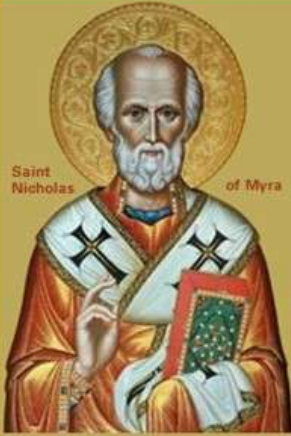


FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
MEMORY OF THE HOLY PROPHETS



Icon of the Holy Images



**ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

*2200 Arctic Boulevard
Anchorage, AK 99503*

**BL. THEODORE ROMZHA
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC MISSION**

*Sacred Heart Church 1201 E Bogard Rd,
Wasilla, AK 99654
2nd and 4th Sundays of the month*



Administration

His Eminence, Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla DD
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Kurt Burnette for
Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

Parish Administration: Reverend Father Vasyl Mutka

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10am-4pm (Please Call before coming to the office)

Phone: (907) 277-6731

E-mail: pastorstnicholas@yahoo.com

www.ak-byz-cath.org



WELCOME TO ALL PARISHIONERS & GUESTS WHO HAVE JOINED US TODAY

Whether you're searching for a new church home or just visiting, we're glad you're with us today. If you are looking for God, have a prayer request, looking for more information about the Eastern Catholic Church, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr. Vasyl, he will be happy to talk to you. Please join us for our coffee hour in the Parish hall following the Divine Liturgy. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

Schedule of Services

MARCH 9—MARCH 16, 2025

Sunday, March 9—First Sunday of the Great Fast (Sunday of Orthodoxy); The Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste

9:15-9:45 am Confessions

9:40 am 3rd Hour

10:00 am Divine Liturgy *For parishioners, founders, donors, decorators of our St. Nicholas Parish & Wasilla Mission and for their relatives*

3:15-3:45 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Divine Liturgy in Wasilla

Monday, March 10

9:30 am The Office of the Great Fast

Tuesday, March 11

9:30 am The Office of the Great Fast

Wednesday, March 12

6:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts *For Abigail Buggy by Kim Bryan*

Thursday, March 13

No Divine Liturgy

Friday, March 14

6:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts *For Molly Buggy by Kim Bryan*

Saturday, March 15—Second All-Souls' Saturday

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Panachida after Divine Liturgy

4:15-4:45 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Vespers/Divine Liturgy *For Molly Buggy by Kim Bryan*

Sunday, March 16—Second Sunday of the Great Fast

9:15-9:45 am Confessions

9:40 am 3rd Hour

10:00 am Divine Liturgy *For parishioners, founders, donors, decorators of our St. Nicholas Parish & Wasilla Mission and for their relatives*

Do not forget prayer—it is the life of the soul.

+ St. Nikon of Optina



Please remember in your prayers:

For health and salvation: Fr. Chris Zegger, Fr. Joseph Wargacki, Fr. Robert, Veronica Frazier, David Bich, , Ed, Dennis, Max, Aniela, Ken Wake, Molly Buggy, Kim Bryan, Shawn, Anna Gage, Oceana Grabianowski, Anthony Heller, Solanche Stone, Dorothy Savok, Spruce Lynch, Truman Beer,

For repose of the departed: +Bishop Gerald N Dino, +Fr. Michael Artim, +Fr. Eric, +Christine Vincent, +Corine Hurst, +Ruth Langley Ayers, +Denise

Please pray also for all our benefactors, friends, neighbors and anyone we may have forgotten. Please let Fr. Vasyl know if you would like to add new names to the prayer list and also notify him about any sick and/or hospitalized parishioners and family members.

Making perogies: Sherry Whah will be making perogies on Saturday, March 22nd at 10:00am-4:00pm.

We need your help in this worthy fundraiser for our church. No experience? That is no problem. We will gladly train you. Can only help for a couple of hours? We would appreciate any amount of time you can help us. Have teens? We welcome them too we assuredly have a lot of fun!! Come join us!



