



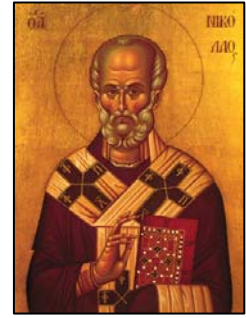
GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, Chancellor

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, December 6, 2009

ON THIS DAY, THE 10TH SUNDAY OF ST. LUKE, THE CHURCH our Father among the Saints, Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra of Lycia (+343) and Holy New-Martyr Nicholas of Asia Minor (+1657). *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Mission Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (First Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.98-101):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: Although Your tomb was sealed with a stone, O Savior, and Your most pure body was guarded by the soldiers, You rose on the third day giving life to all the world. Therefore, O giver of life, the powers of heaven praise You: Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Your kingdom. Glory to Your saving wisdom, O only lover of mankind.

3. Hymn for St. Nicholas the Wonderworker– (not in Hymnal):

It is sung after the Small Entrance. A canon of the Faith, and the image of meekness, a teacher of self-control, you revealed to your flock the authentic Truth. Through this Truth you achieved the heights of humility, and through poverty, riches. Father and Hierarch Nicholas, pray for us to Christ our God, to save our souls.

4. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see handout):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance. Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

5. Kontakion – Preparation for the Nativity (11/26-12/24) – (Hymnal-pp.240-243):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: Today the Virgin goes forth, making her way to a cave where from her, ineffably, God the eternal Word will be born. Let the world be filled with joy, hearing these tidings. Joining the angels and shepherds, let us give glory to Him who is God from all ages, yet wills to be seen as a little child.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Luke 5:14-19)

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Hebrews 13:17-21)

Hebr. 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing — for that would be harmful to you. 18 Pray for us; we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. 19 I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you very soon. 20 Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 make you complete in everything good so that you may do His will, working among us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 13:10-17)

Luke 13:10 Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. 12 When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." 13 When He laid His hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. 14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" 17 When He said this, all His opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that He was doing.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

(TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

(James 1:17)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The Great Steward of the Church

St. John the Almsgiver was a seventh century Patriarch of Alexandria. What does Patriarch John have to do with Stewardship? If we look more carefully at his life, we will see that he was one of the great Stewards of the Church of Christ. His was the true embodiment of giving because of the many philanthropic programs he initiated as Patriarch.

Those who knew him spoke of his great compassion for the needy. He would never think of ignoring a beggar, a prisoner, or any afflicted person that he met in the street. As often as he gave, though, he never seemed to run out of resources for the work of the Church. God abundantly blessed him in every conceivable way because of his charity to others. The following episodes in the life of St. John the Almsgiver allow us the opportunity to learn from this great Steward of the Church who taught us about giving.

An indication of the kind of Patriarch that he was to become is given to us upon the occasion of his enthronement to the Patriarchal See of Alexandria. His first act as Patriarch was to summon the treasurers and financial administrators of the various branches of the Church. He addressed them in the following words: "It is not right, brethren, that we should prefer anyone over Christ."

The whole assembly which had gathered together was deeply touched by his words and in complete agreement with him. Then the holy man continued: "Go, therefore, through the whole city, please, and make a list of all my masters down to the last."

But his listeners could not imagine who his masters could be. In astonishment they asked him to reveal the names of those who were above him in stature. After all, he was the Patriarch. He opened his mouth and again said: "Those whom you call poor and beggars, these I proclaim my masters and helpers. For they, and they only, are really able to help us and bestow upon us the Kingdom of Heaven."

Once his command was carried out with all speed, he instructed his private treasurer to set aside a daily sum sufficient for the needs of these poor; and there were more than seven thousand of them. St. John, we are told, was in the habit of sleeping on the cheapest of beds and using only very poor coverings in his room. One of the city's wealthy landowners once went into the Patriarch's room and saw that he was only covered with a torn and worn quilt, so he sent him a new quilt costing thirty-six nomismata (currency). He urged the Patriarch to cover himself with the quilt, remembering the one who gave it to him in prayer.

John took and used it for one night because of the giver's insistence, but throughout the night he kept saying to himself, "How can I lie under a

blanket costing thirty-six nomismata while Christ's brethren are pinched with cold? How many are there this minute grinding their teeth because of the cold? How many have only a rough blanket half below and half above them so that they cannot stretch out their legs but lie shivering, rolled up like a ball of thread? How many have no second garment either in summer or winter and so live in misery? Mad yet, I who hope to obtain everlasting bliss, am being kept warm by a blanket worth thirty-six nomismata.

Indeed, if I live like this and pass my life in such ease I cannot expect to enjoy the good things prepared for us on high; but I will certainly be told, as was the other rich man: "...You in your lifetime received good things, and Lazarus, in like manner, evil things; but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish!" "Blessed be God!" "I shall not be covered with it another night. For it is right and proper that one hundred and forty-four of my brothers and masters should be covered rather than me, one miserable creature." For four simple blankets could be purchased for one nomisma. Early on the following morning, therefore, he sent it to be sold, but the man who gave it to him saw it and bought it for thirty-six nomismata and again brought it to the Patriarch.

