

St. Nikolai Orthodox Church, Divine Liturgy, 9:30 / Saturday Vespers, 5 pm.
Book study/Christian Education following Vespers
Parish Council meetings 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm (*open to parishioners*)
9837 State Street, Louisville , Ohio 44641
Right Rev. Bishop Alexander, Bishop of Toledo, Orthodox Church in America
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (OCA)
**April 3, 2016: Third Sunday of Lent: Veneration of the Holy Cross/
Venerable Nicetas the Confessor**
Website: <http://www.stnikolaiorthodoxmission.com>
Facebook page: "<http://www.facebook.com/SaintNikolaiOrthodoxMission> of Alliance

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. We look forward to seeing you again and encourage you to learn more about the Orthodox Faith.

Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world//great mercy.

Tone 1 Troparion (for the Cross)

O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance!

Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Your Cross,// preserve Your habitation!

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 7 Kontakion (for the Cross)

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden;

it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross.

The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished;

for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell:// “Enter again into Paradise!”

(In place of the Trisagion, we sing:)

Before Your Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master,
and Your holy Resurrection, we glorify.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Cross)

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance!
v: To You, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Tone 8 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old!

v: God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth!

Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

(Instead of “It is truly meet ...,” we sing this Hymn to the Theotokos)

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace: the assembly of Angels and the race of men. O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a Child – our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens.

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.// Glory to you!

Communion Hymn

The light of Your countenance has shone on us, O Lord.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week.

The commemoration and ceremonies of the Third Sunday of Lent are closely parallel to the feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (September 14) and the Procession of the Cross (August 1). Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ.

As we have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24), and will have mortified ourselves during these forty days of the Fast, the precious and life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, and depression. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. In other words, we must experience what the Lord experienced during His Passion - being humiliated in a shameful manner. The Cross teaches us that through pain and suffering we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: the heavenly inheritance and eternal glory.

As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Fathers “planted” on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged.

Or, as before the arrival of the king, his royal standards, trophies, and emblems of victory come in procession and then the king himself appears in a triumphant parade, jubilant and rejoicing in his victory and filling those under him with joy, so does the Feast of the Cross precede the coming of our King, Jesus Christ. It warns us that He is about to proclaim His victory over death and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection. His Life-Giving Cross is His royal scepter, and by venerating it we are filled with joy, rendering Him glory. Therefore, we become ready to welcome our King, who shall manifestly triumph over the powers of darkness.

The present feast has been placed in the middle of Great Lent for another reason. The Fast can be likened to the spring of Marah whose waters the children of Israel encountered in the wilderness. This water was undrinkable due to its bitterness but became sweet when the Holy Prophet Moses dipped the wood into its depth. Likewise, the wood of the Cross sweetens the days of the Fast, which are bitter and often grievous because of our tears. Yet Christ comforts us during our course through the desert of the Fast, guiding and leading us by His hand to the spiritual Jerusalem on high by the power of His Resurrection.

Moreover, as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam's gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal.

St. Nikolai Velimirovich: What does it mean to take up your cross? . . .

"What does it mean to take up your cross? It means the willing acceptance, at the hand of Providence, of every means of healing, bitter though it may be, that is offered. Do great catastrophes fall on you? Be obedient to God's will, as Noah was. Is sacrifice demanded of you? Give yourself into God's hands with the same faith as Abram had when he went to sacrifice his son. Is your property ruined? Do your children die suddenly? Suffer it all with patience, cleaving to God in your heart, as Job did. Do your friends forsake you, and you find yourself surrounded by enemies? Bear it all without grumbling, and with faith that God's help is at hand, as the apostles did."

CONTEMPLATION of St. Nikolai:

Contemplate the Lord Jesus crucified on the Cross:

1. How He used the last breath of life and saved a thief on the Cross.
2. How He commended His soul into the hands of the Father: "*Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit* (Luke 23:46).

LENTEN SCHEDULE (*dates in bold are services at St. Nikolai Church*)

- > **Friday, April 1**, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm
- > Wednesday, April 6, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm St. George (Serb) N Canton
- > **Friday, April 8**, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm

- > Wednesday, April 13, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm Holy Trinity Canton
- > **Friday, April 15**, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm
- > Wednesday, April 20, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm St. George (Ant) Canton
- > **Saturday, April 23**, Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am

There will be a full Holy Week schedule, April 25-29 (every evening at 6:30) as we celebrated last year..

