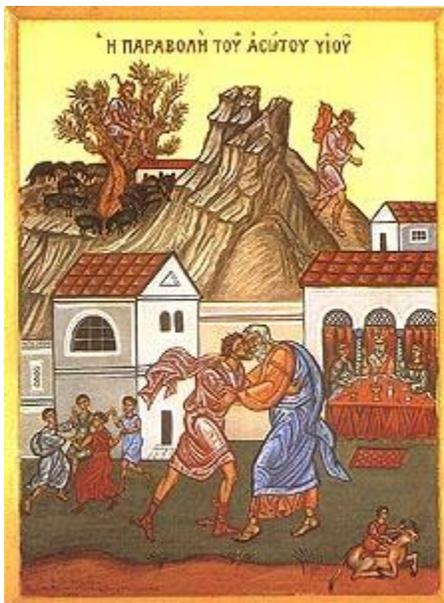


St. Nikolai of Zica Orthodox Mission of Alliance
820 South Linden Avenue, Alliance, Ohio
(at St. Theodore Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church)
Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am

Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)
February 8, 2015: Sunday of the Prodigal Son/Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord
Greatmartyr Theodore Stratelates/Prophet Zechariah



Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,
You destroyed hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.
And when from the depths You raised the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Tone 1 Troparion (Meeting of the Lord)

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace!
From you shone the Sun of Righteousness, ^Christ our God,
enlightening those who sat in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder,
you accepted in your arms the ^Redeemer of our souls, Who grants us the Resurrection!

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 3 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

I have recklessly forgotten Your glory, O Father;
and among sinners I have scattered the riches which You gave me.
And now I cry to You as the Prodigal:
“I have sinned before You, O merciful Father;
receive me a penitent, and make me as one of Your hired servants!”

Tone 1 Kontakion (Meeting of the Lord)

By Your Nativity You sanctified the Virgin’s womb
and blessed Simeon’s hands, ^O Christ God.
Now You have come and saved us through love.
Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

Tone 2 Prokeimenon

The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.
v: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Tone 2 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!

v: Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



Sunday of the Prodigal Son: The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that our heavenly Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Luke 15:11-24). After the Polyeleion at Matins, we first hear the lenten hymn "By the Waters of Babylon." It will be sung for the next two Sundays before Lent begins, and it serves to reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel.

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

For his bravery St 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 St Theodore. Licinius tried to force St 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. St 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.

St 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 St 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 St 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 St 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, St 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.”

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, St 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS requested

For The Health and Salvation of:

Mother Ana

Family of Nanci Stradley

Patricia Kosivich, friend of and helper to Mother Ana

Father Joe Cervo

Doreen Wishnok (friend of the Krupko’s who is battling breast cancer)

George Ralich, (Dan’s father)

Katie (Granddaughter of Father Stevo Rocknage, St. Sava Church in McKeesport, who is battling a rare genetic disease)

Stefanie Waseman

Metodija Damljanovic (4 year old child who fell ill suddenly and grandson of Prota Vasko Sokolovic)

Roland Augspurger (friend of the Krupko’s who is battling cancer)

Joe Novak

Kerri Baugher (friend of the Krupko’s who has cancer)

Despina Poulos (mother of Steve Poulos)

The Knoll Family

Margaret (Deacon James’ Mother)

Eddie, Nancy, John and Alisha (Friends of Father David)

Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

Protopresbyter George Livanos

Jennifer Codrea

Mildred (Peggy) and Walter Borojevich (Wally’s Parents)

For The Repose of the Souls of:

Deacon +Basil Frenchek (a deacon from within our diocese) – 01/15

+Violet (Father Joe’s Godmother)

Matushka +Mildred Klutchko (friend of Frs. Joe & Dragan)

(Please update prayer requests at the beginning of each month. We will remove names if the request is not renewed.)

COFFEE HOUR:

February 1 - Larry and Deanna Dordea

February 8 - Novak Family

February 15 - 2nd Anniversary of Mission – Dinner at the Gresh's
February 22 - Corbin and Georgie Washington

We have received several suggestions that we go to a simpler coffee hour. Please try to keep it to bagels, donuts, coffee cake, etc.

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

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.

DONATIONS:

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.

BUILDING PROJECT:

We are finalizing plans to begin phase one construction of our mission building project. If you have not made a commitment and would like to, please discuss this with either Father Joe or Deacon James by email or phone and/or by making your check payable to St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance. May God Bless all donors for their support of our Mission and purpose in celebrating Orthodoxy.

CHOIR PRACTICES:

Choir Practice will be held on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm at the Gresh Home. Please see Heidi for details

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES:

George and Helen Blebea – 18th

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

John Baier – 10th
Cecelia Krajci – 14th
Linda Cervo – 15th
Jake Krupko – 24th

2nd ANNIVERSARY OF ST. NIKOLAI OF ZICA, ORTHODOX MISSION OF ALLIANCE:

On Sunday, February 15, 2015 we will be celebrating the 2nd Anniversary of our Mission. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop Mark presiding (weather permitting) will begin at 9:30 am. Following church services, there will be a dinner held at the Gresh Home located at 9135 Gans Avenue NE, Canton OH 44721. Please park at the left side of the driveway.

Please see Deanna Dordea if you would like to help with the dinner. (330-206-6281 or ldordea@yahoo.com)

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE PLANNING TO TAKE A PARISH GROUP PHOTO, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8.

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