

Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church



The Voice

**April
2024**



The Ladder of Divine Ascent



The Voice is published monthly by
Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

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 Fort Pierce, FL 34981
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Director

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Deli

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 Cruz

Meetings

Parish Council

3rd Tuesday
 7:00 PM

Philoptochos

2nd Saturday
 10:00 AM

Bible Study

Every 2nd & 4th
 Wednesday
 10:30 AM

Addiction Support

Every 2nd & 4th
 Monday 7PM

Kali Parea

1st Tuesday
 10:00 AM

GOYA

last Sunday
 12:00 noon

Adult Dance Classes

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Book Store

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St Nicholas Greek
 Orthodox Church
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Πρόσχωμεν - Let Us Be Attentive

Dear Parishioners,

The season of Great Lent is once again upon us. Do you dread it? Does it make an unwelcome appearance in your life? Is it the “same old?”

Our reaction to this great mystery of Lent will tell whether it avails to our benefit or to our judgment. Christ told His followers that there was a time to fast, though not while He was among them.

He performed countless charitable works to show by His example the importance of this service to others.

He corrected His questioners who called Him good by instructing them to worship God alone.

He gave His disciples authority to forgive as well as to bind the people's sins.

All of these teachings by our Lord were for our benefit. God wants no one to be lost and teaches through His Son what we must do if we are to enter into His glorious Resurrection.

May this Lenten period be unto salvation for every single member of God's Church, and may we see Christ's Resurrection confirmed in our faith in Him who saves.

I wish you a blessed and fruitful Lenten season.

In Christ,
+ Father John

"Come and See"

Steve Hantzarides, Stewardship Chairman

In the Gospel of John, we read of the calling of the disciples: "Philip finds Nathaniel, and said to him, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' And Nathaniel said to him, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see'" (John 1:45-46).

See the World as God's Gift to You: Come and see God's many blessings in your life. What is your response to His gifts? In gratitude and thanksgiving, you offer your time, talents, and treasure in proportion to what you have been given.

See What the Church can Become: Come and see what the Church can become – not just maintaining current programs, but expanding the ministries made possible by your support. In the early Church, every person brought everything they could spare for the needs of the Church. They provided for the sustenance of the clergy, widows, and orphans, for helping the poor, and for all the good works of the Church. This is the Church that we as Orthodox Christians claim to be. How much can your offering do for Christ? Only as much as you empower it to do. It depends on your love, because we give to Christ and His Church not according to our means but according to our love for Him. We are called to love God with our entire being – our time, talents, and treasury.

Giving to the Church is an opportunity to examine our priorities and values, to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves and to grow in grace. It is an opportunity to participate in the work of God. Come and see what we can do together with your support.

A check mailed to the church is meaningless unless it is accompanied by your presence, your willingness to serve, your prayers, your commitment. Giving is not a substitute for our commitment – it is an expression of our commitment.

Consider Weekly Giving: In I Corinthians 16:2 we read "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his/her income." Regular stewardship contributions are easier to manage and keep the Church and her ministries in our thoughts and plans. One way to do this is through automatically scheduled payments sent directly from your bank. In this way, we offer back to God the "first fruits" of our labor, realizing that all we possess comes from Him. Our church website offers this option and it is safe and secure.

Consider Cheerful Giving: In II Corinthians 9:7 we read "Each person should give what he/she has decided in his/her heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Keep in mind that the expenses of the Church increase every year. To grow our ministries and meet our expenses, stewardship contributions must also increase each year.

Consider Proportionate Giving: The more we are given, the more is expected of us. Each steward should determine the percentage of their income that will be committed to Christ and His Church.

Setting up weekly stewardship giving online is easy and secure. Open the camera on your smartphone, focus it on the QR code on the left and you will be taken directly to the Stewardship page on our website:

- Visit www.stnicholasfp.com
- Click on the Stewardship tab on the homepage.
- Set-up your account, amount of giving and frequency.
- You will receive an email receipt acknowledging your gift.

Thank you to all who have submitted their 2024 stewardship pledges. If you have not, please complete the form that is included in this issue of The Voice and either drop it off in the narthex or mail it to the church office.



Philoptochos



Greetings,

As we begin the month of April, there are many events in the planning stage. Great and Holy Lent brings the beginning of Presanctified Liturgies. Volunteers will be needed to help set up for the Lenten meals and cleanup. Each Wednesday is being hosted by different ministries but will appreciate extra hands.

Tsoureki will be sold on April 21 and 28 after Divine Liturgies. Volunteers are in place.

On Holy Thursday after liturgy, eggs will be dyed, oiled, and packaged. Volunteers are needed and we will meet in the hall. Thank you to Nick Fiorentinos for providing a lite luncheon. Thank you to Maria Miller for donating 13 dozen eggs.

Fr. John will be delivering baked goods from Philoptochos to the homebound during his Easter visits coordinated by Presvytera Melissa.

For questions, please call Stacy: 772-208-0439 or Sharon: 772-564-9941.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with the Oratorical Festival luncheon and for the Annunciation Monday fellowship hour sponsored by Pres. Eva Kyriakos.

Let us all pray for God's strength and blessings as we make our journey towards Great and Holy Pascha.

With love in Christ,
Sharon Colonis, Secretary

***Come, let us purify our souls with
alms and mercy to the poor.***

- (Author unknown)

MEDITATION

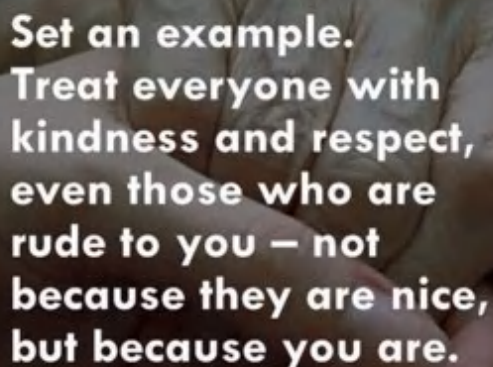
by Fr Luke Veronis

My life is not my own. This is a hard concept for us to accept because we like to think that we are independent, self-sufficient people. Yet, when we choose to follow Jesus Christ, we are choosing to hand over our life to Him for something greater than ourselves. We hand over our freedom and willingly become a servant, a slave to the Lord. Of course, we do this out of our love for Him and out of the joy we discover in Him. We don't hand over our life out of a forced coercion. When Saint Paul says, "*I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me,*" he is highlighting not that he is dead, but that he has discovered new life in Christ. This new life is one of utter faith and trust in God, knowing that the Lord first loves him and has given His life on behalf of him. May we all understand this path of faith - dying to ourselves in order to discover a new life in Christ, a life filled with His love and joy!

The Rent We Pay

There is only one true landlord in life...and that is God. We are the tenants who occupy this earth, breathe His air, use His wheat, His oil, His iron ore, His everything. We cannot pay for the space we take up, no matter how much money we have. But we can and do rent it. The rent is paid in the service we render to Him, to His church, and to our fellow man....

When we ask for something in our prayer, we must wait patiently. There was one time when my eye had swollen and I was in pain. I went to the icon of Panaghia three times and beseeched her to heal my eye so that I could see to read the Psalms at night. I even took a little oil from her vigil oil-lamp and applied it to my eye, but it did not heal. In a few days, the condition began to worsen; the eye had become more painful and it continued to swell. Fifteen days went by. Then, I went again very reservedly to the icon of Panaghia and said, "Forgive me, my Panaghia, for troubling you again." I again took a little oil from her vigil oil-lamp and as soon as I applied it to my eye, it was immediately healed. Was it possible that Panaghia could not have healed my eye on the first day? She however, had seen everything and allowed me to suffer. You, too, should beseech humbly and and wait patiently. Prayer that is offered with faith, anquish, perseverance and patience, as long as it is for our own good, is heard.



**Set an example.
Treat everyone with
kindness and respect,
even those who are
rude to you – not
because they are nice,
but because you are.**

Sometimes I think I'm reasonably intelligent, and sometimes I click the remote car door lock a second or a third time for extra lockiness.