We have cabbage rolls for sale. Contact Sherry or Fr Vasyl to purchase. Thank you for supporting our parish.

ECF: Next Sunday, March 16, will be an Adult Eastern Christianity class at 12:45 p.m. The theme for this class is "Dedication to God" Adults and young adults are encouraged to attend as part of their spiritual development.

Alive in Christ (retreat for youths): The Eparchy of Phoenix Vocation Office is pleased to announce our upcoming 2025 Alive in Christ Camp. This year's camp will take place on July 10-13, 2025 at Palomar Christian Conference Center in San Diego County, California. This ascetical boot camp is for boys aged 7- 17 and for dads/guardians, with an emphasis on vocational discernment and growth in the life in Christ.

Guided by Mary: a Byzantine Catholic Camp for girls and mothers: With Bishop Artur's Blessing, we are pleased to announce a new sister camp to Alive in Christ, Guided by Mary: a Camp for Byzantine Catholic Mothers and Girls. Following the Theotokos' guidance, our Eparchy's girls aged 9-17 and mothers are invited to Santa Fe, New Mexico from July 25-27*. Registration will open soon along with Alive in Christ, which will be held July 10-13 in Palomar, California.

*Girls under 11 are required to have a mother/chaperone with them, similar to Alive in Christ.

All Souls Saturdays: We have 5 All Souls Saturdays (4 remaining) to commemorate our deceased relatives. The next All Souls Saturday will be Saturday, March 15, 2025. Envelopes marked "All Souls Saturdays" are available in the narthex of the church as well as on the welcome table. Please write a list of the departed you wish to be remembered in the year 2025.

Church Cleaning: This coming Saturday, March 15th, the Myrrh Bearers St. Nicholas Women's Group will be meeting for their regular meeting. They plan to clean the church from 10:00 am to 11:45 am. After the cleaning is complete, there will be a short reading of Scripture. After the reading of Scripture, there will be a pot-luck around noon.

It would be very helpful if not only women but also men would come to this event to clean our church together. Thank you.



2025 Kodiak Island

BISON HUNT RAFFLE



2018 Winners Bettany Brown & Cassie Rogers of North Pole, Alaska

PRIZE DESCRIPTION

- Guided hunt on "Kodiak Game Ranch", Kodiak Island
 - Guaranteed 2 to 4-year-old bull (Head, meat, and hide)
 - Up to three days' meals and lodging with ground transportation during hunt
 - No hunting license required (private ranch)
 - Travel to and from Kodiak is not included.
 - Hunt scheduling to be arranged by winner (Optimum period is September through January)
- OR**
- \$3,500 CASH

Drawing is 10 AM, May 11, 2025, at St. Ann's Hall, Co-Cathedral of Nativity of BVM in Juneau

One drawing for each 1300 Tickets Sold!
Ticket Price \$20.00 - Tickets are transferable - Need not be present to win.
The proceeds benefit Knights of Columbus charitable works in Alaska.
Alaska Permit # 1631 - Winners posted at www.alaskakofcstate.com.

Winners of 2024 Raffle were Trygve Haugen, Fairbanks; Anthony Alfonso, Palmer; Colette Cartner, North Pole; Richard Czech, Fairbanks; Thomas Laird, Grand Junction CO.



**OUR PARISH IS DESIGNATED
"A JUBILEE CHURCH" BY
BISHOP ARTUR**

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL: "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law and also the prophets." Finding our Savior during this Great Lent, we see that our "soiled image was restored to its original form, commingled with divine beauty." God may be helping you find that a vocation to monasticism or holy orders is the beauty meant for you. To learn more, contact the Vocations Office at 602-861-9778 or email: vocations@ephx.org

Vocation Icon:



Prayer for Vocations

Lord our God, older than all creation, you have made us in your image and likeness.

You have given us the gift of the Holy Spirit through your servants who proclaim the good news of your Church all that is necessary for our sanctification.

