

THE EKPHONESIS

November 2021— Vol 1. No. 1



The Parish Newsletter of
Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church
Liberty Hill, Texas
www.annunciationtx.com

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Birthdays: Zechariah (11/11)

November 4

Bible Study – 7 pm (Hill Country Smokehouse)

November 6/7 (October 25 OS) #### TIME CHANGE SATURDAY NIGHT ####

Martyrs Marcian and Martyrios

Saturday – Great Vespers 6:30 pm

Sunday – 3rd and 6th Hours – 9:40 am

Sunday – Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

November 11

Bible Study – 7 pm (Hill Country Smokehouse)

November 13/14 (November 1 OS)

The 3 New Great Hierarchs (Photios, Gregory Palamas & Mark of Ephesus)

Saturday – Great Vespers 6:30 pm

Sunday – 3rd and 6th Hours – 9:40 am

Sunday – Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday School

November 21 (November 8 OS)

Synaxis of the Holy Archangels

Sunday – 3rd and 6th Hours – 9:40 am

Sunday – Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

November 27/28 (November 15 OS)

Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Habib

Nativity Fast Begins

Saturday – Great Vespers 6:30 pm

Sunday – 3rd and 6th Hours – 9:40 am

Sunday – Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday School

Clergy Schedules:

Bp. Irineos will be in Greece from November 17-23. Fr. Elias will serve liturgy that weekend. We will not have vespers on November 20.

Confessions may be heard on Saturdays after Great Vespers, on Sundays before 9:40 a.m. or by appointment.

The Ekphonesis

Welcome to our new parish newsletter, *The Ekphonesis*. Ekphonesis is Greek for the Exclamation – literally “shouting out” – the closing prayer that the priest says at the end of any litany. This newsletter will be published monthly – God willing before the first Sunday of the month – and should help in planning for the services, feasts and fasts of the coming month! We will still send a weekly email, probably shorter, with weekly reminders and any changes to the schedule. If there is anything you would like to see covered in the newsletter, or if you have articles, recipes, prayer requests or other matters to share, please let Bp. Irineos or Fr. Elias know!

November is an exciting time in our jurisdiction and in the Church generally. November sees the semi-annual meeting of our Holy Synod in Greece for the Feast of the Holy Archangels. The Feast is served on November 21 (November 8 OS). Bp. Irineos will travel to Greece for the Divine Liturgy of the feast and the synodal meeting. Fr. Elias will serve on that Sunday. The following Sunday (November 28) marks the beginning of the Nativity season as we enter into the Nativity Fast.

As we prepare for the Nativity Fast, the Adult Catechism class will be spending the next few weeks in Orthopraxis study on fasting in the Church.



Synodal Cathedral in Avlona, Greece

"A man who is truly humble is not troubled when he is wronged and he says nothing to justify himself against the injustice, but he accepts slander as truth; he does not attempt to persuade men that he is calumniated, but he begs forgiveness."

St. Isaac the Syrian - *The Ascetical Homilies*

Thanksgiving – The Most Orthodox of Holidays?

Some commentators remark that, of all the secular holidays, Thanksgiving is the “most Orthodox” because of its emphasis on giving thanks to God. There is more than a little truth in this, but there is also a danger. The danger lies in the idea that setting aside a day for thanksgiving is somehow a worthy achievement. Sadly, this day is also now tarred with the crass commercialism of “Black Friday” which appears to have moved to Thursday afternoon or evening. This is a distraction from the thanks due to God. Remember that as Orthodox Christians we strive to live our lives fulling in communion with God, which puts us in a condition of constant prayer and constant thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us by our Creator. So while, indeed, there is much to find praiseworthy in the secular establishment of a holiday for giving thanks to God, it marks what for us should be a regular occasion, not a holiday!

On Giving Thanks to the Creator—from St. Basil the Great

As thou takest thy seat at table, pray. As thou liftest the loaf, offer thanks to the Giver. When thou sustainest thy bodily weakness with wine, remember Him Who supplies thee with this gift, to make thy heart glad and to comfort thy infirmity. Has thy need for taking food passed away? Let not the thought of thy Benefactor pass away too. As thou art putting on thy tunic, thank the Giver of it. As thou wrappest thy cloak about thee, feel yet greater love to God, Who alike in summer and in winter has given us coverings convenient for us, at once to preserve our life, and to cover what is unseemly. Is the day done? Give thanks to Him Who has given us the sun for our daily work, and has provided for us a fire to light up the night, and to serve the rest of the needs of life. Let night give the other occasion of prayer. When thou lookest up to heaven and gazest at the beauty of the stars, pray to the Lord of the visible world; pray to God the Arch-artificer of the universe, Who in wisdom hath made them all. When thou seest all nature sunk in sleep, then again worship Him Who gives us even against our wills release from the continuous strain of toil, and by a short refreshment restores us once again to the vigour of our strength. Let not night herself be all, as it were, the special and peculiar property of sleep. Let not half thy life be useless through the senselessness of slumber. Divide the time of night between sleep and prayer. Nay, let thy slumbers be themselves experiences in piety; for it is only natural that our sleeping dreams should be for the most part echoes of the anxieties of the day. As have been our conduct and pursuits, so will inevitably be our dreams. Thus wilt thou pray without ceasing; if thou prayest not only in words, but unitest thyself to God through all the course of life and so thy life be made one ceaseless and uninterrupted prayer."

The Winter Pascha, Chapter 20: The Two Comings of Christ

The following is an excerpt from The Winter Pascha, by Fr. Thomas Hopko

During the Christmas prefeast season, the connection between the first coming of God's Son as the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God who takes upon Himself the sins of the World, and His second coming as the triumphant King and Judge of the universe is clearly implied in the songs, hymns and lections. The Old Testament prophecies read before the Nativity quite specifically proclaim the messianic age which Jesus is born to bring, but which He will manifest in power only at the end of history. And several verses which are sung during the season directly refer to the interrelationship between the Master's two comings.

*Christ our Judge commands us to be vigilant./ We wait expectantly for His visitation,
For He comes to be born of a Virgin.*

*At Your awesome second coming, O Christ,/ Number me with the sheep at Your right hand,/ For
You took up Your abode in the flesh to save us.*

*At Your first coming to us, O Christ,/ You desired to save the race of Adam;/ When You come
again to judge us,/ Show mercy on those who honor Your Holy Nativity.*

The Christmas prefeast hymns consciously refer to the hymns of the services of Holy Week before Pascha. What is effected at these services is a sort of "triple connection." Christ's Nativity, with His Epiphany in the Jordan, is referred to His Passion and Resurrection, which is then referred to His Coming at the end of the ages. The entire Mystery of Christ is placed before the believers for their contemplation and communion.

Christians live between the two comings of Christ. They remember His first coming to be sacrificed. They anticipate His second coming to reign. This is vividly portrayed in traditional Orthodox church buildings where the "royal gates" of the icon screen in front of the altar table are flanked by the icons of the Theotokos and Child on the one side, and the Lord Jesus in glory on the other. The icons which frame the Orthodox altar are images of the two comings of Christ. Mary is not alone in her icon; she is holding the Christ Child, who is not shown as a baby, but as the Son of God incarnate "in the form of a slave... in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7). This is the icon of Christ's first coming. And the icon on the right of the doors is not a picture of Jesus as He was on the earth. It is His image in glory as King and Lord, the icon of His second coming.

The two comings of Christ are held together in Christian thought, action, and prayer at all times. They cannot be separated. When they are, it is the end of Christian faith, life and worship. The first coming without the second is a meaningless tragedy. The second coming without the first is an absurd impossibility. Jesus is born to bring God's kingdom. He dies to prove His kingship. He rises to establish his reign. He comes again in glory to share it with His people. In the kingdom of God there are no subjects. All rule with the risen Messiah. He came, and is coming, for this purpose alone.

KID'S CORNER



The Feast Day of the Holy Myrrh Streaming Saint Demetrios is celebrated on October 26, which is November 8 on the civil calendar. Saint Demetrios was a soldier who was martyred for his faith in the year 306 A.D.

KID'S CORNER

The
WordSearch.com

Holy Mysteries Word Search

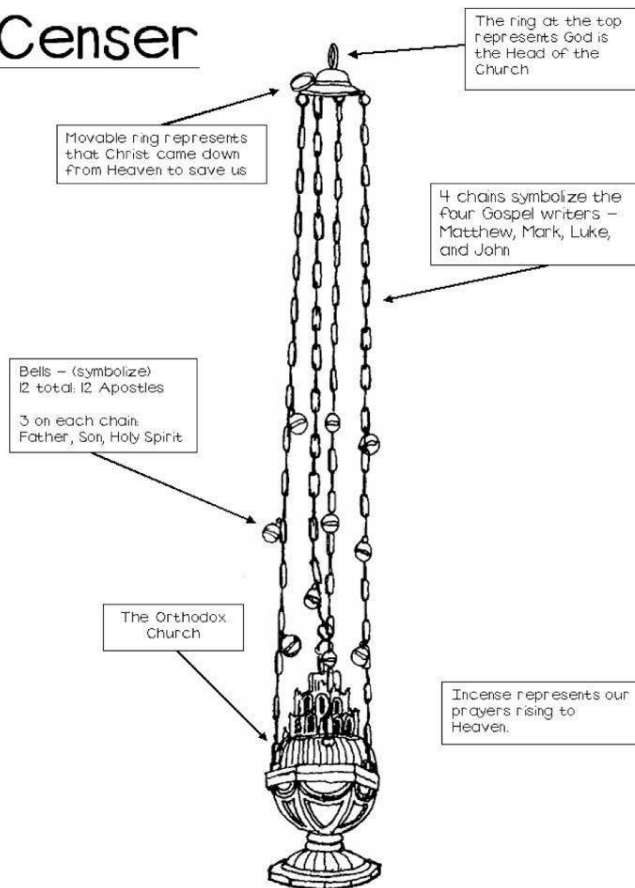
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ORDINATION
MARRIAGE
COMMUNION
GRACE
MYSTERIES
SACRAMENTS
CHRISMATION
PRIEST
UNCTION
BAPTISM
GOD
CONFESSION
HOLY
REPENTANCE

