



# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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**BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 8, 2013**

## A Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us!

## Helping a Needy Family

For the next three Sundays, you are invited to make a donation to help buy Christmas presents for a needy family. If you would like to help, please earmark your check "Gifts for Family".



## The Post-Communion Prayers / Chapel Cleaning

If not staying in the chapel to listen to the post-communion prayers, read during the veneration of the Cross, please make your exit as quietly as possible so as not to disrupt the service. Additionally, it is requested that only adults blow out the candles and clean-up the chapel, and only after the prayers are finished. Thank you!

## The December Calendar

Please note that the schedule of services for Christmas does not include the Midnight service / festal meal this year; the reason is to make it easier for everyone to share in the high holy day.

## Are You Interested?

in becoming an official member of Christ the Savior? Are you curious if you are already listed as a member of the parish? Do you have questions about becoming an Orthodox Christian or joining our parish? If so, please speak with Fr. John about it. All are welcome at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church!



## Appreciation is Extended

to those who stay after on Sundays to help clean the chapel, hall, bathrooms, and grounds. Thank you and may God bless you!

## About Scheduling Confession Before Christmas

With all the hustle and bustle that revolves around Christmas preparations, let's not forget to prepare our innermost chamber for Christ.

## 2014 Calendars & Pocket Planners

The new calendars and pocket planners are available for pickup at the candle stand. Please earmark your payment "Bookstore". The calendars are \$5.00 and the pocket planners \$4.00.

## Safety First

Everyone is asked to be particularly attentive to safety, especially in the parking lot. Parents are asked to please stay with their children at all times or leave them in the supervision of another adult. First-aid boxes are available in both bathrooms.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

#### **24<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost**

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hour

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Vespers

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Vespers

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>

#### **St. Herman of Alaska**

9:00a.m. Akathist

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

5:00p.m. No Class  
 6:00p.m. Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

#### **25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost**

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hour

*The Church is not here to fulfill our "spiritual needs," but to change the very nature of those "needs."*

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

### READER SCHEDULE

#### **Sunday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Joanne Patrick

#### **Sunday, Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Gabriela Jones



CASH FLOWS THROUGH 11/30/13					CASH FLOWS IN DECEMBER 2013					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	ASSETS & LIABILITIES – 12/8		
Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Checking	Overdue	Due 2/2014
62,318	55,022	45,652	27,119	+25,892	2,168	3,547	600	0	-779	+2,035	0	-3,663

## **Patriarch John X Speaks on the Abducted Nuns of Maaloula, Syria**

*From Antiochian.org*

His Beatitude John X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, issued the following remarks on Dec. 5, 2013 at a press conference in Balamand, Lebanon:

Amidst the calamities besetting Syria and the bloodshed afflicting our people and amidst the uncertainty that still surrounds the fate of our metropolitans Boulos and Youhanna in Aleppo, it is with deep pain that the Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East has received news of the abduction of her daughters, nuns and orphans of the Monastery of Saint Thekla in Maaloula on December 2, 2013 and their being transported to Yabroud. Because our initial attempts to obtain the release of our abducted daughters did not achieve the desired outcome, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East calls upon the international community and all governments to intervene and make efforts to release them safely. She likewise calls upon the conscience of all humanity and upon the spark of living conscience that the Creator, may He be exalted, sowed in the souls of all those who worship God, including the kidnapers, to release our sisters the nuns and the girls of the orphanage.

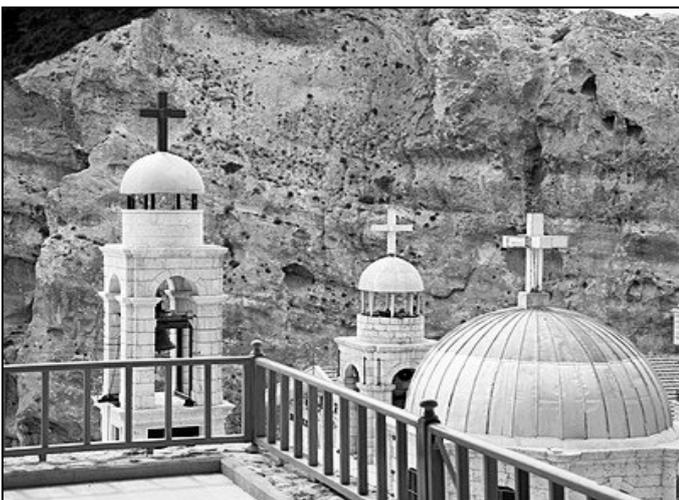
Our appeal to the international community: Although we are grateful for all the feelings of solidarity, we no longer need denunciation, condemnations, or "feelings of concern" about the assault on human dignity that is occurring, because all this is engraved in the conscience of every one of us. Today, however, we need concrete actions, not words. We do not want voices of condemnation from decision-makers, whether regional or international, but rather efforts, pressure and action leading to the release of those whose only fault was their clinging to their monastery and refusing to leave it.



We reiterate our call to stop the logic of conflict in Syria and replace it with the logic of peaceful dialogue and not to use stalling the start of dialogue to make gains on the ground because Syria is bleeding and with her too our hearts. Let all know that one drop of innocent blood shed on this earth is holier and more precious than all the slogans in the world. Let all understand the the bells of our churches, we the Christians of the Middle East, which were hung and rang in time immemorial, shall continue to ring out and be heard as the sound of our love and our peace for others, with their various religions, throughout the world.

The cruelty of the present days shall not uproot us from our land, because it is our being, our essence and a piece of our heart. Given the new circumstances exemplified by the abduction of the nuns and orphans of Maaloula, with regret we announce the suspension of our official patriarchal pastoral visit to our children and parishes in the countries of the Arabian Gulf, which had been scheduled between the sixth and seventeenth of December 2013, and our return to Damascus to follow closely all efforts and communications related to this latest incident. I greet all of our children in those countries and all those who labored to prepare the schedule for the aforementioned visit. I hope that my visit to them will be at the nearest opportunity. You, our children in the Gulf, you whose sweet and honored faces, dear to my heart I was eagerly looking forward to meeting tomorrow, I apologize to you all for suspending this visit after you had made all arrangements for its success. I pray for your health, blessing and success. May God protect Syria, Lebanon and the Middle East and the people of the Middle East.

Thank you to the media who have made it possible for Antioch's pain and Antioch's hope to be heard in all the world.





by Fr. Hans Jacobse

*What happens when we try to secularize Christmas, and why Orthodox Christians need to remain faithful to their traditions.*

In the Christian tradition of both east and west, the twelve days of Christmas refer to the period from Christmas Day to Theophany. The days leading up to Christmas were for preparation; a practice affirmed in the Orthodox tradition by the Christmas fast that runs from November 15 to Christmas day. The celebration of Christmas did not begin until the first of the twelve days.

As our culture became more commercialized, the period of celebration shifted from Thanksgiving to Christmas Day. Christmas celebration increasingly conforms to the shopping cycle while the older tradition falls by the wayside. It's an worrisome shift because as the tradition dims, the knowledge that the period of preparation imparted diminishes with it.

Our Orthodox traditions — from fasting cycles to worship — exist to teach us how to live in Christ. The traditions impart discipline. These disciplines are never an end in themselves but neither can life in Christ be sustained apart from them.

The traditions only make sense only when they have the Gospel as their reference. If we forget that these traditions are given to us to help us lay hold of Christ, then they appear to be superfluous and the disciplines they encourage us to do seem to serve no real purpose. We start to evaluate the discipline by the values of the dominant culture — by a cost-benefit calculus, rather than seeing them as ways to morally reorient ourselves towards Christ.

Instead of preparing for the birth of Christ through inward reorientation, we follow the direction of the dominant culture and skip any preparation altogether. We party instead of fast. We get caught up in the commercial energy of the season rather than wait on the Spirit of God.

It's a dangerous path. Our culture is becoming increasingly secularized; the sacred dimension of creation is slipping from view. This loss of this sacred sensibility has grave ramifications for society

that are expressed in many different ways such as the vulgarization of popular culture or the reduction of an unborn child to a commodity. If this view prevails our culture will inevitably view man as nothing more than an animal or a machine.

But man is more than an animal or a machine. The scriptures reveal man is created in the image and likeness of God, a phrase that means that man is not complete unless he partakes of God — God must be part of man's life. This longing — this innate knowledge that man is created for God — never leaves man although a person can bury it if he so chooses.

A secularized mind is blind to the inherent holiness of life. Maintaining our traditions is one way to avoid this debilitating malady. Christmas is not just "Jesus' birthday" (an impoverished notion heard more and more even among Orthodox faithful), but much more.

The birth of Christ and His baptism ought never to be divorced. Both events define the Christmas season. It imparts to the Christian the knowledge that Christ's coming into the world and Christ's sanctification of the waters makes our new life possible — a sonship by adoption accomplished through baptism.