We humbly beg you, do not leave your people deprived of spiritual gifts, but grant us an abundance of vocations to your holy priesthood, the diaconate and consecrated life, and to lives dedicated to your service.

Open the hearts of men and women to hear your words, "Come, follow me!"

Indeed, do not leave us orphans, but be with us through your Holy Spirit, who is present everywhere and fills all things, and who raises up mere mortals to divine service by the mystery of his grace.

Truly you will never forget your promise to be with us always, until the end of the world, but forgive us if we have, in our weakness, failed to follow you as we should.

For you alone are holy now and ever and forever. Amen.

Stichera at the Praises, Matins, Meatfare Sunday:

I think upon that day and hour when we shall all stand naked, like men condemned, before the Judge who accepts no man's person. Then shall the trumpet sound aloud and the foundations of the earth shall quake, the dead shall rise from the tombs and all shall be gathered together from every generation. Then each man's secrets will be manifest before thee: and those that have never repented shall weep and lament, departing to the outer fire; but with gladness and rejoicing the company of the righteous shall enter into the heavenly bridal chamber. How shall it be in that hour and fearful day, when the Judge shall sit on his dread throne! The books shall be opened and men's actions shall be examined, and the secrets of darkness shall be made public. Angels shall hasten to and fro, gathering all the nations. Come ye and hearken, kings and princes, slaves and free, sinners and righteous, rich and poor: for the Judge comes to pass sentence on the whole inhabited earth. And who shall

bear to stand before his face in the presence of the angels, as they call us to account for our actions and our thoughts, whether by night or by day? How shall it be then in that hour! But before the end is here, make haste, my soul, and cry: O God who only art compassionate, turn me back and save me.

Daniel the prophet, a man greatly beloved, when he saw the power of God, cried out: "The court sat for judgment, and the books were opened." Consider well, my soul: dost thou fast? Then despise not thy neighbor. Dost thou abstain from food? Condemn not thy brother, lest thou be sent away into the fire, there to burn as wax. But may Christ lead thee without stumbling into his kingdom.

Let us cleanse ourselves, brethren, with the queen of the virtues: for behold, she is come, bringing us a wealth of blessings. She quells the uprising of the passions, and reconciled sinners to the Master. Therefore let us welcome her with gladness, and cry aloud to Christ our God: O risen from the dead, who alone art free from sin, guard us uncondemned as we give thee glory.

Prayer

O Jesus our King, have mercy on us as we struggle, and receive our prayers as a fragrant offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice. In all our turmoil, emptiness and suffering, we turn to You, praising You for Your great glory. Lift us up as a father lifts up his little child, and bring us through this season of darkness and pain into Your marvelous light. Resolve our distresses as You will, according to Your great wisdom and love. We accept all that comes from Your merciful hand, and ask that You grant us to do Your will. Thus strengthened to walk in a way that is pleasing to You, to our last breath we never cease to praise Your most holy Name, together with that of Your Father who has no beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

ST. NICHOLAS PASCHA

**HOMEMADE
NUT & POPPYSEED SALE**

- **ORDERS TAKEN UNTIL APRIL 1, 2025**
- **WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PICK ON FLOWERY/PALM SUNDAY (APRIL 13, 2025)**
- **COST: \$15.00 IN ADVANCE**
- **CONTACT: FATHER VASYL OR JUDY BICH**

WHY WE VENERATE ICONS

Adapted from an Orthodox source

When a visitor steps foot into a Byzantine Church, the first face she will probably see is Jesus. He will be placed on a stand in the temple (i.e. the "tetrapod"), and as worshipers enter, they will cross themselves, kiss his hand, and cross themselves again. I am talking about icons -- religious "pictures" -- which will be scattered throughout the church. The faces of the holy ones seem to come to life behind the flickering light of vigil lamps, hanging from gold or brass chains.

