourage healthy recovery. This not only applies to our physical ailments but also our spiritual sicknesses. If spiritually we are diseased through depression, anxiety, obsessiveness, mistrust, paranoia, anger, fear or despair, then we need to seek the proper remedy for effective healing to take place. In Orthodoxy, the medicine that has been prescribed for the past 2 millenniums is Holy Confession. Through this ancient practice all Christians have been given the opportunity to be healed from their physical and spiritual ailments by confessing their sins. So let us historically and caringly embrace the reality of this most appropriate Christ given medicine.

In the Bible we see Christ connecting physical healing to the forgiveness of sin in the healing of the paralytic. (Matt. 9:2) Sin is that which separates us from God and since He is the one who gives us life and is the one who is our life, being separated from Him leads to our ultimate death both spiritually and physically. In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ proclaimed His authority to forgive and release us from sin. (Matthew 9:6) Christ also gave this same authority to His disciples. (John 20:23, Matt. 18:18) Therefore we have the opportunity to be released from sin but this process needs to be bi-lateral, Christ granting forgiveness, and the sinner admitting to his/her sins. To have a proper relationship with God we must confess our sinfulness, as the tax-collector did in the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. (Luke 18:13) In the early Church it was practiced to confess one's sins publicly so that wrong doings could be dealt with appropriately. We see this in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19:18), in the letter of St. James (James 5:16), in the early writings of the 1st century Christians (Didache 4:14) and by St. Leo the Great in the 5th century (Letter VII. 1) to just name a few. This exposure of ones sins was to protect the community from danger and to appoint the appropriate penance as retribution for the offense caused to the Lord. As Christianity became wider spread the practice of public confession fell out of use and the emphasis was placed on private medicinal confession in the presence of ordained clergy, as seen in the 52nd Canon of the Council of Trullo in the 7th century. Therefore it is clear that the practice of confessing ones sins is truly a Christian practice which was established by Christ and maintained by the Orthodox Church through the centuries. Despite this obvious fact many Orthodox Christians fail to embrace this essential sacrament. People claim the Orthodox faith as the one and true faith but hesitate to embrace it's healing Traditions. To help us with these hesitations let us reflect on some of the misconception of Holy Confession and clarify the need for frequent embracement of this sacrament.

The wide spread Christian practice of openly confessing our errors is evident but what if you think your sins are not that "big". Maybe you say that "I have not tried to murder anyone or rob a bank what do I have to confess?" We need to be very weary of making assumptions of our sinfulness or purity. Confession is not just to proclaim our sins to the Lord and receive forgiveness but also to search for guidance to ensure that we are not living in delusion. Delusion is like "when a man stays in a closed room for a long time, and he gets used to the bad air in it and does not feel how unpleasant it is."¹ That is what we want to avoid. St. John of Kronstadt said that it "is truly a gift of God – to be able to see your sins in their multitude and in all their loathsomeness" and we do this in the sacrament of confession with the consultation of our priest.

Another stumbling block for Christ's faithful is thinking our sins are too grievous to be forgiven by God. Shame is used here in a negative sense and because of the gravity of our errors we fear God will reject us, therefore we try to hide them by not mentioning them at all. If we don't expose the sinful mistakes of our past and embrace true repentance to change our ways, our ability to overcome the temptation of that sin will be severely debilitated. We see this in the lives of recovering alcoholics who attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. At every meeting before any one of the members address their peers they state their first name and say "and I am an alcoholic". They do this to clearly reveal their weakness and sin and to avoid any type of delusion so that they can have more strength against the disease of alcoholism. As Orthodox Christians we need to follow the wisdom of the historical church and confess our sins and embrace the lifting of

¹ Aleksiev, Seraphim Archimandrite, *The Forgotten Medicine*, St. Xenia Skete Press, Wildwood, CA, 1994, pg. 31

those sins by Christ through His ordained bishops or priests.

So it is clear that as Christians and especially as Orthodox Christians we should embrace the sacrament of confession but the question arises of “when should we confession or sins?” Obviously we should turn to the Lord in the sacrament of confession when we blatantly offend Him by hurting others or ourselves through stealing, lying, or physically abuse. But let us say that you think that your life is not that “sinful”. Well then maybe you are thinking once a year or maybe just before you die in your old age you can go to confession. Well first of all we do not know when we will die and secondly if we embrace confession in a medicinal manner then we should not wait until we are full of anger and rage to start confessing. It is like as if you have a diseased heart. It is not wise to do nothing to strengthen yourself until you are struck by a heart attack. Rather you should fill your life with healthy eating and exercise over a long period of time. The same is with the sacrament of confession. We need to embrace it on a regular basis, at least during the 4 fasting periods of the church year, in order to responsibly live a Christian life overcoming the passions that plague us. We need to be as strong as possible in order to freely embrace Christ’s love and see the blessings that surround our lives. So Christ challenges all of us and also I challenge you as your pastor, this Lenten period take the medicine that we all need and embrace the sacrament of confession which can truly heal our souls.

