



Life Abundant

A Publication of St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church
February 2012



St. Elias Annual Parish Meeting

Our St. Elias Annual Parish Meeting was held on Sunday, January 29, following the Divine Liturgy. In addition to hearing of the great work that has been taking place at St. Elias over the past year, four new members were selected to serve on the Parish Council. Elias Antypas and Charla Akerman were re-elected and will begin another three-year term. Linda Yazji was appointed by Fr. Ignatius and will also serve a three-year term, and Bouthyna Issa was appointed by the Council to fulfill the remainder of Brian Thabit's term, which he leaves the board to focus on his work serving behind the altar and in maintaining our building. A special thanks also to Bernedette Thabit, who has completed her term on Council. In addition, Patti Hanna-Garlitz was elected to serve a one-year term on the Endowment Committee. We thank everyone for their dedicated service to our holy church and look forward to a great 2012!

From Father Ignatius...

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

This February, we prepare ourselves for the great spiritual journey of Great Lent. Lent is a time for reexamination, recommitment, and a rededication of our lives to Christ. The Christian life is not only to be lived on Sunday mornings, but should permeate our entire life and being. So often, we attempt to put our faith into a box rather than allowing Christ full domain. As we count down the weeks toward the Great Fast, I encourage you to prepare with attention and vigilance, so that together, we might approach the fast with dedication and firm resolve to deepen our life in Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Ignatius

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February Birthdays

Brian Thabit	2/1
Carl Grether	2/2
Pando Pappas	2/2
Kevin Webb	2/3
Andrew Yazji	2/4
Shirley Karam	2/8
Mitch Swentzel	2/9
Shirley Joseph	2/10
Andre Cash	2/11
Ronald Bassett	2/11
Danielle Darah	2/11
Yara Touma	2/11
Derek Corey-Goodman	2/12
Cara Paxson	2/16
Richard Kerbawy	2/16
Charlie Voelz	2/17
Philip Kallile	2/19
Deitra Jamra Hickey	2/19
Denise Webb	2/19
Linda Prephan	2/20
Nicholas Ello	2/20
Tarek Joseph	2/21
David Najarian	2/22
Nicole Hersch	2/22
George Tanber	2/22
Susie Murphy	2/22
Wendy Staley	2/23
Mary Corey	2/24
Joy McKarus	2/26
Rick Metz	2/26
Tatiana Clement	2/27

Mabrook! Blessings!

May God grant all of you many years!



February Anniversaries

George & Linda Ellis	February 15 th
Archie & Stefani Soulidis	February 21 st
Jeff & Jackie Pappas	February 27 th

Memory Eternal

James Shemas
Rosalie Murray
Frank Haney
Riad Fallouh
(Mother of Rania Fahoury)

MABROOK

Adonis Bittar
Anthony Bittar

Born January 31st
Dr. Samih & Rana Bittar

Christ's Humanity

Occasions Our Divinity

The gospel in seven words or less

by Scott Cairns

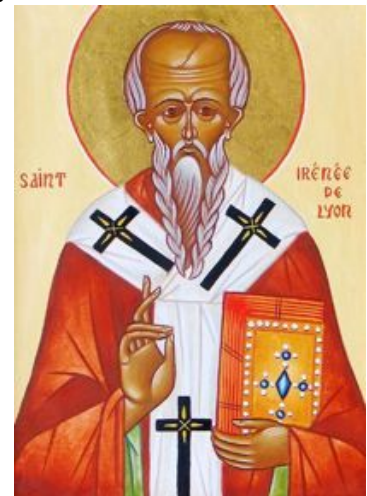
What's the gospel in seven words? The Christian Century asked theologians, pastors, and others both to answer this question and to expand on this in a few sentences. Scott Cairns, a noted Orthodox writer, poet, and professor offers the following submission.

Christ's humanity occasions our divinity.

According to both Irenaus and Athanasios, God became like us so that we might become like God. Clement observes that through obedience one "becomes a god while still

walking in the flesh." Cyril avers that as we are called "temples of God and even gods, so we are." Gregory Naziansus admonishes us: "Become gods for His sake."

