



ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH

Wonder Worker

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, PINELLAS PARK,
FLORIDA

Thoughts From Father Michael

“Christ’s Resurrection: Godly vs Worldly Values”

April 2020

Our current frenzy and hysteria to the coronavirus 19 places in sharp contrast secular worldly values to godly ones.

Christ’s death and resurrection that we celebrate this month are fundamental tenets of godly values. Christ being the first to rise from the dead “might be in all things the first among all” as St Basil records in his anaphora makes clear that as His followers we will also rise from the dead. Death no longer has any dominion over us. We, thus, do not fear death.

Secular values function without any reference to God. They function in a closed loop of human thought and action, and as such are limited in what they can accomplish and explain.

Christ’s followers “Trust God.” Secular people trust their own reasoning.

One example in the current hysteria is the reaction of some people to hoard, i.e., to think of themselves only. Without God any action is permissible. They are clearing the shelves in grocery and pharmacy stores of toilet paper, paper towels, sanitary wipes, antibacterial soap, meat, and canned goods among other items as if the world will end soon. Some are also attempting to profit by selling basic goods at highly inflated prices at the modern trading place, Ebay. If the world is coming to an end, they clearly will not need all the hoarded goods they have stockpiled, will they? *(continued)*

May one who hoards grain leave it to the nations,
But may the blessing be upon the head of the one who shares it. [Prov11:25]

In the parable of the Foolish Rich Man who decided to build bigger barns to house the windfall God had granted him said to himself; “take your ease: eat, drink, and be merry.” [Luke 12:19] He was not going to share the unexpected bounty with others, and God called him a fool and demanded his soul that very night.

Godly values instilled in the early Christians as recorded in Acts [43-47] sold all their belongings and provided for everyone as had need. Godly values are to share not to hoard.

We need look no further for evidence that worldly values and not godly ones. In any crisis Christians are prepared to die. Just think of the Christian martyrs who refused to sacrifice to pagan gods and faced death willingly confident of God’s promise of eternal life. Secular people deny death; our American culture epitomizes this outlook. Our fascination with youth, our constantly looking for the latest fashion, cars, electronic devices, foods, and cosmetics and surgeries says volumes to this will-of-the-wisp notion.

So, is this pandemic a wake-up call to discern the reality of life? Maybe. More importantly, it is a warning that we must avoid a life style that puts us in harms way, as the virus is so virulent that we are at a loss as to how to treat it. Normal flus cause death in people whose immune systems are compromised; this one does the same but it is also impacting more healthy people. We pray that God enlightens our medical and research people to understand this flu and to develop vaccines and other treatments and medicines to dampen its impact. Scripture tells us of the value of medicine:

Honor the physician with the honor due him,
And also according to your need of him.
For the Lord created him.
Healing comes from the Most High, ...
The physician’s skill will lift up his head,...
The Lord created medicines from the earth,
And a sensible man will not loathe them.
Is water not made sweet by wood
That its strength is known?

(continued)

Birthdays for April

2 April, Victor Jacob, Jeanne Claire Poirier; 5 April, Amy Yacoub, Kathleen Milligsan; 6 April, Sami Mobayed; 8 April, Simon Najjar, Christopher Jacob; 13 April, Marion Bostley, Donna Mason; 16 April, Mary Jeanne Lubin; 18 April, Nabiha Najjar; George Ishaq; 20 April, Suhil Isaac, Olga Wiggins, Aaliyah Grace Kassis, David Sazbo; 22 April, Eva Sazbo; 23 April, David Ishaq; 24 April, Samar Mansour; 25 April, Emily Foltz Dagny; 26 April, Avery George Cooper; 28 April, Nick Nahas

Anniversaries in April

23 April, Bob & Olga Wiggins; 25 April, Alibek & Emily Foltz Dagly; 29 April, George & Sandra Baindurshvili; 30 April, Michael & Rebecca Pagani

Departed this Life in April

2 April, Jamilleh Jacob; 5 April, Sonja Twors; 11 April, Nancy Blair; 15 April, Phyllis Kirshy, Andrew Mamary; 20 April, Habeeb Khoury; 26 April Victoria Jasmine White; 27 April, Kokab Kakesh; 29 April, Bassam Ishaq

Holy Week

April 12, Palm Sunday

Orthros at 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy at 10:30 AM followed by procession of Palms
6:30 PM Bridegroom Service: The Noble Joseph and the Fig Tree

