

**St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance
820 South Linden Avenue, Alliance, Ohio
(at St. Theodore Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church)
Divine Liturgy, 9:30**

**Right Rev. Bishop Alexander, Bulgarian Diocese, Orthodox Church in America
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)**

Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)

September 13, 2015: 15th Sunday after Pentecost/ Forefeast of the Elevation of the Cross Sunday before the Elevation of the Cross/Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection (Holy Sepulcher) at Jerusalem

Mission Website <http://www.stnikolaiorthodoxmission.com/>

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SaintNikolaiOrthodoxMissionOfAlliance

Welcome to Visitors. Thank you for coming and praying with us today. In the Orthodox Church, Holy Communion is reserved only for Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and confession during the Church fasting seasons. We invite you to introduce yourself to Father Joe and Deacon James at the end of the Liturgy and receive a piece of the blessed bread and join us for fellowship and Christian education at the Jonathan Casteel hall, directly through the alley way behind the church. We look forward to seeing you again and encourage you to learn more about the Orthodox Faith.



Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb; the guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure body.

You took hell captive, // not being tempted by it.

You came to the Virgin, granting life. // O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.

Tone 4 Troparion (Dedication)

You have revealed the beauty of the holy dwelling place of Your glory on earth to be like the splendor of the heavenly firmament, O Lord.

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, strengthen it for ever and ever and accept our supplication which we ceaselessly offer to You therein, the life and resurrection of all!

Tone 4 Troparion (Forefeast of the Elevation of the Cross)

We offer in supplication the life-creating Cross of Your goodness, O Lord, which You have granted to us although we are unworthy. Through the Theotokos, save all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of mankind!

Tone 4 Troparion St. Nikolai

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father Nikolai, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved!

Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race.// He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon

O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance! (Ps 27/28:9)
v: To You, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me! (Ps 27/28:1)

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18 (Sunday before the Elevation)

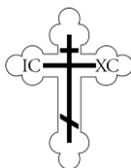
Tone 1: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v. I have exalted one chosen out of My people.
v: For My hand shall defend him, and My arm shall strengthen him.

Gospel: John 3:13-17 (Sunday before Elevation)

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!
I have loved the beauty of Your house, O Lord, and the place where Your glory dwells.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship!

“Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven....” [Matthew 24:30].

Contemporary scholars debate the meaning of the word “sign” in the words of Christ found in the above passage that describes, in highly symbolic terms, His *parousia* or return in glory. This sign, whatever it may be, will be impossible to miss or misinterpret. It will overwhelm those who are present to observe it and stand in its shadow, so to speak. Yet, for many of the Church Fathers – including Saint John Chrysostom - the word “sign” in this passage refers to the cross of the Savior. Commenting on this passage as found in the Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Saint John writes, “The cross will be brighter than the sun. The sun will be darkened and hide itself. The sun will appear at times when it would not normally appear.... For having the cross as the greatest plea, the Son of man thus comes to that judgment seat, showing not only His wounds but also the reproach of His death” [*The Gospel of Matthew*, Homily 76.3].

The Church Fathers were in direct continuity with the New Testament in their emphasis on the cross in the divine economy. There was no conceivable way to legitimately underemphasize or somehow “get around” the

centrality of the cross. If Jesus was Lord, then His lordship had been fully revealed following His death on the cross. As we read in Acts 2:36, “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Saint Paul knew that the cross of the Lord was a “stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles.” It was no different in the centuries to follow, including the great Patristic Age when the Church Fathers offered their great commentaries on the Scriptures. And it is no different today: there will always remain a deep sense of incomprehension before the mystery of the cross. How can suffering and death be the path to glorification and life with God?

Saint Paul, however, did not flinch from what God had revealed, and he drew his own hard conclusion: “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” [1 Corinthians 1:18]. Even more emphatically for the great apostle, the cross and Christ are so closely bound together, that both are considered to be “the wisdom of God” [1 Corinthians 20-25]. The Cross may be “foolish,” “low” and “despised” [1 Corinthians 1:27,28], but it is Christ Jesus, the Crucified One, “Whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption” [1 Corinthians 1:30]. In a beautiful image from Saint John Chrysostom, we hear him say that “I call Him King because I see Him crucified.”

The cross does not stand alone, but is always linked to the Resurrection of Christ, the event that reveals the inner meaning of the cross and its fulfillment. Without the Resurrection of Christ, the cross would indeed remain an instrument of suffering and death, having the “last word” in a fallen and irredeemable world. We express this liturgically, through the powerful hymn we sing on the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross: “Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy resurrection, we glorify!” This organic and inextricable union of the cross and Resurrection is beautifully expressed in every celebration of the Liturgy, when immediately after the reception of the Eucharist we chant, “Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We venerate Thy cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection, for Thou are our God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy name. Come all you faithful, let us venerate Christ’s holy Resurrection! For, behold, through the cross joy has come into all the world. Let us ever bless the Lord, praising His Resurrection, for by enduring the cross for us, He has destroyed death by death.”