The consensus of the church fathers and mothers is that the purpose of Christ's coming is to endow us with life, divine life, endlessly becoming. Good journey!



No Meat for You!

by Fr. John Cox

As January slips into February thoughts of Christmas and Theophany fade into our memory and an invisible clock in our minds begins to register a small alarm, Lent is coming... As the month of February rolls along that alarm gets louder, more insistent – Lent is coming, Lent is coming! Indeed, Great Lent is coming. In a few short weeks it will begin in earnest and we are wise to prepare ourselves for its arrival now.

During Lent we are invited by the Church to forego meat and dairy products as part of our spiritual discipline and this is one of the things that many people struggle with every year. It is a good time then to reflect on the meaning of fasting and why it should be an important part of our lives, especially during Great Lent.

We fast to have communion with God. How does this happen? When we attempt to fast, eating more simply and less often and abstaining from meat and dairy products, our body often rebels against us. It will complain loudly and ache in protest at the change in our diet. Our mind also registers its objection to the change by conjuring up fantasies of juicy steaks and piping hot potatoes dripping with butter, cheese, bacon crumbles, and sour cream. The body and mind behave as if we have declared war against them and the result of our small attempt at self denial is that we become short tempered and sharp tongued. In a sense this is a good thing because our own poor response to fasting and/or our failure to fast faithfully encourage us to repentance, to a greater awareness that we have fallen short of the glory of God because we are too attached to the good things of this life. This is not the only blessing fasting has to bestow



however. If we are faithful and humble in our fasting, ignoring the demands of body and mind for rich food, we learn not to be ruled by desire. This is the ultimate goal of fasting or any other ascetic effort, to break the oppressive power of sin in our flesh so that we can be free to take up our cross and follow Christ.

It bears repeating that fasting will not help us reach this goal if we approach it in a legalistic or formalistic way. St. John Chrysostom once opined that fasting without almsgiving is the fasting of demons. Our subtraction of certain worldly behaviors and rich foods must be balanced by the addition of other spiritual behaviors such as acts of charity, increased prayer, and spiritual reading either from Scripture or the lives of the Saints. This will assure that our fast is truly the God-pleasing fast of the Church that leads through repentance to communion with God and not the self-congratulatory posturing of the Pharisee that leads to judgment and condemnation. So be courageous and fast! Do so faithfully and hold on all the while to the conviction of St. Paul that though we struggle and suffer neither life nor death, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Presentation of Christ in the Temple


On February 2, the Church commemorates an important event in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the God-Infant was taken to the Jerusalem Temple, the center of the nation's religious life. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty days. At the end of this time the mother came to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb or pigeon to the Lord as a purification sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, had



no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement. However, she humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Symeon was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he should behold the promised Messiah. By inspiration from above, St. Symeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and St. Joseph had brought the Infant Jesus to fulfill the Law.

The God-Receiver Symeon took the divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). St. Symeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).



Saturday of Souls
Saturday, February 18
Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am

Kroger Community Rewards

Our St. Elias Church School is participating with the Kroger Community Rewards program and are asking for your support to help us earn money to go towards our children.

It's a very easy process to sign-up but if you have questions, please see Charla Akerman.

If you already have a Kroger Reward card, you can register your card online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com, using **ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH (NPO #90239)**. If you do not have access to the online sign-up method, please call 1-800-837-4483 to learn about the alternative sign-up method. Make sure to give them **ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH (NPO #90239)**. Unfortunately, all participants must re-enroll each year to continue earning awards.



**ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX
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www.krogercommunityrewards.com

or call **1-800-837-4483**



How it Works:

Once you add St. Elias as the organization and the number to your card, you will see the name at the bottom of each receipt so make sure you check it after you sign-up.

Every time you shop for groceries and swipe your card, we automatically start earning a rebate. This reward is in addition to your gas rewards you earn with each purchase, and it does **NOT** affect your gas points.

You can either swipe your reward card at the check-out or you can enter your phone number that is registered. If for some reason you don't want a rewards card, you can still use another members phone number at the check-out.

The rewards are distributed on a quarterly basis and given to the PTO for our church school needs.

