



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL ORTHODOX CHURCH



A Message from Father Nick

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For in-depth info about St. Michael and the history of orthodoxy, check out our web site at:	
stmichaelcotuit.org	
www.ancientfaith. com/listen	

How can we celebrate the true spirit of Christmas this year in the face of all that is happening in our country and in the world? The answer can be found in the message which God gave the shepherds that first Christmas Eve.

"But the angel said to them, 'Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Savior was born, Christ the Lord!"

Christmas, my dear friends, is not our reaching out or up to God. Christmas is God reaching down to us. And we respond by believing that at the center of the universe there is an undefeatable power of love on which we can depend and to which we are called to join our lives. That is the true meaning of Christmas...God reaching down to us and we responding with a joyous faith and with love.

All of us are looking for a little joy and happiness in our lives, especially these days with all that is going on in the world. But, you know, you can't find happiness...you cannot capture happiness. Happiness is a gift from God.

Oftentimes we look for joy and happiness in the wrong places. We are constantly straining for happiness but it can never really be found this way. We may find a kind of counterfeit happiness which lasts for a little while, but has no long-term satisfaction. It sometimes takes us a lifetime to learn the secret that chasing after happiness for happiness' sake is a waste

of time. Many times we identify happiness and joy with the cushioned life. A life without sorrow, pain and suffering would guarantee us happiness we think.

A wise man wrote: "A heart of joy is never found in luxuriously coddled lives, but in men and women who achieve and dare, who have tried their powers against antagonisms, who have met even sickness and bereavement and have tempered their souls in fire.

He goes on to say: The unhappiest world conceivable by man would be a world with nothing hard to do, no conflicts to wage for ends worthwhile, a world where courage was not needed and sacrifice was superfluous."

Many times our search for happiness is purely selfish. Our goals are self-centered and our search is self-minded. Sometimes we pursue happiness so hard that we are not aware when it has been given to us. Happiness then is not something that we can achieve as a possession. It is a gift which God gives us. It is His Christmas gift to each and every one of us, to all who will receive it.

But what is this gift? What does Christ provide for us out of which joy and happiness come? Jesus gives us something to believe in, a firm foundation to stand on. He doesn't offer us outer security against the storms of life.

He suffered. He was always at the mercy of his enemies, and they finally put him to death.

He cannot shut out for us the temptations, the tragedies, the illnesses and the sorrows that

Father Nick Cont'd...

come to all of us, Christians and non-Christians. But he does give us something to stand on...a way to overcome. He gives us the inner stability of a dynamic faith. All the pleasures and all the money in the world cannot guarantee that for you.

Now, how do we respond to God's Christmas gift to all of us? Is a response called for? Our response is to accept the good news of Christmas and live it through faith and through love for God and for others. Jesus lived and taught that the highest form of human happiness is found in sharing God's love with those around us. Yes, the real joy of Christmas is in the giving rather than the receiving. We give happiness and receive it back a hundred times over.

My dear friends, Christmas is a joyous time because it links us with the God who came to us as a baby in a manger. Christmas is a joyous time because we are now able to open up more areas of our lives to joy, areas that previously had been kept tightly shut. Christmas is a joyous time because now once again we have a chance to make our faith more real, our hope more real, our love more real—alive and vital and living in Christ.

A wise man once said, "You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father's face and tell Him you have received His Christmas gift."

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Lord God, we thank you for permitting us once again to be participants in the great miracle of Christmas and to be recipients of your most precious gift, salvation through your Son Jesus. O God, grant that this day and always we may be aware of your loving presence, become conscious of your power and protection, and finally know down deep in our hearts and minds and souls the wonder and grace of your peace. For you are the giver of all gifts and the source of all blessings and to you we give thanks and worship, to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. *Amen*

HOLY COMMUNION WILL BE BROUGHT...

To all those confined to their homes, to hospitals, to nursing homes, and other places and who cannot come to Church between now and Christmas. To be sure everyone is covered, please call and notify Father Nick of anyone who wishes to receive this service at (508) 790-1738).

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION...

Is available to all who desire it. Confession will be offered before and after all the worship services listed for the season. Or call Father Nick at (508) 790-1738).