If this seems like idolatry to you, you are not alone. On the first Sunday of Great Lent (which recently began in our Church), we celebrate the "Triumph of Orthodoxy." This marks the end of a long and bloody period in our history, beginning in 726, when Emperor Leo III issued an edict banning icons throughout the Byzantine Empire. Some say he did this because he was influenced by Islam (which rejects images), but few historians agree with that theory. Muslim armies were a threat to the Byzantine Empire, and one tends not to adopt the practices of one's enemies. Leo probably banned icons because he genuinely thought they were idols. A lot of people today would agree with him. After all, the Bible says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:4). Of course, this verse does not just ban images of holy things. A poster of the solar system on a kid's bedroom wall violates the commandment because it is an image of "heaven above." Jesus-fish stickers are also excluded because they depict something from "the water under the earth." Let me also add that a "graven image" is actually a statue. Thus some translations render "graven" as "carved." So something like this would violate more than just good taste. If we are going to read the Bible in legalistic ways, then technically there is nothing wrong with venerate pictures.

Of course, most Christians who oppose icons do not really have a problem with images themselves. They just don't like the venerate part! The Second Commandment certainly condemns the act of prostrating oneself (bowing) before an image (Leviticus 26:1), and we Eastern Christians prostrate all the time. But if prostrating before a material image is sinful, then the crowds who bowed before Jesus Christ were all idolaters. All throughout his ministry people crowded around Jesus. They wanted to reach out to touch him, and some were miraculously cured because of it (Matthew 9:20). This is a very human thing to do. When we see something holy, we want to touch it. We are also a bit scared to touch it (which is why the woman with the issue of blood snuck up behind Jesus). That is what "reverence" means. Modern iconoclasts might say it is fine to reverence Jesus, but we cannot reverence a picture because Jesus was God. But when the woman with the issue of blood reached out from the crowd to touch Jesus, which

"part" of Jesus was she reverencing, the God "part" or the human "part"?

The Triumph of Orthodoxy celebrates the triumph over that kind of thinking. It took a while, but the controversy over images ended in 843 because enough people realized that if they could not venerate icons, then they could not be saved. I am not saying that venerating images of the saints is necessary for one's salvation (though it wouldn't hurt). I'm saying that if we cannot venerate images, then Christ has not come in the flesh for our salvation. We do not just celebrate the "Triumph of Icons" because iconoclasm was only a symptom of a larger problem: our tendency to think that God and the material world cannot touch each other. Thus some early Gnostics claimed that Jesus was a divine being that only appeared to be human, that when he walked, he did not leave footprints. Later groups (called Arians) said that Jesus was a demigod in human form. Again, they believed that the hands of God could not dirty themselves with the material creation. Thus Jesus was like an incarnate demiurge (in Plato's philosophy), a "go-between" to mediate the infinite distance between God and creation. But if that were true, if Jesus were a demigod, then he is not really human either. Christians cannot pray to him, let alone reach out and be healed by him. They would be worshipping a creature, and that is idolatry!

That is ultimately what ended the controversy over icons. The church realized that if we are to confess that Jesus is fully God and fully human, then we cannot say it is OK to venerate Jesus and not other material objects. After all, the woman who reached out to Jesus did not actually touch his body, just his cloak, but she was healed because through the material object, she worshipped Christ.

That is why we venerate pictures in the Byzantine Church. Like the cloak of Jesus, we do not think the object as divine. Rather, we call them "windows" to heaven, because we encounter Jesus through material objects. A little boy at daycare who misses his mom may carry her picture in his pocket. Sometimes he might take it out to kiss it. He is not an idolater. He just loves his mother. The same is true of a widow woman, who carries on a conversation with her beloved, while gently stroking his tombstone. She is no more an idolater than a Christian who kisses or bows before an icon.

The first Sunday of Lent is a fitting start to his period of more intense fasting and prayer in our Church. Processing with icons around the church reminds us that the path from Galilee to Golgotha is a path through matter that ultimately redeems it. So we kiss icons, and we bow before them, because, thanks to Christ, the world he entered and made a part of himself is good and holy. Thus, as St. John Damascene put it, "I do not venerate matter, I venerate the fashioner of matter, who became matter for my sake, and in matter made his abode, and through matter worked my salvation."