The prayer list will be revised this week. *If you wish to continue to list or add someone, please advise Father this week.*

PRAYERS requested:

For The Health and Salvation of;

Andrea Bartol (Steve & Sandy Bozeka's daughter)

Letitia Bella (Lynette Baier's mother)

Olympia Tillman (Father David's mother)

Helen (Father David's aunt)

Carl (friend of Father David)

Lisa “

Bruce “

Kitty “

Father David and Family

Doreen Wishnok

Stefanie Waseman

The Knoll Family

Roland Augspurger

Leslie and Tim Kocevar

Beth Plocher

Renee Young

Larry Gainer

James Rickard and Family

Mary Lou Suitca

Ken Mabry

Malaik (Allison pre-school child)

Edward (Allison pre-school child)

Arika (missing person)

Gregory Cervo

Ann Cervo

For The Repose of the Souls of the newly departed Servants:

+Paul (friend of Fr. David)

+Khouria Marguerite Shaheen

+Edna Stamatoff (Popadija Linda (Fr. Basil) Shaheen's mother)

+Elena Stora (friend of Jenny Codrea)

Many Years!

James Gresh - April 3

Caleb Walentik- April 5
Nicholas Ralich – April 8

Coffee Hour Today: Tom & Lana Baier; April 10-Larry & Deanna Dordea.

Sponsor needed for Palm Sunday, April 24.

If we do not have anyone signed up for coffee hour on any week, we will simply have coffee during fellowship.

Donors requested: We are seeking individuals to donate the following items:

3 Wood carved stands to set icons of Christ & Theotokos on for veneration, \$200 each.
Chapel Windows-Sun Block, \$2467.

\$125 is needed for the Mentoring Program that we are supporting through Georgie Washington. The monies are for clothing and supplies as part of the dress for success program.

IOCC: As part of our Lenten regiment, in accord with the Gospel, we are called to help needy and suffering people, in America and around the world. Please put aside money (that we are to save by curbing expenditures of unnecessary purchases, luxuries, entertainment and sumptuous food) and turn it in by Palm Sunday. In turn we will send one check to the International Orthodox Christian Charities, which was organized 25 years ago by the Orthodox Bishops of America. For every dollar we donate, IOCC is able to get an additional seven dollars from the government and foundations. 92% of the money donated goes directly to assisting people in need.

\$220 was collected at our Presanctified Liturgy for the feast of St. Nikolai

IOCC SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS FOR GREAT LENT THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Father Jon-Stephen Hedges, IOCC Frontliner

Lent is like a battle. In the middle of battle, a flag is held high to encourage the spirit of warriors, showing them why they fight. Today the church lifts up and venerates the Holy Cross. *"God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of Jesus."* (Gal. 6:14)

This Cross is deeper than mere wearing or hanging on the wall or signing or proclaiming with words. The Cross Christ carried and hung upon, the Cross He extends to us, is in a place deep in the heart.

In the chaos and the confusion of the daily battles of this life, how is it that we see that Cross and how is it that we connect with that place in our heart where it is?

Seeking the Cross is a struggle. As Christ laid down His Life for us so must we, insofar as we are able, lay down our lives in the holy disciplines of charity, prayer, fasting and forgiveness if we are to find His. What does it mean to lay down our lives?

The Prayer of St. Ephraim is the prayer of the Cross. Speak the words with faith as to Christ on the Cross. You will find your heart bowing as much as your knees. *Bowing is the beginning of sacramental charity for the life of the world.*

If we desire union with Christ we cannot avoid what He did not. Jesus submitted Himself joyfully to the pain of the Cross because He looked ahead and saw the gain, like a mother looking through the pain of childbirth to see the joy of the child who is to be. The joy of taking up the Cross is that with the Cross comes Christ Himself. *Bowing this day is the beginning of sacramental charity for the life of the world.*

Stewardship: Please pray, contemplate and complete the parish pledge form and return to the Priest or Deacon, as soon as possible. May the Lord direct you and bless you for returning some of your possessions to further the work of His holy Church.

Save Your Stuff. Once again our parish is going to have a rummage sale at the Hartville Flea Market, Memorial Day weekend. Please contact Georgie Washington for details.

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March 30, 2016
Venerable John Climacus

Diocesan Spiritual Council
Board of Trustees
Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers
Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Holy Synod is presently in session for their spring meeting and on the agenda for Tuesday, March 29, was the discussion concerning a candidate for the Diocese of the South.

His Grace, our Father and Bishop Alexander, called late last evening, March 29, and instructed me to send out this communique this afternoon, March 30. The Holy Synod has chosen to elect Vladyko Alexander as Bishop of Dallas, Diocese of the South and he remains at the same time Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian

Diocese.

Further details will be forthcoming as they are known. Vladyko is accepting this decision under obedience to the Holy Synod and not by his request. The Spiritual Council of our Diocese was neither consulted on this matter nor asked for our opinion or input.

We will need to work closely with Vladyko during this time of transition. Vladyko Alexander has instructed that his liturgical commemoration remains the same: Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese.

Faithfully yours in Christ,
Archpriest Don Anthony Freude
Chancellor, Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo