

St Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral of Los Angeles
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America



Beloved in Christ,



This coming Sunday, as we work our way through Advent and prepare for Christmas, we will commemorate all the Holy Forefathers of Christ. We will also remember St. Herman of Alaska. The first Saint of America, he is known as the "Wonderworker of All America."

In one of Saint Herman's most famous sayings, he urges:

*"From this day, from this hour, from this minute,
let us strive to love God above all and to fulfill His holy will."
~ St. Herman of Alaska*

*"من هذا اليوم ، من هذه الساعة ،
من هذه اللحظة ،
دعونا نسعى جاهدين لنحب الله قبل
كل شيء ونحقق ارادته المقدسة."
القديس غرمانوس الالاسكي*

Indeed, this is why we fast now, why we keep the Lenten Great Fast and even every Wednesday and Friday: to lay aside all earthly care and strive to love God above all else.

We can find silver linings in the present pandemic lockdowns. For example, we can now focus more on “the one thing needful” (cf. Luke 10.42). The world usually has us running around, shopping and going to parties in December—*before* Christmas—keeping us so busy that we lose any sense of joy and peace; by the time the Feast actually arrives, many people have had it and are *done* with Christmas.

During the Nativity Fast we prepare ourselves to receive Christ, born anew in our hearts, through **prayer, fasting and almsgiving**. We abstain from meat, eggs and dairy products (though fish is generally still allowed until December 19). In this way we strive for self-discipline, so we can shun distractions and self-satisfaction. All too often, people get worked up about superficialities; let us now actively contemplate what is of eternal importance. Let’s focus on loving God and serving others.

Please see, below, an article for further reading on preparing for Christmas, written by Fr. Joseph Hazar (my former assistant in Indianapolis).

Finally, in this vein, I appreciate and commend you for your wonderful response to our Advent charity appeal. Through your generous support of our Community Christmas Card, we received \$14,065, *plus* canned goods, which we will use to help at least 300 needy families in our Cathedral neighborhood. We will be distributing the food bags tomorrow. Besides non-perishable items, each bag will include a gift card to a grocery store, so these poor families can buy fresh produce, meat, milk, etc., for their Christmas dinners.

Asking the Lord to bless you and keep you safe,

Your loving father and servant in Christ,

+Nabil

Upcoming Schedule and Links

Date	Time	Event or Service (click link for service text)	How to Participate
Friday, Dec 11	6:30 pm	Charity Food Bag Assembly	
	7:00 pm	Church School Classes	See links for each class, below
	7:00 pm	Arabic Bible Study درس الكتاب بالعربي	Sign up with Dn. Eliya at Louia@hotmail.com
Saturday, Dec. 12	7:30 am	Charity Food Bag Distribution for Christmas	
	6:00 pm	 Great Vespers	Livestream only (church closed)
Sunday, Dec. 13	7:45 am	Divine Liturgy in Spanish	In person outdoors AND livestream
	9:15 am	 Matins	In person outdoors AND livestream
	10:30 am	 Divine Liturgy	In person outdoors AND livestream
Monday, Dec. 14	7:00 pm	Cathedral Council	
Friday, Dec 18	7:00 pm	Church School Classes	See links for each class, below
	7:00 pm	Arabic Bible Study درس الكتاب بالعربي	Sign up with Dn. Eliya at Louia@hotmail.com
Saturday, Dec. 19	6:00 pm	 Great Vespers	Livestream only (church closed)
Sunday, Dec. 20	7:45 am	Divine Liturgy in Spanish	In person outdoors AND livestream
	9:15 am	Matins	In person outdoors AND livestream
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy	In person outdoors AND livestream

Please note that you do NOT need to have a Facebook account to join our services via livestreaming. Also, if you cannot join the services live, it remains on the Facebook site, so you can participate when your schedule allows.