Parish Giving

Great news for those donating online

Now you can use our new online giving tool to tithe online using your credit card or bank account information. You can also do a one-time donation or set up weekly donations! You will receive a receipt and statement immediately after donating. The software takes a very small percentage of the donation, but its worth it for the ease of the system. You can donate at:

<https://donorbox.org/support-st-nicholas-and-help-us-grow>



Tithes & Attendance:

March 2

Tithes: \$1410.00

Attendance: 47

Thank you for your support and love for our Parish.

Also, feel free to send in your regular tithe check by mail to:

2200 Arctic Blvd,

Anchorage, AK 99503.

It is very important that we continue to give a percentage of what Our Lord has given us, and continue to support the structure and ministry of the parish. Thank you!

Fred Meyer Rewards: St. Nicholas of Myra participates in the community rewards program with Fred Meyer stores which gives a



percentage of purchases by those signed up with the program to St. Nicholas. It does not cost anything for customers. Fred Meyer pays out each quarter and will send a check if it's above a certain amount.



It won't cost parishioners and friends of St. Nicholas anything to participate. The steps to participate are:

- 1) Set up a Fred Meyer Rewards account if you don't have one or sign up at one of the stores.
 - 2) Set up an online account.
 - 3) Log into the account and search for Community Rewards.
 - 4) Search for **Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church** or our account number **QD147** and select as the charity to receive the funds.
 - 5) Shop at Fred Meyer as you normally would and the St. Nicholas account will automatically be credited.
- Thank you!

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Support Our Church
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PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS:

SACRAMENT of CONFESSIONS: on Sundays and Holy Days: 30 min. before Divine Liturgy and other days, by appointment.

HOLY COMMUNION: for the sick, by appointment, anytime.

BAPTISMS - by appointment.

MARRIAGES - by appointment, at least 6 months in advance.

FUNERALS - by appointment.

ANOINTING of the sick, hospital visits - by appointment, anytime

Safe Environment:

The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions, and programs, is committed to assuring a Safe Environment in ministry for its children and vulnerable adults that conforms to the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. For additional information regarding the eparchial Safe Environment Program or to report any concerns, please contact:

Subdeacon Paul Kilroy, Safe Environment Program Coordinator

Cell: (480) 745-0316 ~ Office: (602) 861-9778 ext. 204 ~ Email: sbdcnkilroy@ephx.org -

or -

Victim Assistance Coordinator, Deacon Michael Hanafin

Cell: (480) 307-5182 ~ Email: vac@ephx.org

Let Your Prayer Come from a Humble Heart

When we pray, our words should be calm, modest and disciplined. Let us reflect that we are standing before God. We should please Him both by our bodily posture and the manner of our speech. It is characteristic of the vulgar to shout and make a noise, not those who are modest. On the contrary, they should employ a quiet tone in their prayer.

Moreover, in the course of His teaching, the Lord instructed us to pray in secret. Hidden and secluded places, even our own rooms, give witness to our belief that God is present everywhere; that He sees and hears all; that in the fullness of His majesty, He penetrates hidden and secret places. This is the teaching of Jeremiah: Am I God when I am near, and not God when I am far away? Can anyone hide in a dark corner without my seeing Him? Do I not fill heaven and earth? Another passage of Scrip-

ture says: The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, observing both good and wicked men.

The same modesty and discipline should characterize our liturgical prayer as well. When we gather to celebrate the divine mysteries with God's priest, we should not express our prayer in unruly words; the petition that should be made to God with moderation is not to be shouted out noisily and verbosely. For God hears our heart not our voice. He sees our thoughts; He is not to be shouted at. The Lord showed us this when He asked: Why do you think evil in your hearts? The Book of Revelation testifies to this also: And all the churches shall know that I am the one who searches the heart and the desires.

St. Cyprian of Carthage