April 13, Great Monday

6:30 PM Bridegroom Service: The Ten Virgins

April 14, Great Tuesday

6:30 PM Bridegroom Service: The Sinful Woman: Hymn of Kassiani

April 15, Great Wednesday

6:30 PM Sacrament of Holy Unction

April 16, Great Thursday

10:00 AM, Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Washing of the Feet & Institution of the Eucharist

6:30 PM, Orthros with the Twelve Gospels

April 17, Great Friday

10:00 AM, Royal Hours

3:00 PM, Taking Down from the Cross Vespers

6:30 PM, Lamentations

8:00 PM, Vigil at the Tomb Begins

April 11, Great Saturday

10:30 AM, Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Jesus in Hades

10:30 PM, Rush Service

Midnight, Paschal Divine Liturgy

Please Pray for the Following Brothers and Sisters

Departed: Jamilleh Jacob, Sonja Twors, Nancy Blair, Phyllis Kirshy, Andrew Mamary, Habeeb Khoury, Victoria Jasmine White, Kokab Kakesh, Bassam Ishaq

Shut-ins/Sick: Metropolitan PAUL, Archbishop YOHANNA, Nicholas Hughes, Schauki Kassis, Rose Beede, Alice Flaherty, Theodora Ohlinger, Sally Bell, Bob Bostley, Bill Yopp, George Joseph Rolfes, Aurelia Buda, Eveyon Lonack, Richard Pippy, Diane Zorich, Lisa McCoy, Thomas Ziegler, Susana Kassis

For the Health of: Fr Lazarus Sucanto, Kh Virginia Massouh, Pf. Margot Siniari, Viola Haddad, Anna Jacob, Angela Jacob, Farhat David, Helen Massarelli, Carole Massarelli, Evelyn Salem, Helen Salem, Ruth & Evern Hazel, Gerorgette Abraham, Mariam Haddad, Annette & Bryan Haddad, Nasir Kassis, Geri & Mitch Kanaan, Alice Faccenda, David & Eva Szabo, Marion Bostley, Theodore Todorow, Alex Gimon, Diane Karns, Leo Poirier, Steve Bové, Natalie Floreancig, Millicent Palko, Leila Bashara, Philip Lemieux, Mary Magdalena Foltz, Charlene Toney, Gail & Charles Barnett, Suha Mansour, Bruce Bingham, Dorothy Milelic

Service Members: Christopher Salem (Air Force): Nephew of Helen Salem), Peter McIntire: Nephew of Viola Haddad, Curtis Brickwood (Navy): Fr. Michael's Cousin, James Sexton(Army): David Butler (Navy): Son of Joanna Kassis Butler, Trenton Wesley (Army)

Upcoming Events - Subject to Postponement or Cancellation Given the Closings due to the Safeguards re: the Coronavirus

Wednesday, April 1, 2020 - 6:00 PM Pre-sanctified Liturgy

Sunday, April 5, 2020 - 10:30 AM Mary of Egypt Sunday

Monday, April 6, 2020 - 6:30 PM Great Compline

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 - 6:00 PM Pre-sanctified Liturgy

Saturday, April 11, 2020 - 10:00 AM Lazarus Saturday Liturgy followed by Spring Cleaning of Church and Grounds

Sunday, April 12, 2020 - 10:30 AM Palm Sunday and Start of Holy Week; See Separate Schedule

Sunday, April 19, 2020 - 11:00 AM Pascha; Agape Vespers, Reading of Gospel in Several Languages

April 20 - 25 - Bright Week

Weekend of May 22-23, 2020 - Annual Visit of His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS

Spring Cleaning of the Church and Its Grounds

Each year on Lazarus Saturday we clean the Church, the floors, the windows, all the altar vessels, and the bathrooms. Outside, we weed the flower beds, prune the trees, and pick up scattered material.

There is a sign up sheet with various chores outlined. If you can join us, please sign in.

Also, Mona Elkhoully will demonstrate how to make crosses from the palms.

And he gave skill to men

That He might be glorified in His wonders.

By them He heals and takes away the pain,

A druggist making a compound of them.

God's works are never finished,

And from Him health is upon the face of the earth.

Wisdom of Sirach 38:1-8

This quote from Sirach continues that one should pray to the Lord when one is sick, depart from transgressions, and cleanse ones heart from every sin. "Keep in touch with your physician for the Lord created him." [38:12]

Each Lenten season gives us an opportunity to deepen our faith by giving us more time for prayer, worship, and almsgiving, and hopefully less time with social media and watching the news. As we read from Isaiah, Genesis, and Proverbs during the weekdays of Lent we see God's love for us as we are the high point of His creation (Genesis), what happened when our ancestors abandoned Him (Isaiah), and what advice we get to live moral lives (Proverbs). Contrast these lessons with today's media hype. These Scriptural readings orient us to life's realities unlike the media that promotes fantasy and escape from reality. Worldly advice is to buy this product of service to experience happiness and bliss. But tomorrow you are expected to buy a new product or service to keep the happiness and bliss going. Buying never ends.