Church School 7 pm Friday, December 11

Class	Zoom Link	Meeting ID and Password (Not needed if you use the link)	Text and Discussion Material
Preschool & Kindergarten	None – discuss at home	None	 View or print for Preschool
1 st – 4 th Grades	Join 1st – 4th Class	950 0406 4284 602971	 View or print for Grades 1-4
5 th – 8 th Grades	Join 5th – 8th Class	966 6787 2317 283692	 View or print for Grades 5-8
High School	Join High School Class	964 9146 2720 439263	 View or print for High School

Holy Oblations and Prayer Requests

- By Souheil and Alex Helou and family, for the repose of beloved mother Colette Daccache (1-year memorial), and also in loving memory of father Emile, sister Anna, brother Marwan, and Souheil's wife Lana.
- For the continued good health of Robert Andrews on the occasion of his 92nd birthday. Offered by his wife Adrienne, his children and grandchildren. May God grant him many years!
- By Suzi, Danielle, Louie, Tamar, Jack and George Sadd, for the good health of John L. Sadd on his 70th birthday.
- In loving memory of Sabin Nassif (8 years), Anne Nassif (18 years), George A Nassif Senior, Alexandria Kelle Nassif, George Nassif, Dr. Floyd Nassif & Loraine Nassif. Offered by Alexis, Christopher, and Paul Nassif and grandchildren.
- By Ehab Dahabreh and family and Mariam Beshara.

Cathedral Prayer List:

Please include in your daily prayers the following—those struggling with acute illness and those newly departed this life—from our parishioners and those for whom they have requested our prayers. (Names are kept for 40 days, until the date indicated after the name, and may be renewed upon request.)

Living

Mary Rose Grim, nursing home, 1/18

Bernadette Elac Krank, home, 1/12

Soad Shammaa, rehab., 1/9

James, Roberta, Jamie and Marie Sadd, home, 1/1

Gonzalo and Griselda Arriaga, home, 12/31

Jason Perkins, home, 12/28

Lila Awad, home, 12/28

Renee Crawford, home, 12/24

Fred Wehba, hospital, 12/24

Henry Roum, home, 12/23

Abdo Hanna, home, 12/18

-

Pilar and Patricia, Alex Cajeme's sisters, 1/19

Conner Capata grandson of Julian Jr. and Shirley, home, 12/30

Ralph Parker, brother-in-law of Adrienne Andrews, 12/27

Fr. Nicholas and Kh. Malvi Neyman, daughter Kh. Joanna Townsend, son Richard

Neyman, grandchildren Dimitry Youssef and Genevieve Townsend, 12/22

Physicians, nurses and all the healthcare professionals on the front lines of the pandemic

All those suffering from illness, violence and want in this country and throughout the world

Departed

Olga Elias, 1/4

-

Kh. Ruth Meena, 1/10

Alice Naccache, sister of Antoine Naccache, 1/9

Archbishop David, OCA Bishop of Sitka, Alaska, 1/7

Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, 12/30

Fr. Hanna Sakkab, 12/19

Metropolitan Maximos, retired GOA Bishop of Pittsburgh, 12/12

Victims of the pandemic and of violence everywhere

*To offer Holy Oblations and Memorials and for any announcements to be included in the bulletin, please email Cathedral@stnicholasla.com or contact the Cathedral office at (213) 382-6269 by **Wednesday noon**.*

Schedule for Christmas 2020

***With the angels, the shepherds, the wise men and all the saints,
we come to adore Him at Christmas.***

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24

9:00 a.m. **Royal Hours of Christmas**
10:30 a.m. **Divine Liturgy (Paramon of Christmas)**
While we encourage all to come to both the Christmas Eve morning and the Christmas Day morning services (they are not the same), this may be an excellent opportunity for young children and entire families to celebrate the birth of Christ together, especially if attendance Christmas morning not be feasible.



Christmas Day, Friday, December 25

9:00 a.m. **Christmas Matins**
10:30 a.m. **Christmas Divine Liturgy**

On account of pandemic restrictions, there will be NO Services the night of Christmas Eve.

Arabic Bible Study on the Parables – درس الكتاب بالعربي - الامثال Every Friday at 7PM

Classes will be led by Dn. Eliya Ammari

Contact him at (818) 433 5523 or Louia@hotmail.com to sign up.

He will then send you an invitation for a Zoom meeting one day before the discussions.

Date	Topic of Discussion	Bible Readings
12/11/2020	مثل المديونين	لو (٧ : ٤١ - ٤٣)
12/18/2020	مثل الكرمة والأغصان	لو (11 : 15) يو (15 : 1-11)
1/8/2020	مثل الغني الغبي	لو ١٢ (: ١٦ - ٢١)
1/15/2021	مثل العبد القاسي	مت (١٨ : ٢٣ - ٣٥)
1/22/2021	مثل السامري الصالح	لو (١٠ : ٢٥ - ٣٧)
1/29/2021	مثل الوزنات المختلفة	مت (٢٥ : ١٤ - ٣٠)
2/5/2021	مثل الغني ولعازر	لو (١٦ : ١٩ - ٣١)

Our Bible Studies This Fall Are Available Online

The Series on Worship and Liturgy by Fr. Nabil and the recent session by Fr. Andrew on Incarnation and Nativity are all available on our Cathedral website at <https://www.stnicholasla.org/orthodoxeducation>

Do You Need Books or Icons?

See Diane Brooks or Isabel Elac for anything from the Cathedral bookstore. While we can't have you go into the bookstore to peruse the stock at this time, they will be happy to bring out to you what you would like.

Give a Christmas Gift to your Church

The St. Nicholas Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Committee is pushing forward with the plan to install the new air conditioning system in the Cathedral.

Matching Gift Challenge Expires Dec. 31, 2020!

An anonymous donor has stepped forward and has committed to donating \$25,000 in a matching fund campaign to raise the amount of funding still needed to pay for the new system. The HVAC committee urges all the faithful of the Cathedral who have not yet contributed to meet this challenge with your own generous donations. Your commitment is very necessary to making the new air conditioning system for the Cathedral become a reality. How wonderful it would be to walk into a blessedly cool Cathedral in the near future!

Please earmark donations "AC" on your check, or use the "AC Challenge" link on the online donations page on the Cathedral website stnicholasla.org. Please deposit donation in the offering box, or mail them to St. Nicholas Cathedral, 2300 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90057.



Contact Ron Samore with any questions at 818-378-2055 or ronsamore18@gmail.com.

See's Candy

Please remember to order and purchase your holiday See's Candy from Diane Brooks. A one pound box of chocolates now costs \$23.50 and a two pound box now costs \$45.00. Diane also has a few See's Candy Gift Cards left that you can purchase for the old price. That way, you can give a gift at any time during the holidays!

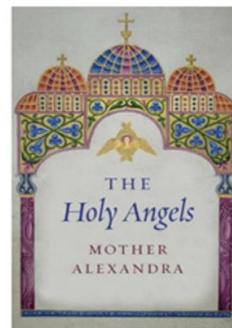


Contact Diane at 562-693-7927; or email her at rockinwomom@gmail.com.

St. Nicholas Antiochian Women Book Club

Our Chaplain, Lauren Malouf, is organizing a book club for us! Our first book is one recommended by the Antiochian Women of the Archdiocese. More information about meetings to discuss the book will follow.

Join St. Nicholas Cathedral's
Antiochian Women's
Book Club!



Learn more about our faith and enjoy time with your sister's in Christ!

Order at: <https://store.ancientfaith.com/the-holy-angels/>

Celebrating Christmas in America (Part I)

As we have now moved past the Thanksgiving holiday, Christmas is well on its way. Of course, as Orthodox Christians, we know that we celebrate Christmas a little different than the rest of the country. We are supposed to fast before the feast, and celebrate for 8 [sic, 12] days afterwards, when the rest of the country has already burned out on Christmas. We are supposed to fast all day on Christmas Eve, and

For all details, contact Lauren Malouf
(818) 687-0406
lmalouf@hchc.edu

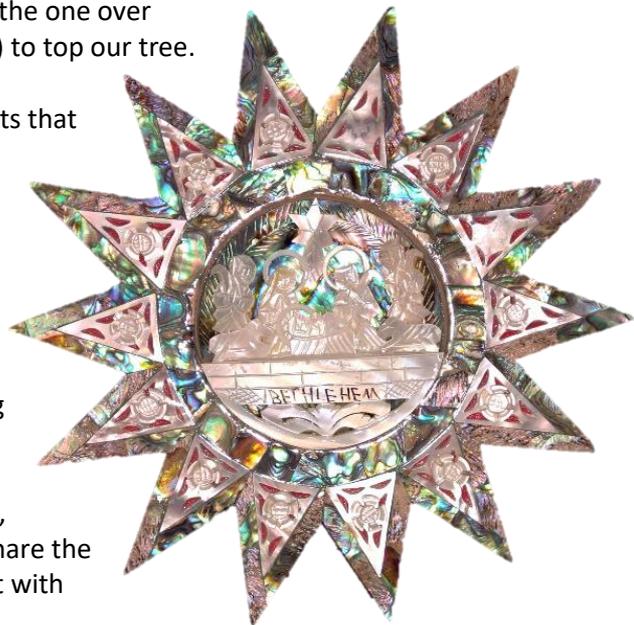
attend liturgy that night (or the next morning), while everyone else is celebrating by having Christmas dinner and opening presents in their pj's around the tree.