NOTICE

HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA SERVICES TO BE HELD AT HOLY NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Every six years the Eastern and Western Churches celebrate Pascha on the same day, and this is one of those years! Guadalupe Church will be needed for Catholic services, so arrangements have been made for us to hold our Holy Week and Pascha Services at Holy Nativity Church, located at 16 W. Cherry Street. Please watch for more details as we approach Holy Week.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

On January 21st, the first parish council meeting was held at 12:30 at Kachina Downtown Restaurant. Fr. Nicholas conducted the first part of the meeting until the election of the new parish council officers was completed. The results of the elections is as follows:

President.....Randy Schulz
Vice President.....Richard Jackson
SecretaryTammy Krestsedemas
Treasure.....Kathy Lampros
Stewardship ChairpersonToula Howington

After the election of officers, President Randy Schulz conducted the remainder of the meeting. Some of the topics was the review of last years financial data, a review of the upcoming budget for 2004, upcoming clergy laity meetings and the setting of a date for a parish council retreat. This retreat will help the parish council establish goals and create a focus for our efforts over the next 12 months.

The next parish council meeting will be February 18th, 12:30pm at the Kachina Downtown Restaurant. Anyone is welcome to attend.

In Christ, Your Parish Council

Fundraisers

We had three successful fundraisers at the end of 2003 which brought in over \$4,600 in total! The Standing on the Corner event in Winslow, that Tammy & Pete Krestsedemas manage single-handedly brought in \$589 after expenses. Our Community Christmas card netted us \$241. And through our Holiday Baklava Sale, we earned \$3,774 after expenses. We sold over \$4,400 of baklava through our baking and at the Winslow Christmas parade; that’s the equivalent of 176 trays (at \$25 per tray)!! Aren’t we glad that our community loves baklava?!!

Many, many thanks to all who helped with these events and much appreciation and thanks to Tammy and Pete for spearheading our efforts.

Thank You From Richard Jackson

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Fr. Nicholas and everyone in the parish for your support during my term as president of the parish council. The past three years has been very exciting and dynamic for our mission to say the least. A lot of very positive change has occurred as a result of hard work on your part, trust in God and our prayers being answered.

We have for many years now worked closely together and have become a family of like-minded Orthodox faithful in pursuit of our ultimate goal, a permanent church in Northern Arizona. As you can tell, our family is growing. Now we have a full-time priest, a full liturgical schedule and many blessings as a result of our faith.

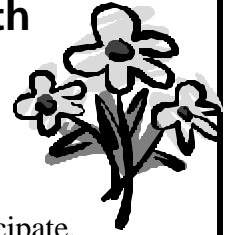
I am so very pleased that Randy Schulz has been elected president of our parish council. Randy is a true leader. He is thoughtful, considerate and will do his very best for the success of our mission. I will work closely with him, offering my full support to help him in anyway I can. I ask every one to support Randy in his new role and also his wife Helen and their children Nicholas and Andrew. The position of president requires a very large commitment of time and energy. The kind of support Randy needs is your input on issues confronting our church and your time and talent when we need help on a committees and fundraisers. Please join with me in helping Randy be successful in his new position as President of our parish. Offer your prayers and your help to him and his family.

Thank you so very much for the opportunity I had in helping our mission during this most exciting time.

In Christ,

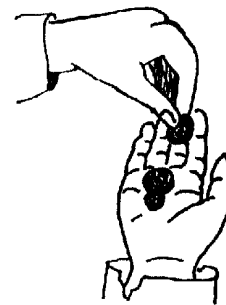
Richard Jackson

Nursing Home Visitation March 6th



On Saturday, March 6th, we will visit the Los Arcos nursing home. Children and adults of all ages are encouraged to participate.

We can give our elderly a pick-me-up by simply saying hello or holding their hands, and this is something that only takes a little of our time to do. So please join the fun, and watch for upcoming details...



Collection for the Homeless March 7th

On Sunday March 7th, we will pass a second basket for an offering for the homeless. Please plan accordingly.

(As part of our mission philanthropy, we pass an extra tray for an offering to help fund our giving to homeless people on the first Sundays of, March, June, September and December.)

