

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

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Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, February 11, 18
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, February 12, 19
Divine Liturgy: 10am

**Coffee and fellowship will
follow the service**

*The above services are at St.
Olympia Church
34 North Main Street
Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address
St. Olympia Orthodox Church
PO Box 122 Canton, NY13617*

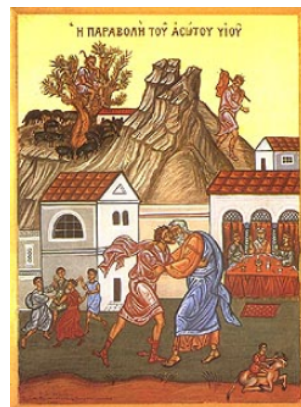
**Sunday of the Prodigal Son
February 12**

*Brothers, our purpose is to know the power of God's goodness.
For when the Prodigal Son abandoned his sin,
he hastened to the refuge of his father.*

*That good man embraced him and welcomed him;
he killed the fatted calf and celebrated with heavenly joy.*

*Let us learn from this example
to offer thanks to the Father, Who loves all men,
and to the glorious Victim, the Savior of our souls!*

Vespers, Lord I Call



*Like the Prodigal Son, I too have returned
after spending my whole life away from home.
I have scattered the wealth that You gave me, O merciful Father.
Accept me as I repent, O God, and have mercy on me!
Vespers, Litya*

Saint Nicholas, Equal of the Apostles, Archbishop of Japan **February 16**

Saint Nicholas, Enlightener of Japan, was born Ivan Dimitrievich Kasatkin on August 1, 1836 in the village of Berezovsk, Belsk district, Smolensk diocese, where his father served as deacon. At the age of five he lost his mother. He completed the Belsk religious school, and afterwards the Smolensk Theological Seminary. In 1857 Ivan Kasatkin entered the Saint Peterburg Theological Academy. On June 24, 1860, in the academy temple of the Twelve Apostles, Bishop Nectarius tonsured him with the name Nicholas.

On June 29, the Feast of the foremost Apostles Peter and Paul, the monk Nicholas was ordained deacon. The next day, on the altar feast of the academy church, he was ordained to the holy priesthood. Later, at his request, Father Nicholas was assigned to Japan as head of the consular church in the city of Hakodate.

At first, the preaching of the Gospel in Japan seemed completely impossible. In Father Nicholas's own words: "the Japanese of the time looked upon foreigners as beasts, and on Christianity as a villainous sect, to which only villains and sorcerers could belong." He spent eight years in studying the country, the language, manners and customs of the people among whom he would preach.

In 1868, the flock of Father Nicholas numbered about twenty Japanese. At the end of 1869 Hieromonk Nicholas reported in person to the Synod in Peterburg about his work. A decision was made, on January 14, 1870, to form a special Russian Spiritual Mission for preaching the Word of God among the pagan Japanese. Father Nicholas was elevated to the rank of archimandrite and appointed as head of this Mission.

Returning to Japan after two years in Russia, he transferred some of the responsibility for the Hakodate flock to Hieromonk Anatolius, and began his missionary work in Tokyo. In 1871 there was a persecution of Christians in Hakodate. Many were arrested (among them, the first Japanese Orthodox priest Paul Sawabe). Only in 1873 did the persecution abate somewhat, and the free preaching of Christianity became possible. In this year Archimandrite Nicholas began the construction of a stone building in Tokyo which housed a church, a school for fifty men, and later a religious school, which became a seminary in 1878.

In 1874, Bishop Paul of Kamchatka arrived in Tokyo to ordain as priests several Japanese candidates recommended by Archimandrite Nicholas. At the Tokyo Mission, there were four schools: for catechists, for women, for church servers, and a seminary. At Hakodate there were two separate schools for boys and girls.

In the second half of 1877, the Mission began regular publication of the journal "Church Herald." By the year 1878 there already 4115 Christians in Japan, and there were a number of Christian communities. Church services and classes in Japanese, the publication of religious and moral books permitted the Mission to attain such results in a short time. Archimandrite Nicholas petitioned the Holy Synod in December of 1878 to provide a bishop for Japan.

Archimandrite Nicholas was consecrated bishop on March 30, 1880 in the Trinity Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky Lavra. Returning to Japan, he resumed his apostolic work with increased fervor. He completed construction on the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Tokyo, he translated the service books, and compiled a special Orthodox theological dictionary in the Japanese language.

Great hardship befell the saint and his flock at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. For his ascetic labor during these difficult years, he was elevated to the rank of Archbishop.

In 1911, half a century had passed since the young hieromonk Nicholas had first set foot on Japanese soil. At that time there were 33,017 Christians in 266 communities of the Japanese Orthodox Church, including 1 Archbishop, 1 bishop, 35 priests, 6 deacons, 14 singing instructors, and 116 catechists.

On February 3, 1912, Archbishop Nicholas departed peacefully to the Lord at the age of seventy-six. The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church glorified him on April 10, 1970, since the saint had long been honored in Japan as a righteous man, and a prayerful intercessor before the Lord.



Saint Nicholas, Equal of the Apostles, Enlightener of Japan

February 16

*O holy saint Nicholas the enlightener of Japan,
you share a dignity and the throne of the Apostles;
you are a wise and faithful servant of Christ,
a temple chosen by the Divine Spirit,
a vessel overflowing with the love of Christ.
O hierarch equal to the Apostles,
pray to the Life-Creating Trinity
for all your flock and for the whole world.*

Troparion

Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)
February 19

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book *Great Lent* (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.



*When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory,
all things shall tremble
and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat;
the books shall be opened and the hidden things disclosed!
Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire,
and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand,
Most Righteous Judge!*

Kontakion

UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

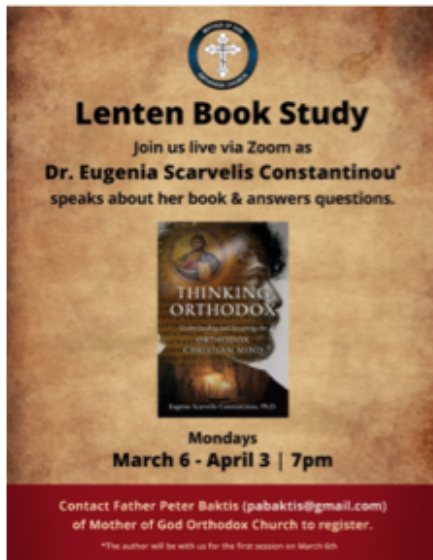
Diocesan Council Meeting

Thursday, February 23 at 11:00 AM
Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL'S NEXT VISIT TO OUR PARISH – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29 FOR PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY

LENTEN STUDY POSSIBILITIES

(check the Diocesan website for more information www.nynjoca.org)



WEEKDAY VESPERS AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA Weekdays at 4 PM

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead

*He who prays must hunger after, must ardently desire those blessings
—especially the spiritual ones—
the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing, the sanctification, the strengthening in virtue,
for which he prays, otherwise it will be a useless waste of words.
The same applies to thanking and praising the Lord,
hunger and thirst to constantly thank and praise the Lord,
for everything comes from Him,
everything is the gift of His goodness and mercy.*

St John of Kronstadt