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

- Mend a quarrel
- Ask someone for forgiveness
- Give forgiveness
- Invite a lonely person to dinner
- Visit the sick
- Strengthen a faltering marriage
- Offer hospitality to a foreign student
- Help a poor family
- Go to confession and repent for your sins
- Receive Holy Communion
- Come to the Divine Liturgy with your family
- Make a phone call to someone who needs your friendship
- Pass on a Christmas gift you don't need to someone who does
- Bring Christ's joy to a depressed person
- Be generous
- Be positive
- Let the light of Christ shine through you

REMEMBER THE REASON FOR CHRISTMAS AND MAKE A GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO CHURCH IN GRATITUDE FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF OUR PARISH!

CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY SERVICES

December 24, Saturday Evening

Divine Liturgy and Carols 6:30 p.m.

Festive Christmas Reception following the service.

January 1, Sunday, Feasts of the Circumcision of our Lord and St. Basil the Great

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m., Coffee Hour follows.

January 5, Thursday, Eve of Epiphany

Divine Liturgy and Blessing of the Waters 6:30 p.m.

January 8, Sunday after Epiphany

Divine Liturgy and Church School 10 a.m.

Coffee Hour follows.

January 15, Sunday

Divine Liturgy and Church School 10:00 a.m.

January 22, Sunday

Divine Liturgy and Church School 10:00 a.m.

Coffee Hour. Annual Parish Meeting follows.

OUR PARISH PEOPLE

Baptisms: The son of Mr. & Mrs. Mark John Zevitas was baptized on Sunday, August 7th, 2011 and was named Connor John. The Sponsors were Steven Theodore Zevitas and Alyse Audrey Demary.

The daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Agostino Ferretti was baptized on Sunday, October 2, 2011 and named Valencia Ana. The Sponsors were Audry Tymchyshya and Natalia Lopichak.

The son of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Howard Bell was baptized on Saturday, September 17, 2011 and was named Finnegan James. The Sponsors were Terry Griffith and Elaine Griffith.

MAY GOD BLESS THEM WITH HIS DIVINE GRACE ALWAYS!



Finnegan James Bell with parents Johanna & Tom Bell, and godparents Elaine & Terry Griffith...daughters of parishioners Tom & Kathy Themistos.



Chrismation: Patricia Louise Mosca was received into holy Orthodoxy on Sunday, September 4, 2011. Her Sponsors were Anna Valtsakis and John Petercuskie.

GOD BLESS YOU AND WELCOME!

CHRISTMAS ADVENT BEGINS

Orthodox Christians observe a 40-day fast period of preparation prior to Christmas. During this time we are asked to abstain from meat and other foods as much as possible. In a time of affluence and abundance, it is necessary to observe periods of self-denial in order to see life in proper perspective. Spiritual awareness and renewal enters our lives as we strive to follow God's will through prayer and spiritual askesis. During this Christmas Advent season, remember also to go to confession. Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and Holy Communion bring us close to God.

DONATIONS FOR POINSETTIAS

The church will be decorated again this year with beautiful wreaths and poinsettias. If anyone would like to contribute a plant for the health of a loved one, please see Marilyn George.

WOMEN'S GROUP, Anna Valtsakis

The Bake Sale on November 20th following church services was very successful. We raised approximately \$700 and everything sold out! Not bad for a one-hour Sale! The Women's Group voted on Sunday, November 20 to donate \$6,000 to the Building Fund earmarked for our new kitchen. Kudos for the Women.

CHAIRMAN, Marilyn George

During our last Parish Council meeting, a variety of subjects were discussed. Natalie Leva gave a report on the Sunday School Christmas projects. Lorraine Reiley reported on our Christmas Outreach program through the Salvation Army called "Dress a Live Doll". Thanks to all our generous participants, we fulfilled the children's dreams, especially the skateboard the young boy requested. Lorraine would like us to step up our "Food for Hungry" food drives, with collections planned for the first Sunday of every month.

Discussions are ongoing about the Choir, Women's Group, Fund Raising, and the wonderful construction progress to date of our Social Hall. Finally, it was determined to place added emphasis on Publicity and Evangelism, by reaching out and extending a warm invitation to all Christians and "wandering Orthodox" of any ethnicity to join our active exceptional congregation. Any suggestions given to our Council members would be most welcome on this subject.