Christians live under and by the sign of the cross. Many Christians – certainly Orthodox Christians—even “make” this sign over their bodies when they “cross themselves.” This can, of course, be nothing but an empty gesture, or a vestige of a cultural tradition that has long lost any power or significance in our lives. The sign of the cross can even be manipulated in a manner dangerously approaching superstition—as if the cross were a sort of charm or talisman that protects one more-or-less magically. However, let us assume that we are no longer subject to such crass temptations. Let us further assume that our intentions are to treat the sign of the cross with respect and reverence. At this point there may be additional and more subtle temptations that we must contend with. If we compartmentalize our lives in such a way that “religion” – or even God – is consciously or unconsciously only a part of our lives, or apart from our daily lives, then we can find ourselves living under or by a different “sign” than that of the cross.

As we prepare to celebrate the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, let us once again recommit ourselves to taking up the cross of Christ and to embracing the joy and blessing that come from following Him.

Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, Monday, September 14, 2015,
STRICT FAST DAY. Liturgy, 10 am. St. George Antiochian Church, 1118 Cherry Ave. Canton.

PRAYERS requested
For The Health and Salvation of:

Mother Ana
Doreen Wishnok (friend of the Krupko's who is battling breast cancer)
Stefanie Waseman
The Knoll Family
Archpriest Rastko Trbuhovich (Fr. Dragan's Kum)
Ann Cervo (Fr. Joe's sister-in-law, diagnosed with optical melanoma)
Roland Augspurger
Leslie and Tim Kocevar
Joan Downey
Beth Plocher
Susan Smith Miller (Heidi' Gresh's sister)

For The Repose of the Souls of:

Donald Barnhart (Grandfather of Laura Cotterman)
Father +Louis Mahshie, of St. George Antiochian Church, Akron

Save the Date: The blessing of our chapel is scheduled for the weekend of October 17 & 18, details will be forthcoming very soon.

Jaga Radosevic is in charge of food for the event. Please make sure you sign up with her to help with the festivities! Georgie Washington is taking reservations for Saturday and Sunday. Please see her with names and numbers of guests!

For any additional questions regarding the weekend, please see Georgie Washington, Chairperson of the Opening of the Doors.

ADULT EDUCATION:

Our weekly study group at the Gresh house is beginning again. The meetings will be at 6:00 pm on Saturdays, beginning this Saturday.

COFFEE HOUR:

Sept 6	Deb and Wally Borojevich
Sept 13	Krupkos, Catantias, and Jaga
Sept 20	Washingtons
Sept 27	Cervos

Please see Deanna and Larry Dordea if you are interested in hosting a Coffee Hour. There are plenty of dates available. Thank you to Deanna, Larry and Georgie for chairing our Coffee Hours.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE HOSTED COFFEE HOUR!!!!

BUILDING PROJECT:

September 10, UPDATE! By the grace of God the finishing work on our chapel continues. The chapel painting is complete. Finishing of the floor will take place this coming week. The construction of a new Cross for the cupola is expected to be done very soon, with installation on the roof, hopefully next week. (there will be a blessing of the cupola before being set in place; an email will be sent to everyone advising the day and time of this event).

We are collecting appropriate items, memorabilia and a list of parishioners for the "time capsule" that will be implanted under the altar at the same time the cupola is blessed. Work on the Icons is progressing and we are receiving donations with specific Icon subject requests on a first come basis. For those wishing to donate an Icon, please see Fr. Joe for further information.

For updated construction pictures please visit our parish website or Facebook page.

We are also still in need of additional funding for the general building fund. If you are able to make an initial or additional contribution, please see Father Joe or Deacon James.

Please note, any special donations will be added directly to our building fund unless otherwise specified by the donor. God bless all who have generously donated to and support our mission.

May the Lord bless all our endeavors to glorify His Holy Name and bring others to the fullness of the truth.

Heightened prayers are requested for Mother Anna, abbess of Monastery Marcha, Richfield Ohio. She has been diagnosed with inoperable bladder cancer. May God comfort and strengthen her in the days and months ahead.

CHOIR PRACTICES:

We are ready to begin practices! Please check with Heidi Gresh for information on times and dates.

MEMORIAL FUND FOR GEORGE RALICH:

Several people have inquired about donations to the Mission in memory of Dan's father, +George Ralich. We will set aside any donations in +George's memory to purchase an item for the church. Thank you!

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

Susan Varga – 1st
Deanna Dordea – 3rd
Heidi Gresh – 19th
Josh Gresh – 30th

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

Matt and Amy Catania – 5th
Deacon James and Heidi Gresh -29th

St. Nikolai of Zica, Orthodox Mission of Alliance

P.O. Box 193

Maximo, Ohio 44650

email: stnikolaiorthmission@gmail.com