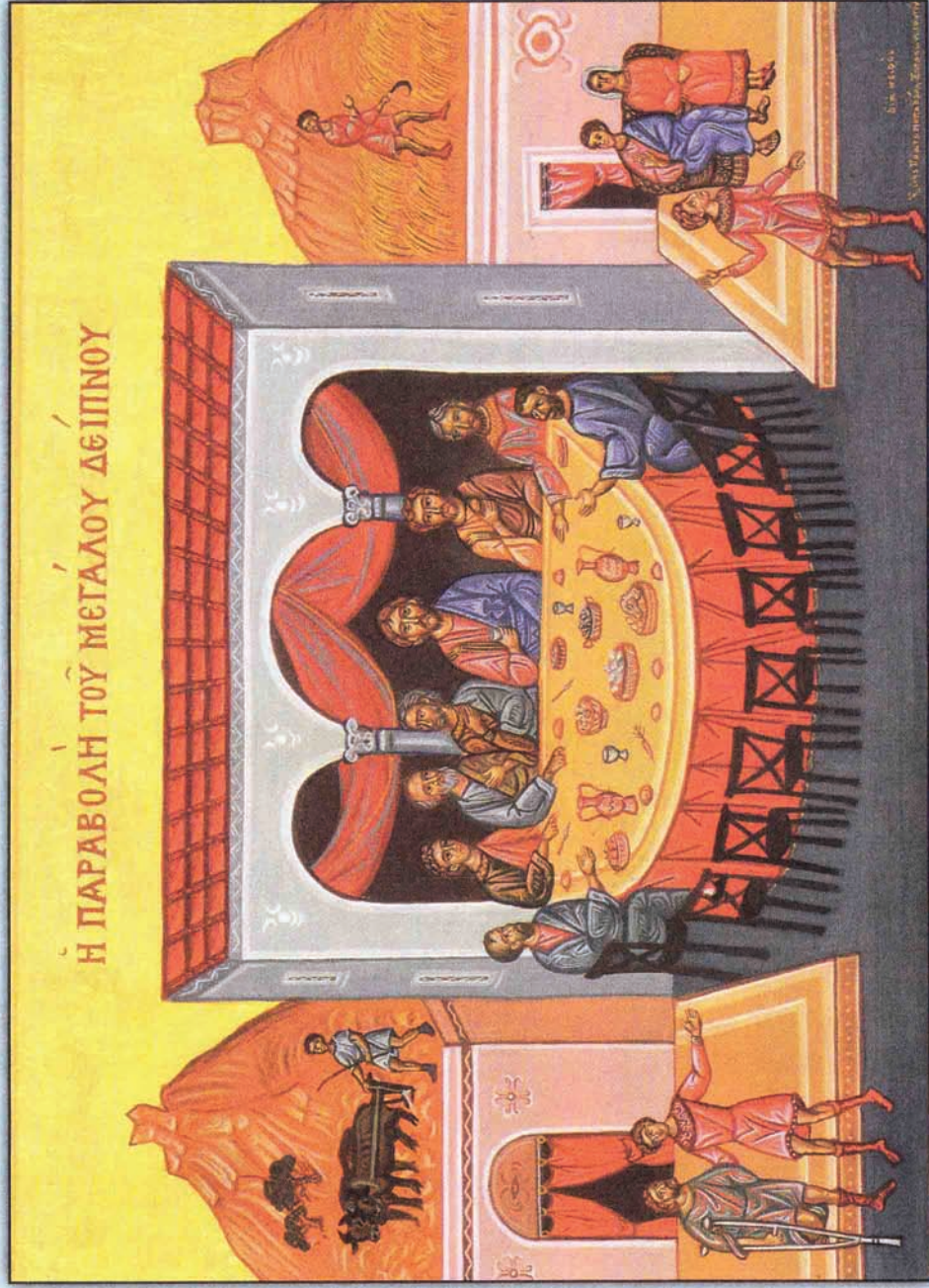


SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS
ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of the Parable of the Great Feast

December 11, 2011

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS
OUR VENERABLE FATHER DANIEL THE STYLITE

Tone 1

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 12 - DECEMBER 18

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 - *THE HOLY PROPHET DANIEL AND THREE HOLY YOUTHS: ANANIAH, AZARIAH AND MISHAEL*

4:00 PM - Moleben to Emmanuel

6:00 PM - Great Vespers for Sunday

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 – *SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY - OF THE HOLY FATHERS*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Christmas Bazaar - December 18

To ensure an adequate amount of varenyky for everyone, place your order for varenyky, kolach, kutia and makivnyk today! Call 619-567-6967 to order. St. Nicholas will visit our parish and distribute gifts to all the good children on December 18.