Sunday of St. John Climacus

The memory of this Saint is celebrated on March 30, where his biography may be found. On the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, he is also remembered. This year that falls on April 14. He is celebrated today because his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, is a sure guide to the ascetic life, written by a great man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.

Beginning of Great Lent

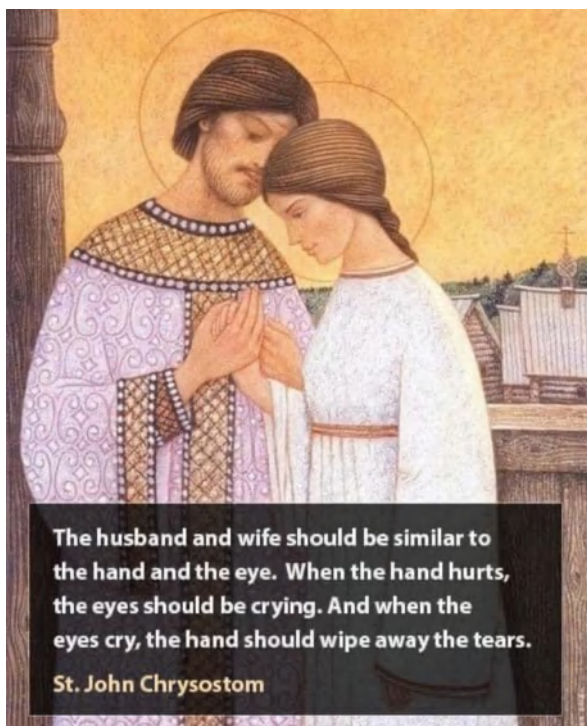
Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for, the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no “enemies?” Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them—in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being “polite” and “friendly” we fulfill God’s commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize—be it only for one minute—that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual “recognition” which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

—Father Alexander Schmemmann

Son, obedient servant of the Lord, do not be so fooled by the spirit of conceit that you confess your sins to your spiritual father as though they were someone else's. Lay bare your wound to the healer. Only through shame can you be freed from shame. Tell him, and do not be ashamed, "This is my wound Father; this is my injury. It happened because of my negligence and not from any other cause. No one is to blame for this, no man, spirit or body or anything else. It is all through my negligence." He who exposes every serpent show the reality of his faith, while he who hides them still walks the trackless wastes.

- St. John Climacus



Did you know there's a prayer called the "I don't know" prayer? It's very spiritual. You just go off somewhere quiet and hidden and you walk right up to the heart of God and you say, "I don't know."

I don't know where to go from here. I don't know what is happening. I don't know how to process this. I don't know what to do with these emotions. I don't know how to handle this situation.

It covers a lot of I don't knows.

And then with whatever dusty little sand grain of faith you have, you say, "But You know."

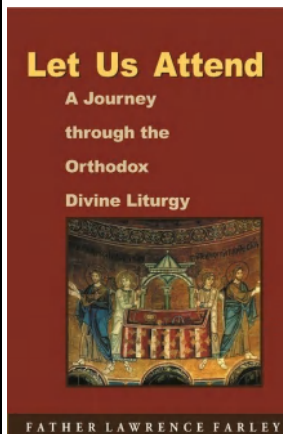
And you leave it there.

God most certainly hears that prayer.

Book Review

Let Us Attend – A Journey through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy

By Father Lawrence Farley



From the back cover of the book we read, “If you would like a deeper understanding of your Sunday morning experience so that you can draw closer to God, then this book is for you.”

“YOU.” Who are you? “You” are the Orthodox Christian that was baptized and chrismated as an infant and have been coming to Divine Liturgy ever since. Or “You” are a newly baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christian coming to Orthodoxy. Or “You” might be coming to the Orthodox Church from another faith tradition (or no tradition at all) and just beginning to explore Orthodoxy. Whoever “You” are, “You” are seeking to know God in a closer relationship.