Please spread the word to your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors so we can benefit from this great opportunity to

Endowment Foundation's 2012 Gifting Announced; New Committee Members Selected

by George Tanber

The St. Elias Endowment Foundation announced its 2012 gifting decision in its report at the annual meeting on Jan. 29. In total, the Endowment will gift \$10,000 in 2012. This figure is based on interest, dividends and capital gains earnings from 2011 and includes a carryover of \$3,625 from allowable, unspent 2010 gifting funds.

All Endowment gifting recommendations must be approved by the Parish Council.



The gifting breakdown for 2012 is as follows:

- Graduating seniors scholarships - \$3,000
- Antiochian Village grants - \$3,000
- St. Elias Discretionary Fund [managed by Fr. Ignatius for emergency charitable situations involving St. Elias parishoners] - \$2,000
- St. Ananias Antiochian Orthodox Mission, Evansville, Ind. - \$1,000
- Cherry Street Mission - \$500
- Fellowship Matters - \$500

Meanwhile, at the Annual Meeting, Patti Hanna-Garlitz was voted onto the Endowment committee for a three-year term. She replaces Elias Antypas. In addition, the Parish Council elected George Darah as its representative on the Endowment Committee in 2012. George replaces Gabriel Barrow, Parish Council's 2011 representative.

The Endowment Committee will hold the first of its quarterly meetings in mid-February, during which officer elections will take place.

The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man; the coat hanging in your closet belongs to the man who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes; the money which you put into the bank belongs to the poor. You do wrong to everyone you could help but fail to help.

-St. Basil the Great



Hospitalized?

Please call Fr. Ignatius at 419-318-7147, or the Church Office.

Forgiveness Sunday

February 26

The last day before the beginning of Great Lent is called “Forgiveness Sunday”, indicating the desire for God’s forgiveness that lies at the heart of Great Lent. On this Sunday, we identify with Adam and Eve and forgive each other in order to obtain forgiveness from God, typically in the Forgiveness Vespers service that Sunday evening. During Forgiveness Vespers the hangings and vestments in the church are

changed to somber Lenten colors to reflect a penitential mood. At the end of the service comes the “Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness” during which all of the people one by one ask forgiveness of one another. People make a prostration before one another and ask forgiveness, and thus Great Lent begins in the spirit of reconciliation and Christian love. The following day is known as Clean Monday, because everyone has confessed their sins, asked forgiveness, and begun Great Lent with a clean slate.

Outdoor Blessing of Water

Every January 6th, Orthodox Christians all throughout the world celebrate the Fest of Theophany with a “blessing of the waters.” It marks not only the 12th day of Christmas and Christ’s baptism in the Jordan, but also the revelation of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Blessed with an unusually sunny, mild January day, Fr. Ignatius and fellow parishioners made the short trip to Ten Mile Creek in the heart of downtown Sylvania. Together they prayed, asking God to bless their homes, families, country, and spiritual and political leaders, while Fr. Ignatius blessed the waters, which flow into all the world, sanctifying all of God’s creation.



For more photos, go to
www.steliasofsylvania.org



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Toledo Area Lenten Vespers Series for 2012

(Theme: Healing, Suffering and Forgiveness)

March 4th: Sunday of Orthodoxy; Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

- Speaker: Metropolitan Nicholas *(tentative)*
- Topic: General remarks on the relationship between healing, suffering, and forgiveness *(Subject to His Eminence's discretion)*

March 11th: Gregory Palamas Sunday; St. Elias Orthodox Church

- Speaker: Fr. Ari Damaskos
- Topic: I pray to get better, and I get worse, help me Father!

March 18th: Sunday of the Cross; St. George Orthodox Cathedral (Woodley St.)

- Speaker: Fr. Ignatius Warren
- Topic: Does suffering lead us to a deeper relationship with Christ?

March 25th: Climacus Sunday; Annunciation; St. George Orthodox Cathedral/Rossford

- Speaker: Fr. Basil Koory
- Topic: Wonderworking and Healing Ministry of the Saints

April 1st: Mary of Egypt Sunday; Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

- Speaker: Fr. Paul Gassios
- Topic: A Christian Ending to our Life

All services will begin at 6 PM.

Lenten potluck will follow. Please bring a non-meat, non-dairy dish to share.