Thank you Past and Present Parish Councils

Many thanks are sent to our past parish council for all their hard work, dedication and commitment to our Mission! Tess Konomos and Pete Kretsedemas have rotated off the council, and we thank them for the zeal and prayerful thoughtfulness that they brought to the council.

We also thank our on-going council members: Richard Jackson, Kathy Lampros and Randy Schulz, and our new members, Toula Howington and Tammy Kretsedemas, for committing their time and talents toward the growth and caring of our Mission. *Please remember our parish council in your prayers!*

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DONATIONS AND SEAMSTRESSES FOR ALTAR BOY VESTMENTS

Our Altar Boys are in need of new vestments, and at this time we are asking for donations toward purchasing the material needed. We are also looking for volunteers to help sew the new vestments. If you would like to donate and/or help sew, please let Fr. Nicholas know, or contact Terri Tallent at 928-526-4823.

Thanks!



Youth
Confessions
February
14 & 21

Following Vespers on February 14 & 21, Father Nicholas will be hearing confessions of our youth in preparation for Pascha. So that children become accustomed to confession at an early age, Father would like to hear from children from ages 5 and up!

Project Mexico

From July 8th through 14th, the following eight individuals from our community will be going to Project Mexico to build a home for a needy family in Tijuana:

Fr. Nicholas Andruchow
Lewis McCormick
Krystina Kraus
Sandy Boyce
George Howington
Daniel Sierra
Caleb Sierra
Katy Sierra



Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare for their mission trip

Attention Parents:

Church School Schedule & Events

Sleep-over for preschoolers through grade 3:

February 20. -- Parents of preschool aged children are requested to spend the night with their child(ren) also.

Bring Icons to Church for Sunday of Orthodoxy:

February 29

Make Palm Crosses:

April 3 (Lazareth Saturday)

Holy Friday Retreat:

April 9

Oratorical Festival:

May 23

There will be no Church School Classes on the following dates:

March 14 (First Sunday of Spring Break)

April 11 (Pascha Sunday)

May 30 (Memorial Day Weekend)

Last day of Church School:

June 6, 2004



For The Record...

Welcome Little One

October 11, 2003

Jonathan Richard Padilla

7 lbs 12 oz

20 inches

Blessed Parents: Georgia and Darrell Padilla

40 Day Blessing

November 16, 2003

Georgia Padilla and son Jonathan Richard

Chrismations

December 21, 2003

Abbie Lander

Sponsors: Phil and Helen Blommendahl

February 1, 2004

Jessica Sorren

Sponsors: Gina Folk & Anastasia Konomos

*We welcome Abbie and Jessica to our
Orthodox Family!*



Sayings of our Holy Fathers

The Writings of Staretz Silouan:
The Soul's Yearning for God

The grace of God gives strength to love the Beloved; and the soul is drawn to pray unceasingly and cannot even for a moment forget the Lord.

My soul languishes on earth and longs for the things of heaven.

The Lord came down to earth to raise us to where He Himself dwells with His most holy Mother, who served Him on earth for the sake of our salvation, and with all the Disciples and followers of the Lord.

The Lord calls us thither, in spite of our sins.

There shall we behold the holy Apostles in glory for their preaching of the Gospel; there shall we see saintly monks who wrestled in fasting to humble their souls; there those who assumed folly for Christ's sake are glorified because they overcame the world. There all those who have conquered themselves will be glorified, and all those who prayed for the world and bore the burden of the whole world's sorrows because theirs was the love of Christ, and love cannot suffer a single soul to perish.

It is there that the soul would take up her abode; but nothing unclean shall enter where those who came in arrive by way of great tribulations and chastening of spirit and many tears; and only children, who have not lost the grace of holy baptism, enter therein without affliction, and there in the Holy Spirit they know the Lord.

My soul yearns after God and prays day and night, for the Name of the Lord is sweet and dear to the prayerful soul, and warms the soul to love God.

Staretz Silouan

“Staretz” or “Elder” is a title given to Orthodox monks of particular spiritual development. Staretz Silouan was a Russian peasant that lived from 1866 to 1938, whose only formal education consisted of two winters at the village school. But on Mount Athos, rooted in a tradition reaching back to the very beginning of Christian monasticism, he was taught of God and attained a wisdom akin to that of the Desert Fathers. This series presented is an arrangement of the notes which Staretz Silouan pencilled on odd scraps of paper. (Material from *Wisdom From Mount Athos: The Writings of Staretz Silouan 1866-1838*, by Archimandrite Sophrony.)