While all that sounds fun, Christmas is about way more than fun. Christmas is about our salvation. Xboxes and new purses are nice, they don't compare to eternal life with God and the avoidance of eternal punishment. Is it just that straight forward? Yes, I believe it is.

So how do we break the cycle of a secular Christmas and get back to what Christmas is supposed to be about, meanwhile not turning people away from the faith because they love the "Christmas feeling"?

We can still do quite a bit of "American Christmas," while still being true to ourselves as Orthodox Christians. Christmas decorations, for example, are mostly good. I guess it's nice that we are spending so much time preparing our homes and communities for the coming of Christ, but let's make sure to not forget who we are doing this for. Maybe we could add some icons of the Nativity or of the saints, who we celebrate during the Nativity Fast, to our decorations. We could get creative and make a fourteen-point star (like the one over Christ's birthplace in Bethlehem) to top our tree.

There are some good vegan treats that we could *occasionally* cheat with. Besides all of the very important spiritual reasons for fasting, I also think giving up certain foods and feasting on the feast itself makes things more special. Perhaps doing more with our families in serving the homeless during Christmas time would help remind us that we are fortunate the entire year, and it would be good for us to share the food that we would normally eat with the less fortunate.



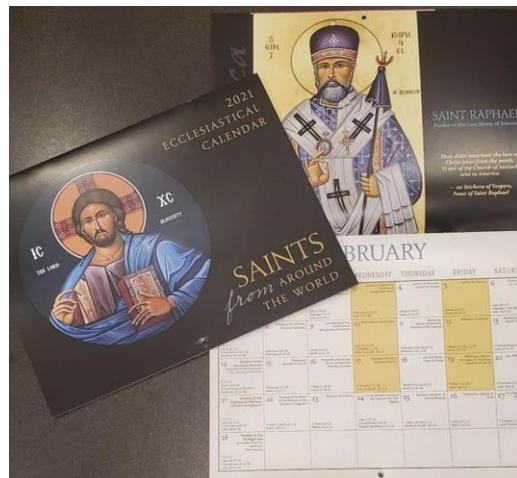
Then we have possibly the most spiritually-destructive part of Christmas: The gifts. A small gift to remind us of the Gift of Jesus Christ isn't the worst thing, however, I think we often forget that Christmas is Jesus' birthday and think that it's ours. What would Jesus want for His birthday? He already received gold, frankincense, and myrrh, so what's left? I believe that He would appreciate it most if we gave gifts to the Church and to the homeless. Why not give to the Church or a philanthropic organization in someone's honor? That way, your gift to them is actually treasure in their heavenly account.

How about our children? How can we teach them how to celebrate a Christian Christmas without taking out all the fun for them? Maybe we could get them different types of presents than they would receive for their birthdays. Spiritual gifts, such as icons or crosses, for example. We should definitely teach them to give to the poor, so a gift in their honor to the poor is definitely worth doing. Maybe buying them an experience, where you participate with them, rather than a toy they will soon get sick of.

We need to get creative in a way that allows those who do not fully understand the gravity of this feast to begin to learn the meaning of Christmas, while keeping from feeling excluded from the festivities of the holiday. In time, we should make a transition from the emotional to the spiritual, not forgetting that some of our brethren are not as spiritually advanced, while others may be more attuned to the spiritual implications of our Lord's birth. At the end of the day, the Church knows what's best for our salvation – how to get us to truly understand the meaning of Christmas – so let's not ignore the instruction that She gives us on how to prepare for the feast.

By Fr. Joseph Hazar

Since you made it to the end of the bulletin you get your reward: our beautiful, new 2021 Calendars have arrived. You can pick one up next time you're in church (one per family, please).