This is a short book, just 100 pages. But it is not something “You” will sit down and read like a novel, twenty pages at a time. It is best read slowly, only one or two pages at a time. Then spending time thinking and meditating on what you have just read, and how “You” make this a part of your understanding. Divine Liturgy is not a spectator sport. As you immerse yourself in the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning you are participating, not watching. You don’t watch Divine Liturgy, you PRAY the Divine Liturgy with all your mind, with all your heart, and with all your soul.

This book takes you through the Divine Liturgy from the Introduction and sixteen chapters to the Conclusion, from “Blessed be the Father . . .” to “Through the prayers of the Holy Fathers . . .” each section examines in detail the historical development of the Liturgy to the present form we experience today. It explores those Greek words that mark the various sections of the liturgy like “Prokeimenon”. These will be highlighted in boxes (like this one) along with the explanatory text. The historical use changes through the years as the Liturgy develops into its present day use when, in this case, the people do not repeat the Prokeimenon.

Prokeimenon (or prokeimen)

A liturgical verse chanted by the reader and repeated by the people that introduces the epistle reading at Liturgy.

So whoever “You” are, this book is a must read for you. If you truly take it to heart you will find that the Divine Liturgy does draw you closer to your God.

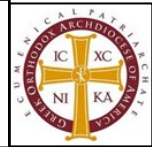
Reviewed by Subdeacon Pamphilos



April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
	1	2 Kali Parea - 10:00 AM	3 6:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 PM - Lenten Dinner
7 Sunday of the Holy Cross Matins - 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM Memorial: Harry Colonis GOYA Meeting - 1:00 PM	8 Addiction Support Group - 7:00 PM	9	10 Bible Study - 10:00 AM 6:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 PM - Lenten Dinner
14 Sunday of St. John Climacus Matins - 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM Memorial: David Matarese	15	16 PC Meeting - 7:00 PM	17 6:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 PM - Lenten Dinner
21 Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Matins - 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM	22 Addiction Support Group - 7:00 PM	23	24 Bible Study - 10:00 AM Presanctified Liturgy Lenten Dinner - 7:00 PM
28 Palm Sunday Matins - 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy with blessing of palms- 10:00 AM Service of the Bridegroom—6:00 PM	29 Holy Monday Service of the Bridegroom - 6:00 PM	30 Holy Tuesday Service of the Bridegroom/ Kassiani Hymn - 6:00 PM	
	12		

1 2024



Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Unsanctified Liturgy Anten Dinner</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6:00 PM - Salutations</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>10:30 AM</p> <p>Unsanctified Liturgy Anten Dinner</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>GOYA Olympics - Fort Lauderdale - 5:00 PM</p> <p>6:00 PM - Salutations</p>	<p>13</p> <p>GOYA Olympics - Fort Lauderdale - 9 AM - 9 PM</p> <p>Philoptochos - 10:00 AM</p>
<p>Unsanctified Liturgy Anten Dinner</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Confessions without appointment - 9 AM - 5 PM</p> <p>6:00 PM - Akathist Hymn</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>10:30 AM</p> <p>Liturgy - 6:00 PM r - 7:00 PM</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 Lazarus Saturday</p> <p>Matins - 9:00 AM Teaching Liturgy - 10:00 AM Breakfast - 11:30 AM Palm Folding - 12:00 noon Children's Confessions - 1 PM</p>
		<p>13</p>	

Parishioner Happenings

^{HOLY}
Baptism

Adrienne Iasillo and **Katherine Iasillo**, daughters of Angelica Polyzois Iasillo were baptized.

Aaron David Franklin, son of Jennifer was baptized.

Melina Stratis, daughter of Alexandra Stratis was baptized.

Deepest Sympathy



Sending thoughts of peace and comfort
today and in the days to come.

Helen Chachakis passed away.

Brian Rahm passed, husband of Marianne.

I've moved!

Theodore Stavrakos relocated to Pennsylvania.

Cypriana Fisher received her 40 Days Blessing.



YAL had a good turnout at their recent gathering. Good times with good people!





Demonstrating their love for our Lord and honoring His teaching to love and help others, the youth of St. Nicholas collected and arranged items from the GOYA food drive to be donated to those in need in our community. Working together, they proudly spelled out, "I love Jesus" with a large cross on the steps leading to the altar. Thank you to **all** who participated! All proceeds were donated to the Treasure Coast Food Bank.