Greeting Cards

Christmas Cards and various other greeting cards are for sale in the Church Hall. Please see Mary Kitt to purchase.

Let's go Caroling!

Between December 25 and February 2 we will be organizing visits to our parishioners, shut-ins, and nursing homes. If you are interested in participating or you would like to be visited or you know of someone who would like to be visited, please contact Fr. James.

Hall Decorating

Please come on Saturday, December 17th at 2:00 PM to help decorate the Hall for the Christmas Bazaar and visit from St. Nicholas. Please note the time change to facilitate the Peace Light event.

Church Decorating

Please come on Tuesday, December 20th at 10:00 AM to help decorate the Church for the feast of the Nativity of our Lord.

Bethlehem "Peace Light"

Вишлєсмський Вогонь Мирy



Each year, a child from Austria fetches the light from the grotto in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. The light is carried on an Austrian Airlines jet from Tel Aviv to Vienna Austria from where it is distributed at a Service of Dedication to delegations (especially scouting organizations) to

be taken throughout the world. The peace light will be brought to our church on Saturday, December 17. The distribution of the flame will begin with the Moleben to Emmanuel at 4:00PM and continue through Vespers which begin at 6:00PM. You should take the flame home to be kept especially on your table for the Holy Supper (*Свят Вечір*).



Schedule of services for Nativity

Saturday, December 24 Vigil of the Nativity

10:00 AM Royal Hours

10:00 PM “З Нами Бог!” Велике Повечір’я
“God is with us” Great Complines

Followed by **Divine Liturgy**

**Sunday, December 25 – The Nativity in the Flesh
of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ**

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

Sunday offering for December 4

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$20.00	2
\$25.00	2
\$28.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	1
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$125.00	1
<hr/>	
\$478.00	11

Average / household (38): \$12.58

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

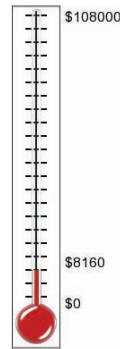
Shortfall: -\$1647.00

Q. How does prayer and the keeping of the commandments actually affect our daily lives? Don't we say that everything that happens to us is part of God's providence? If so, what's the point? We can't really change our destiny, can we?

A. Though the Lord works in mysterious ways, arranging all things according to His Providence, we do actually have a crucial part to play in choosing our own destiny, both in this life and the next.

As the Scriptures teach us, just because God is all-powerful and always desires what is best for us, this does not mean that He will force us to enter into His Kingdom. He respects our free will so much that He even allows us to choose hell, both in this life and the next. Though He desires to shower us with His goodness in an infinite measure, in order not to infringe on our free will, He limits His goodness to us to the measure that we are willing to receive it from Him by working with Him - keeping His commandments, praying to Him, etc..

That's why when we keep the commandments or pray "Lord have mercy" we should remind ourselves that we are not trying to convince the Lord to be merciful to us - how silly would it be to think that we sinners can convince the Lord of infinite goodness, love, and wisdom to be more merciful or more loving. Prayer and the keeping of the commandments have their power to change our destiny not because we convince God to do something better for us, but because through prayer



Stewardship Pledges

and the keeping of the commandments we become humbler and more open to His action in our lives - we allow Him to work wonders on our behalf - the greatest wonder being the gift of salvation. In the spiritual life, the simple rule is: the measure in which we change (repent, turn to the Lord, keep the commandments, etc) is the same measure in which we will receive God's mercy. I think that this is really what St. Anthimos of Chois was getting at when he said that "the Goodness of God is so rich in graces, that it seeks a cause to have mercy on a person."

Anyway, it is a daily struggle (for all of us) to put Him first, but the great thing about it is that when we do we are guaranteed that everything will turn out for the best (even if we can't always see it from our human perspective). Hard work in the spiritual life always is worth it.

The Newly Departed Marie



Please remember in your prayers our benefactress Sr. Marie Arendes, who reposed in the Lord on Friday, December 9th. Burial will take place in Washington D.C. A local service is being planned and details will be announced. May the Lord grant His maidservant Marie blessed repose and eternal memory!

The Parenting Vocation: Living The Life Of Christ

by Fr George Morelli from the March 6 issue of The Word magazine

Consider Our Lord's words on the importance of how children are influenced: "And he said to his disciples, ... woe to him by whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin" (Lk. 17:1-2). Parents and any caretakers of children have one of the most important vocations in the Church, namely to teach their children about Our Lord Jesus Christ and His message. Teaching may take many forms.

The place to start is with those who care for children themselves. Parents are the primary teachers of children by the blessed marriage they possess. One of the blessing prayers said by the priest in the Holy Mystery of Matrimony is: "Unite them in one mind and one flesh, and grant them fair children for education in thy faith and fear" (acknowledging the awesome, transcendent God).