When the wealthy landowner saw it put up for sale again the next day, he bought it once more and carried it to the Patriarch and implored him to use it. When he had done this for the third time, the Saint said to him jokingly, "Let us see whether you or I will give up first!" For the man was exceedingly wealthy and the Saint took pleasure in getting money out of him for the sake of the poor. The Patriarch used to say that if, with the object of giving to the poor, anyone were able, without ill-will, to strip right down to their shirts, he would do no wrong, especially if they were heartless skinflints. For in so doing, he would save their souls.

One day the Patriarch heard of a generous giver and so he sent for him privately and said jokingly, "How is it that you became so generous? Was it natural for you, or did you have to force yourself?" The man answered, "I used to be very hardhearted and unsympathetic and one day I lost my money and was reduced to poverty. Then my reason began to say to me, 'Truly, if you had been generous, God would not have forsaken you.' And immediately I decided to give five coppers a day to the poor. But when I started giving them, Satan immediately checked me by saying, 'Those coppers would really have been enough to buy a bath ticket or vegetables for your family.'

When I felt at once that I was taking the money out of my children's mouths and so I gave nothing. But I noticed that I was being mastered by greed, so I said to my servant, "I want you to steal five coppers each day without my noticing it, and give them to charity." "My servant, a worthy fellow, began by stealing ten coppers, and occasionally even more. As he noticed that we were being blessed, he began to steal larger sums of money and give them away."

"One day I was expressing my astonishment at God's blessings to us! I said to him, 'Those five coppers, boy, have greatly benefited us. So now I want to give ten.' At that the servant said to me with a smile, 'Yes, be thankful for my thefts, since but for them we should not even have bread to eat today. However, if there can be a just thief, I am he!' And he told me that he had given larger amounts than the five or ten coppers. So it was through my servant's faith that I grew accustomed to giving with all my heart." The holy Patriarch was much edified by this story.

One last story in the life of St. John has to do with his practice of giving money to every poor person that he met. A stranger to the city, one who noticed the remarkable sympathy of the Holy Patriarch, decided to put him to the test. The stranger dressed himself up in old clothes and approached the Patriarch as he made his rounds of the hospitals. He came to John and said, "Have mercy on me for I am a prisoner of war."

John said to his purse-bearer, "Give him six coins." After the man had received his money he left, changed his clothes, met John in the street a second time and falling at his feet said. "Have pity on me for I am in need." Again the Patriarch said to his purse-bearer, "Give him six coins." As the man left, the purse-bearer nudged the Patriarch to let him know that it was the same man. This time the Patriarch responded, "Give him twelve coins, for it might be my Christ come to test me."

Our Church, too, calls upon each of us to become Stewards. Unlike the man in disguise, our Church comes openly seeking support for the worthy work of the Church. If Patriarch John was doubly generous to the disguised man, thinking that he might be Christ, how generous should we be to the Church which is the body of Christ?

[Thanks to the Rev. Fr. John Chakos for this reflection.]

On this the two hundred and ninety-seventh Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Nativity Fast – continues through December 24

Sunday, December 6 (10th Sunday of St. Luke/St. Nicholas the Wonderworker)

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros Service
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 10:15 a.m. Artoklasia Service
- 10:30 a.m. Stewardship Presentation & Community Lenten Luncheon
- 11:15 a.m. Ice Cream Sundae Sunday
- 11:30 a.m. Decoration of Community Christmas Tree
- 12:30 p.m. Christmas Program Rehearsal for “A Christmas Box”

Monday - Wednesday, December 7-9 – Clergy Convocation at Diakonia Retreat Center (Fr. George will be away.)

Thursday, December 10:

- 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice – *please join us if possible*

Saturday, December 12 (Feast of St. Spyridon the Wonderworker):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy & community breakfast (*please offer lenten food*)
- 10:00 a.m. Christmas Program Rehearsal for “A Christmas Box”
- 11:30 a.m. GOYA Christmas Caroling to Parish Shut-ins

Sunday, December 13 (11th Sunday of St. Luke):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 10:30 a.m. Hands of Love – St. John the Wonderworker Christmas Collection
[We will be collecting toys, hats, scarves, and mittens for kids and teens. For further information, contact Claudia Sliwinski, 770/487-4932.]
- 10:30 a.m. Parish Council Elections (*polls close at 1:30 p.m.*)
- 10:45 a.m. Religious Education Classes
- 11:30 a.m. Christmas Program Rehearsal for “A Christmas Box”
- 11:45 a.m. Parish Council Meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Service at Annunciation Cathedral – with Metropolitan

Alexios of Atlanta & Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta and our respective choirs

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!