By walking with the Apostles as they accompany Jesus on His last earthly week we participate in the highs and lows of agony, betrayal, abandonment, beatings, injustice, and the death of our Savior mirroring our own life's highs and lows. Yet, this Holy Week ends joyfully when Jesus rises from the dead breaking down the gates of Hades, freeing us from death's bondage, and giving us the promise of life eternal in God's Kingdom. Knowing this reality, we stay calm, trusting God that we will endure.

From the time of Adam and Eve until Christ's dying on the Cross we have been held in bondage, and we humans have lived in darkness. For His love for us Christ rescued us from this bondage uniting us again to God, and illuminating the world. The emotional roller coaster of Holy Week ends triumphantly, and the joy when we find the Empty Tomb is boundless. That is why we Orthodox celebrate this cosmic event in the middle of the night with lighted candles, processions, bell ringing, and breaking the fast eating (*continued*)

all the good foods we denied ourselves during Lent to rid ourselves of our passions and cultivate our virtues.

This is reality, this is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet in God's presence; and yet our secular culture denies this reality and tries to create an artificial substitute of worldly and ungodly values that are fleeting and perishable.

So, we have a choice: do we adhere and cultivate the Biblical godly truths of existence, or do we succumb to the promised enticements of the secular world? This year's Lent and Holy Week with the threat of a pandemic in America are times to try men's and women's souls.

Do we cultivate the godly life leading to Paradise? Or, do we cultivate the secular life leading to perdition? Allow me to give you a clue: a worldly life is ultimately bankrupt leading to dead ends. A godly life leads us to personal peace and fellowship with the saints. As Christ instructs us:

Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it. [Matt 7:13-14]

Let us constantly make an effort to discuss the differences between the two ways of life and to follow the narrow gate.

May God grant you a Blessed Lent and a Joyful and Glorious Pascha!

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

Spiritual Sayings

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty... For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; and you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are men the most pitiable. *St Paul, I Corinthians 15:12-19*

Update on Burning the Mortgage

We are nearing our goal of reducing the Church Mortgage to zero. Thanks to the generosity of Helen & Carole Massarelli and others donors listed below the mortgage balance as of March 31, 2020 is \$78,044.67.

Here is the accounting of the funds amounting to \$105,250 we have received so far in this campaign:

Helen & Carole Massarrelli \$40,000	Viola Haddad \$500
Anonymous \$20,000	Rob & Bonnie Guirguis \$500
Anonymous \$5,800	Samya Semann \$500
Ron & Anamay Rossomando \$5,100	Nadine Schmidt \$500
Fr. Michael & Kh Virginia Massouh \$5,000	Dean Smuro \$500
Anonymous \$5,000	Alice Flaherty \$500
Fady Hakim & Mary Guirguis \$3,000	Helen Salem \$500
Ladies Society \$2,000	Bob & Marion Bostley \$500
Sam Newey \$2,000	Anonymous \$300
Don & Joann Hawkins \$2,000	Fr Emmanuel & Pbs Barbara \$250
Ralph & Eleanor Parker \$1,500	James & Sheila Mallo \$250
Anonymous \$1,000	Bryan & Annette Haddad \$250
Anonymous \$1,000	Steve & Lisa Spears \$200
Walter Alexandroff \$1,000	Martin & Katherine Favata \$200
Charles & Christine Doerner \$1,000	Lance & Mary Jeanne Lubin \$200
Dr. Phillip & Nadine Matar \$1,000	John Frazier \$200
Edouard & Yvonne Matar \$1,000	David Yopp \$100
Anonymous \$700	Patrick & Erin Lauer \$100
Matt & Nicole Nassif \$500	Vito & Robin Bianca \$100
Alice Faccenda \$500	

We humbly ask each of our parishioners to consider making a pledge. Once we pay off the mortgage, we can direct our current monthly payment to ourselves to begin setting aside funds to demolish the First Church and to build a new structure that will house a larger fellowship hall, Sunday School classrooms, a restaurant style kitchen, a clergy office, a library, and meeting rooms.

God and St Nicholas have blessed us to come this far, and with your prayers will continue to bless us in taking the next steps in the history of our beloved St Nicholas Parish.

