

<p><b>SUNDAY</b> <b>February 23, 2020</b></p>	<p><b>SAINT NICHOLAS SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH</b>  <b>Very Rev. Fr. George Veselinovic</b>, Parish Priest  412-622-4714 (cell) 412-856-8166 (office)  dj.veselinovic@yahoo.com  www.stnicholasmonroeville.org stnicholasmonroeville@gmail.com</p>
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**SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT (MEATFARE)**

**TROPARION - TONE III (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.

**TROPARION - TONE IV (TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS)**

The day of the joyous celebration has come; the city of Bari rejoices and with it the whole universe leaps from joy, singing the spiritual songs and psalms. For today, the holy feast, on the occasion of the transfer of the honorable and exceedingly healing relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, has shone forth with the radiant rays, like the sun that does not set, driving away the darkness of temptations and calamities from those who faithfully exclaim to thee: "Save us, as our protector, O great Nicholas!"

**TROPARION - TONE IV (HOLY HIEROMARTYR HARALAMBOS)**

In his suffering, O Lord, Your martyr Haralambos received an imperishable crown from You our God; for, possessed of Your might, he set at naught the tormentors and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By his supplications save our souls.

**KONTAKION – TONE III (RESURRECTION)**

On this day You rose from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the prophets and patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power!

**KONTAKION - TONE I (SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT)**

When You come to earth with glory, O God, and all things tremble, then a river of fire will flow before Your Judgment Seat, and the books will be opened, and the hidden things made public. Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire and grant me to stand at Your right hand, O most just Judge.

**KONTAKION - TONE III (TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS)**

Your relics, O Saint Nicholas, came out as a star from the east to the west. The sea was sanctified by your journey, and the city of Bari, through you, has received the grace. For working for us, you have appeared as an excellent, wonderful and merciful Wonderworker.

**THEOTOKION – STEADFAST PROTECTRESS - TONE VI**

Steadfast protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator: do not despise the cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call upon you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

***Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2***

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

***Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46***

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

***REMINDERS***

- **CANCELED – Thursday Evening Akathist & Bible Study as well as Saturday Vespers – Fr. George will be out of town for the Diocesan Assembly in Florida. He will resume the following week.**

***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

- **TODAY – 40-day Parastos for Sally Ann (Zivkovich) Sahene**
- **TODAY – Lunch** offered today following Divine Liturgy: Beef goulash.
- **Purse Bash – A very special thank you to all who helped organize the wonderful Purse Bash event yesterday!**

**House Blessings** – Fr. George will continue to bless houses. Please anticipate a call from to schedule your house blessing. (412) 622-4714 / dj.veselinovic@yahoo.com

### *UPCOMING EVENTS*

- **Beginning this FRIDAY, February 28 – The Men's Club Fish Fry** will continue every week through Friday, April 10. This means that the Fish Fry Cake Table will be in operation as well. If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to contribute Lenten baked goods, or work at the Cake Table, please call or email Janet Tumbas – (412) 751-3809 / jtumbas@gmail.com, or see her at church. There is no set schedule, and we appreciate any assistance, whether it is one cake and one hour, or many cakes and many hours. Thank you for your support!
- **Sunday, March 8 – Sunday of Orthodoxy** – Please bring your icons from home to hold during the procession around the church at the end of Divine Liturgy.
- **Sunday, March 8 – Vespers for the Sunday of Orthodoxy** at 4:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church (985 Providence Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237) in the North Hills.
- **SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, May 3** – Senior Luncheon hosted by the Outreach Committee
- **SAVE THE DATE: Friday, May 22 – Sunday, May 24** – SSF Festival Monroeville

### *FOOD FOR THOUGHT*

The commemoration for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning his Second Coming and the Last Judgment of all, both the living and the dead. In Matthew 25:31-46, Christ speaks about what will happen at this specific point in time when He will “come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him” (v. 31).

At His coming, “He will sit on the throne of His glory,” and all of the nations will be gathered before Him. He will separate them “as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats” (v. 32). The sheep will be placed on His right hand, and the goats on the left.

To the sheep, He will say “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (vv. 33-34)

This kingdom is offered to the sheep because of their compassion and service to those in need. Jesus says, “...for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.”

The sheep, who are the righteous chosen for the kingdom, will ask how this could be so. They will ask Jesus when was He hungry or thirsty, a stranger, naked, and in prison. He will answer them by saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to me” (vv. 35-40).

Christ the King, seated on His throne of judgment, will then turn to the goats on His left and say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). He will condemn them because they did not feed Him when He was hungry, give Him drink when He was thirsty, take Him in when He was a stranger, clothe Him when He was naked, visit Him when He was sick or in prison.

The goats will ask the Lord, “When did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?” Then He will answer them saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (vv. 42-45).

Jesus concludes His words on the Last Judgment by stating that those on the left “will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (v. 46).

On the past two Sundays of this pre-Lenten period, the focus was placed on God’s patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our Judge. Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes.

This Sunday sets before us the eschatological dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come, a theme that is also the focus of the first three days of Holy Week. But the judgment is not only in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts toward others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.

Another theme of this Sunday is that of love. When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable of the Last Judgment answers: love—not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous “poor,” but concrete and personal love for the human person—the specific persons that we encounter each day in our lives. Christian love is the “possible impossibility” to see Christ in another person, whoever he or she is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a “good deed” or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself.

The parable of the Last Judgment is about Christian love. Not all of us are called to work for “humanity,” yet each one of us has received the gift and the grace of Christ’s love. We know that all persons ultimately need this personal love—the recognition in them of their unique soul in which the beauty of the whole creation is reflected in a unique way. We also know that people are in prison and are sick and thirsty and hungry because that personal love has been denied them. And, finally, we know that however narrow and limited the framework of our personal existence, each one of us has been made responsible for a tiny part of the Kingdom of God, made responsible by that very gift of Christ’s love. Thus, on whether or not we have accepted this responsibility, on whether we have loved or refused to love, shall we be judged.