When the link between Christmas and Theophany is broken (and by neglecting the proper preparation we break it), the cultural memory of the promise of new birth expresses itself in weakened and ultimately insufficient cultural forms. These forms function as a new tradition.

Religion is not the product of culture; religion is the source, writes philosopher Russell Kirk.

*"It's from an association in a cult, a body of worshipers, that human community grows...when belief in the cult has been wretchedly enfeebled, the culture will decay swiftly. The material order rests on the spiritual order."*

Orthodox Christianity can contribute to the recovery of the moral foundation of American culture by imparting knowledge that can strengthen and deepen that foundation. It won't happen however, if the Orthodox faithful adopt the practices of the dominant culture in place of their own tradition.



## **VIRGIN-MARTYR LUCY OF SYRACUSE**

*Commemorated December 13<sup>th</sup>*

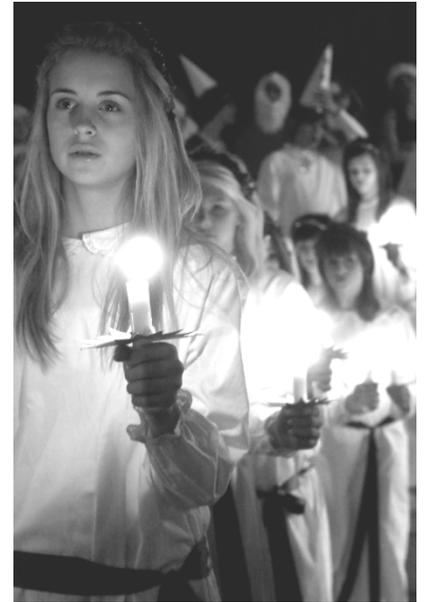
Saint Lucy was born in Syracuse, Sicily during the reign of Diocletian. She distributed her wealth to the poor, and made a vow of virginity. Since she refused to marry him, a rejected suitor denounced her to the prefect Paschasius as a Christian, and she was arrested. She was sentenced to be defiled in a brothel, but with God's help she preserved her purity.

Then the pagans attempted to burn her alive, but she was not harmed by the fire. Finally, she was killed by a sword thrust to the throat.

The name Lucy (Lucia) is derived for the Latin word for light (lux), and so she is often invoked for afflictions of the eyes. There is a tradition that she was blinded by her torturers, and the church of San Giovanni Maggiore in Naples even claims to possess her eyes.

Today's saint should not be confused with St Lucy of Campania (July 6).

St. Lucia's Day is celebrated most commonly in Italy and in Scandinavia, with each emphasizing a different aspect of the story. In traditional celebrations, Saint Lucy comes as a young woman with lights and sweets. It is one of the very few saint days observed in Scandinavia. In some forms, a procession is headed by one girl wearing a crown of candles (or lights), while others in the procession hold only a single candle each.



## **REFLECTION ON ST. NICHOLAS AND GODLY ZEAL**

*By St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

There are three types of praiseworthy zeal: zeal in cleansing oneself of sinful desires and thoughts, zeal for the truth of the Faith, and zeal for God's justice among men. All three of these filled the soul of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker to perfection. He showed zeal in purifying himself throughout his life, vigilantly guarding over his heart. He especially showed zeal for the truth of the Faith at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325) when he entered into a fearful confrontation with Arius. His zeal for God's justice among men was seen particularly in two notable events, when on each occasion he saved three innocent men from the punishment of death. Once, in his absence from the city of Myra, the avaricious commander Eustathius condemned three men to be beheaded, receiving a bribe for this from some of their enemies. Informed of this, St. Nicholas returned to Myra with the greatest haste. The condemned men had already been brought to the place of execution, and the executioner had already raised the

sword over the innocent men. At that moment, Nicholas grabbed the sword, pulled it out of the executioner's hand, and freed the condemned men. Afterward, he rebuked the commander Eustathius and brought him to shame and repentance. In a similar way, three imperial commanders—Nepotian, Ursus and Herpylion—were slandered before Eulavius the Eparch of Constantinople and before the emperor himself. The emperor signed their death sentence. On the eve of their execution, the three commanders prayed to God, saying: "O God of Nicholas, deliver us innocent ones from death!" That night, St. Nicholas appeared to both the emperor and the eparch in a dream, rebuked them for this injustice, and ordered them to free the three commanders from prison immediately. The next day, the emperor and eparch each related to the other the same dream and they immediately freed the commanders, both from the death sentence and from prison.