Hope and Joy:

Lessons from the Youth Group Meeting on 3/8/24



In our latest youth group meeting, we delved into sacrifice through a fun and engaging activity—playing the popular game "The Floor is Lava". As our youngest parishioners navigated the imaginary lava-filled terrain, we explored lessons that connect with our faith.

Just like in the game where we had to sacrifice our comfort zones to stay safe, we realized that in life, stepping out of our comfort zones is often necessary for growth. This act of sacrifice can lead to personal development and spiritual growth.

During the game, as we leaped from one safe spot to another, we learned the importance of trust and teamwork. Similarly, in our lives, trusting in our faith and supporting one another can help us overcome challenges and obstacles with resilience and unity.

Through the playful experience of "The Floor is Lava", we found that sacrifice is not just about giving up something valuable but also about gaining something greater--returning to God. It reminded us that through sacrifice, we open ourselves to new opportunities, experiences, and blessings.

As we carry these lessons forward, may we continue to embrace sacrifice as a path to deeper faith in our lives and in our community.

Join us in the upcoming youth group meetings as we explore more ways to nurture our faith, spread joy, and cultivate hope. .

Interested in joining Hope & Joy? Contact Lauren Gieseler at 352-262-3160 for information.

GOYA Happenings



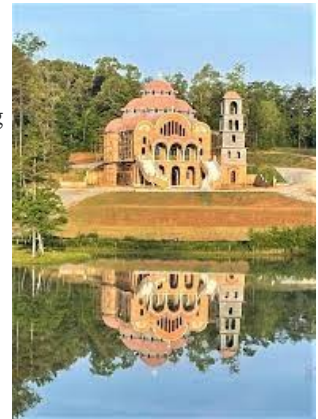
GraceWay Village: We had our GOYA Youth volunteer to help serve meals and sort donated clothing at GraceWay Village on March 17th. Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped prepare and serve 400 meals every month to serve those need in our community.

GOYA District Olympics: St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Fort Lauderdale, FL is hosting their annual South Florida District GOYA Olympics on April 12th & 13th. We will have a few of our youth attend this fun event.

Saint Stephen's Camp: Registration for camp took place on Thursday, March 28th. Spots filled up very fast. We will be having a few of our GOYA Youth attending camp on week one June 23-29 and will be sharing bus transportation with Saint Mark's Church in Boca Raton.

St. Stephen's Camp has a rich tradition, dating back to the 1980's, and is grounded on the principals of living a true Orthodox lifestyle with twice daily liturgical services, opportunities for reflection, community living and meals, athletics, arts & crafts, and nightly social activities.

Recognized as the highlight of the summer, St Stephen's Summer Camp offers teens of the Metropolis of Atlanta entering 6th through 12th grades when school begins in the fall, an opportunity to spend a week at our Diakonia Retreat Center.



District Oratorical Festival: Our church hosted the District Annual South Florida Oratorical Festival on **Saturday, March 30th at 10:00am**. We had GOYAns from south Florida parishes join us in this annual competition.

GOYA Mission: GOYA Mission: The mission and goal of GOYA ministry is to lead our young people into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. By developing a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and becoming active sacramental members of the living Church, our young people will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation.

For more information about GOYA or to register our child, (6th -12th grades), please contact Betty Cruz at 772-233-3115 or contact the church office.

Μέτρον βίου το καλον ου το του χρόνου μήκος.
The value of life is measured by its goodness, not by its length.

Donations Needed For Great and Holy Lent

Once again we must prevail upon your love for the Church in order to provide flowers, candles, etc. for the services of Holy Lent. If you are able to help, please indicate the item and place your donation in one of the Lenten envelopes along with this form. You can also use the QR Code below and pay directly from our website. We thank you in advance for your generosity.