If parents and others who teach or care for children are not keeping a "life in Christ," how can children be expected to follow Christ and His teachings? Psychologists have long emphasized the powerful effects of modeling on children (Bandura, 1986). Recently, news media have even reported that a gene for imitation has been discovered. Children have a propensity to make a neural copy of a behavior modeled and to repeat it (Milner and Goodale, 1996).

I remember when I was first in clinical-pastoral practice. Parents would come to me and present a behavioral problem. For example, their ten-year-old was smoking. Inside the shirt pocket or hanging out of the pocketbook of the parent would be a pack of cigarettes. This was and still is hypocrisy. It is nearly impossible to change the child's behavior. Parents, guardians, and others who have children in their care are supremely powerful models. I have never met one child in my pastoral or clinical career who bought into the usual "lame" explanations: "Well I can do it, and when you get to be my age then you can make up your own mind," or "You are not old enough yet." Children are bright enough to see right through such explanations.

The Holy Spirit imparts grace in the

sacraments. The parents have to bring their children to their parish church where the Holy Spirit is sacramentally imparted. If a child is not brought in to be baptized, the child is not an Orthodox Christian. If the parents do not bring their children to attend Divine Liturgy, they do not receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If the parents bring the child to church but do not go themselves, children see right through such hypocrisy, just as in the cigarette example above. The message is: "Grown ups do not have to go to church." So the child is no longer getting the grace of Christ. Often the greatest teaching, or, in this case, scandal, is teaching by what is not done.

A child may hear a family conversation about a nasty neighbor or relative in which a parent says, "That no good for nothing @#\$\$%^&," yet in church the child hears preached from the altar our Lord's words of love, forgiveness, and not holding anger against a brother. If they then see and hear their mothers or fathers doing just the opposite, does this add to the child's faith and commitment to Christ? It destroys it! And we wonder why morality and values are breaking down in modern times?

On the other hand, no one is perfect — parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, bishops, priests, teachers. We all sin and fall short. What a beautiful lesson could be taught to a child we care for, when we do fall short, if we go to the child and say, for example: "You know, I lost my temper today. It was not right, I am sorry and I will try to do better. This is what Jesus would want me to do." No one may speak exactly like this, using such words. However, using their own words parents will get across the substance of the message: I did wrong, I will try to do better and I want us all as a family to follow our Lord's teachings.

Thus, the first and most important lesson in Orthodox Christian parenting is to live the life in Christ as thoroughly as can be done. Despite our failings, we must remember the words of Jesus: "He said to them: The things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

WHO IS ST. NICHOLAS?

From The St. Nicholas Center, stnicholascenter.org

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruthlessly persecuted Christians, Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. The prisons were so full of bishops, priests, and deacons, there was no room for the real criminals—murderers, thieves and robbers. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. He died December 6, AD 343 in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where a unique relic, called manna, formed in his grave. This liquid substance, said to have healing powers, fostered the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration, St. Nicholas Day, December 6th (December 19 on the Julian Calendar).

Through the centuries many stories and

legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These accounts help us understand his extraordinary character and why he is so beloved and revered as protector and helper of those in need.



One story tells of a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value—a dowry. The larger the dowry, the better the chance that a young woman would find a good husband. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry. This poor man's daughters, without dowries, were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home – providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children

hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes the story is told with gold balls instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for St. Nicholas. And so St. Nicholas is a gift-giver.

Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be venerated by Catholics and Orthodox and honored by Protestants. By his example of generosity to those in need, especially children, St. Nicholas continues to be a model for the compassionate life.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

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Парох: о. Яків Бенкстон

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The Great Feast

This familiar parable is read in the Church each year just two Sundays before the feast of our Lord's Nativity. In it we are reminded of the great care with which God prepared the way of His incarnation. All of the Law and the Prophets look forward to this moment, the moment when the God-man Jesus Christ comes into the world. He is, in fact, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets – the goal towards which they were all aiming. The whole world was prepared by them for this great event. As the parable tells us the King – that is God – has prepared a great feast for us and has invited us to come and enter into the joy that He has prepared for us.

Today we begin in earnest to move toward the

feast of the birth of our Incarnate Savior Jesus Christ. Today we are called to see the great preparation that has gone into this event, to marvel at the great love and care of God for us that He would labor so long and with such great care for us. Today we look back at the whole of the history of the people of God and see that it is the history of God's preparation all leading to the moment when He would take flesh, become incarnate and enter the world as a child. We have been given an invitation to come and join the feast, to abandon the world and enter the Kingdom of God, to leave our own life and receive instead the Life of Christ. We have been invited, chosen by God – will we then accept the invitation and choose Him?