The Council members wish you *all a joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

STEWARDSHIP, Lorraine Reiley

All of our members have recently received their annual stewardship letter. We are taking this opportunity to extend membership to our broader community.

St. Michael has seen many wonderful changes over the years, most recently the near completion of our basement renovation, thanks to our beloved priest, members and friends. We are seeking to grow our core community of members who are committed to the challenge of maintaining our unique Pan-Orthodox presence on Cape Cod. We invite you to fill in the enclosed stewardship form and share with us the vision of spreading Orthodoxy.

PRAYER AND HEALTH

A study was done by Thomas Oxman and his colleagues at the University of Texas Medical School. It examined the effects of social support and spiritual practice on patients undergoing heart surgery. It found that those with large amounts of both factors exhibited a mortality rate one-seventh of those who did not. Another was done at St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. It examined links between church attendance and physical health. The researchers found that patients who attended church regularly and had a strong faith practice were less likely to die and had stronger overall health. These are not isolated examples. Dr. Larry Dossey, in Prayer Is Good Medicine, says that there are over 1,200 scientific studies demonstrating the link between prayer, health and longevity.

PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

Our parish was well represented at the PLC on June 17, 2011 at the Hyannis Resort and Conference Center. In attendance were Father Nick and Presvytera Effie, Marilyn George, Anna Valtsakis, Patricia Mosca, Elaine Rautenberg and Dorothy Petercuskie.



Our Sunday School

PLYMOUTH SYMPHONY CONCERT IN MEMORY OF 9-11



Attending a 9-11 Memorial concert at the Plymouth Library: Harry & Carole Kanavos, Anna Valtsakis and a frequent visitor to St. Michael, Director Steven Karidoyanes of the Plymouth Philharmonic. Also attending was Pat Mosca.

ST. MICHAEL ANNUAL PICNIC HELD ON CHURCH GROUNDS AUGUST 21, 2010



Picnic raffle winner and new choir member Vera Shipunova with Father Nick and Jasmine Andrews.

2012 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE FORM

Pease provide us with a few of your thoughts regarding a Vision for Our Parish...

1. I Gladly Volunteer My Time and Talents:

I am interested in serving the Church in the following ways (check all that apply)

<i>Church School</i>	<i>Altar Servers</i>	<i>Fundraising</i>
<i>Choir & Chanters</i>	<i>Facilities/Maintenance</i>	<i>Outreach</i>
<i>Building Committee</i>	<i>Stewardship Ministry</i>	<i>Other</i>

2. With boldness and faith, I make my pledge to the Stewardship Program of St. Michael:

Recognizing that all I possess, I hold in trust from Almighty God, I will contribute the amount noted below as a minimum gift in 2012 to support the work of Christ's Holy Church at the parish of St. Michael. With faith and love towards my Church, I cheerfully make this pledge to St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church.

Total Amount of my Pledge for the calendar year 2012: \$ _____

(To be paid) Weekly Monthly Quarterly Annually

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Telephone #: _____

E-Mail address (if applicable): _____

3. Do you belong to another Orthodox Church? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please list Parish _____

Please fill out this form and return as soon as possible to:

**ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL ORTHODOX CHURCH
62 MAIN STREET
COTUIT, MA 02635**

Thank you and God Bless!

ST. MICHAEL ANNUAL PICNIC
HELD ON CHURCH GROUNDS AUGUST 21, 2010



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St. Michael The Archangel Orthodox Church
62 Main Street
Cotuit, MA 02635



Church Hours

Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
Services in English

Rev. Dr. Nicholas C. Manikas

Choir Director: Margo Irwin
Sunday School: Natalie Leva
and Julia Henderson

Services in English

THE BUTTERFLY

A man found a cocoon for a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and could go no farther. Then the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. Something was strange. The butterfly had a swollen body and shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened. In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and deformed wings. It was never able to fly. What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand, was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the small opening of the cocoon are God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through all our life without any obstacles, that would cripple us. We would not be as strong as we could have been. Not only that, we could never fly!