Summary of Procedures

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!” (Luke 12:32)

«لَا تَخَفْ أَيُّهَا الْقَطِيعُ الصَّغِيرُ لِأَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ سَرَّ أَنْ يُعْطِيَكُمْ الْمَلَكُوتَ.»

As we take the coronavirus pandemic seriously, with faith and love, please note the following procedures:



1. Parking

As our parking lot is small, it is reserved for elderly and families with newborns in strollers. Everyone else should park at the photo lot. It is essential that all able-bodied worshippers show courtesy to the elderly and those with little children.

2. Social Distancing and Masks

Please remember to maintain sufficient distance between your household and others. Your family may all sit together, if you live in the same house, but please keep six feet distance between yourself and members of other households.

Remember too that **masks are required**. Be sure to wear them in a way that covers your nose and mouth fully. Not wearing masks or wearing them incorrectly makes other people feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Let us practice this important courtesy to others who may have health issues and for everyone's comfort and peace of mind.

3. Communion

Holy Communion is the “medicine of immortality,” given “for the remission of sins, for healing of soul and body and for life everlasting.”

It has long been the practice throughout our Archdiocese—more out of respect for Communion, *rather* than *unthinkable* concern for germs—for the faithful to approach the Chalice with their mouths wide open and their heads tilted back. *Remember that you have to do both – a mouth that's open wide but tilted downward doesn't help!* This will allow the priest or deacon to insert the spoon, turn it over in your mouth and pull it out *without* touching your tongue or lips.



4. Venerating Icons

Venerate icons or the gospel book or the cross with just a 'gesture,' but **do not actually touch the item with your lips or hand.**

While the Greek word in the Bible for veneration literally means to "approach and kiss," for now, approach *as if* to kiss, but then back away. The same goes for the priest's hand.



5. Antidoron (Blessed Bread)

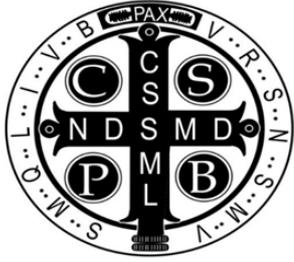
For receiving the antidoron (blessed bread) after Holy Communion and at the dismissal, the Archdiocese has directed us to implement the more ancient practice. That is, *instead* of everyone reaching into the bowl with their own hands, **cup your hands together, and the priest (at dismissal) or an assistant (after Communion) will drop a piece of the blessed bread in them.** The priest and assistants will have washed their hands thoroughly and will be wearing gloves, so please do not touch or kiss their hands. While it is traditional to kiss the priest's hand when receiving a blessing, for the time being, please just make a 'gesture' of veneration for the priest's hand (as described above).

6. Who Should NOT Come to Church

Of course, those who are elderly, who have asthma, diabetes or other conditions that compromise their immune systems are still advised NOT to come to church at this time. Thus, **Fr. Nabil will be very happy to bring you the Sacraments to your homes or to have you come to the Cathedral privately, by appointment.** Please call him directly at (213) 915-6269 to schedule.

7. Confessions

For confession, to minimize risk, please set up a time for us to talk by phone or Zoom. Then you can come for absolution before one of the Liturgies and partake of Communion at that Liturgy, or we can arrange a private appointment.



LIVING PRAYER

ACTIVE PRAYER

AN ONLINE ADVENT RETREAT

Presented by Saint Michael Orthodox Christian Church and the Society of St Benedict

Featuring presentations by
Abbot Theodore
of Ladyminster
V Rev John W Fenton
Br Joseph Brown

Saturday, December 12, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Prayers and Meditations will be offered using Zoom

RSVP to StMichaelWhittier@gmail.com to receive
an invitation to Zoom and a detailed schedule

A donation of \$15 per person is requested
but not required.

75% of your donation will support Our Lady and
St Laurence Monastery

"As with retreats in the past, this year's asks participants to set aside the entire time for prayer, reflection, and silent meditation. Of course, this will need to be accomplished in the quiet of your home or room rather than at the church; and so greater diligence will be rewarded with greater benefit."

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ATTACHED CLERGY CONTACTS

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Rev. Father Paul Olson, *Assistant Pastor*
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