Sunday of the Holy Cross

Daffodils - \$300

Palm Sunday

Palms Strips and Crosses - \$100

Bridegroom Icon Frame - \$150

Holy Wednesday

Holy Unction Olive Oil - \$15

Holy Thursday

Candles for Top of Crucifix - \$15

Holy Friday

Epitaphios Flowers - \$800

Rose Petals for Myrrh Bearers - \$30

White Sheet for Shroud - bring one

Rose Water - bring one bottle

Holy Saturday

Bay Leaves - \$100

Resurrection Banner - \$175

Eight Iconostasion Swags - \$30 each

Large Garland - \$100

Five Small Garlands - \$30

Large Lily Plants - \$25

Small Lily Plants - \$15

Name _____

Donation _____

A Message from the President

Dear Parishioner,

One of the major fundraisers for our church is the Community Easter Card, which is sent to all members of our parish. Please support this yearly project by completing the attached form and returning it to the church office by the deadline of

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

The cost of printing your name on the card is \$25.00 per family. Please make checks payable to Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. You may place your form and donation in the trays on Sunday, or send it to the church office at 2525 South 25th Street, Fort Pierce, FL 34981, or pay online from our website at www.stnicholasfp.com.

Love in Christ,
Kevin Cruz
Parish Council President

*****Cut Here*****
and return this portion with your donation.

Easter Card Form



Print your name as it is to appear on the card:

Enclosed Payment: Cash_____

Check_____



Sacred Music Institute - Miami, FL - March 22-25

It is better to err by excess of mercy than by excess of severity. You wish to become a Saint? Be severe to yourself but kind to others.
- St John Chrysostom


HE CRIED
HE KNEW LAZARUS
WAS DEAD BEFORE HE GOT THE NEWS
BUT STILL, HE CRIED
HE KNEW LAZARUS WOULD BE ALIVE AGAIN IN MOMENTS
BUT STILL, HE CRIED
HE KNEW DEATH HERE IS NOT FOREVER
 HE KNEW ETERNITY AND THE KINGDOM BETTER THAN
 ANYONE ELSE COULD
YET HE WEPT
BECAUSE THIS WORLD IS FULL OF PAIN AND REGRET AND
 LOSS AND DEPRESSION AND DEVASTATION
 HE WEPT BECAUSE KNOWING THE END OF THE STORY DOESN'T
 MEAN YOU CAN'T CRY AT THE SAD PARTS.





**Sending you warm
wishes and lots of
love on this Easter
day. May your heart
be filled with joy and
your home with
happiness.**

Happy Easter



Pascha Sunday Pot-Luck

Sunday, May 5, 2024
following the Agape Service
in the Church Hall
12 noon

Contact Ann Athans at 772-971-4458
to let her know what you will bring.

Lamb will be provided.

Saint Nicholas Greek Deli

Lenten items available

We also offer Saint John Commanderia wine for sale as a church offering (special wine used for Holy Communion) \$25 per bottle.

Special orders can be sent by text to Betty Cruz at 772-233-3115 by Monday of each week to be picked up on Sunday after liturgy services during coffee hour.

- Assorted halva: plain, pistachio and chocolate marble
- Taramasalata (prepared)
- Tarama (fish roe)
- Gigantes (lima beans) in a tomato sauce (canned)
- Eggplant in a tomato sauce (canned)
- Dolmades stuffed with rice (canned) - Large cans available
- Ladokouloura - Cretan cookies with sesame
- Rusk crackers
- Kalamata Olives
- Pita bread
- Assorted dry beans (lima beans, fava and lentils)
- Macedonian Tahini
- Elite toast
- Orzo pasta and noodles
- Imported olive oil - Kalamata & Sparta
- Imported honey from Crete
- Preserves
- Sesame candy
- Red egg dye available

Delicious Homemade Cheesecakes available at the Deli for Easter. Stop by to place an order on Sundays after liturgy during coffee hour.

Plain: \$25.00
Strawberry or Cherry: \$30.00



Honor flees away from before the man that runs after it; but he who flees from it, the same will it hunt down, and become to all men a herald of his humility.

- St Isaac the Syrian



Saint Nicholas
Greek Orthodox Church

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Fort Pierce, FL 34981

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Always remember that even the Son of
God and all His friends entered His
kingdom through thorns and crosses.

- St Nikodemos the Hagiorite