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2933748/>

Sunday School Classes will be the 2nd and 4th Sunday of November. We will continue our study of the Holy Mysteries, focusing on Chrismation and Confession.

Censer



The Use of Incense in the Church

In our Orthodox church, we burn incense in a metal vessel that hangs on three chains and has a sliding cover to regulate the burning of charcoal. The whole apparatus is called a censer. On the chains are twelve small bells, signifying the Disciples.

We put grains of incense on burning charcoal in the censer with a prayer, "Incense do we offer unto Thee, O Christ our God, as a savor of spiritual fragrance, having received it upon Thy altar above the heavens, send down upon us, in return, the gift of Thy Holy Spirit." Incense is a mix of spices and gums that we burn during services to produce fragrant smoke. It is quite likely that incense was used from the beginning of Christian

worship since its use was common in Jewish worship in the Temple at Jerusalem.

The burning incense symbolizes prayer. In Vespers we sing "Let my prayer arise in Thy sight as incense and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice" as the Church is censured. Symbolically, the incense represents prayer ascending to God. "An angel came and stood at the altar, with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden Altar before the Throne of God; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the Saints from the hand of the angel before God." (Revelation 8: 3-4). We remember that Christ received frankincense as one of the gifts of the Magi (Matthew 2:11).

In our liturgy we burn incense to symbolize:

- Worship of God who is present in the Temple and in the Eucharist.

- Prayer rising to God like the smoke.
- The Grace of the Holy Spirit, which God pours upon us as incense pours fragrance throughout the Church.

The Church censes icons and other Holy things to honor God who crowns these saints in heaven, who worked wonders through them here on earth, and who sanctified and glorified their bodies; and to demonstrate our devotion to these special friends and servants of God called Saints.

We cense bishops and priests to honor in them Jesus Christ, whom they represent and with whose sacred character they are clothed.

We cense the faithful in order to honor in you, as you were made in the image of God and His likeness was imprinted on you at Baptism and to honor you as temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6). When you are censed, you should bow in the same manner as when receiving a blessing, rather than cross yourself.

Theologically, censing is very important. Orthodoxy is focused on theosis, on “becoming like God,” not in Essence but through God’s Energies (as great writers like St John of Damascus and St Gregory Palamas made clear), which are imparted to us in myriad ways but chiefly through the sacraments. We cense the icons first because they are the people among us whom we venerate as having received theosis in high degree; we cense ourselves because we are in process, throughout this life, of becoming more and more God-like by grace. In a sense, you may also see censing people as a wake-up call: Recognize that you are made in the image of God and that you are being restored to that image and likeness through Christ who is at work in you through the Spirit to become a “partaker in the divine nature” (II Peter). Therefore, we cense the departed in the funeral rites to honor their bodies, made holy at Baptism, and to offer prayer for the repose of their souls.

Whenever the priest is censing, the people should stand and be attentive. When we cense the church, please note that you do not make the sign of the cross. When the priest is going through the church the first time around, he is censing the icons and not the people present at worship. This is also true, but more obvious, for the smaller censings during the Epistle and at the Cherubic Hymn. When the priest censes the people, however, it is appropriate to bow your head, as you would when you receive a blessing during the liturgy.

FASTING RECIPES

Recipe: Quinoa with Herbs & Green Onions

Quinoa (the name is derived from the Spanish spelling of the Quechua name kinwa) originated in the Andean region of Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, where it was successfully domesticated 3,000 to 4,000 years ago for human consumption, though archaeological evidence shows a non-domesticated association with pastoral herding some 5,200 to 7,000 years ago. It is a pseudo-cereal rather than a true cereal, or grain, because it is not a member of the true grass family. As a chenopod, quinoa is closely related to species such as beetroots, spinach, and tumbleweeds. One of the best reasons to enjoy quinoa is because of its high protein content. Quinoa seeds also contain essential amino acids like lysine and good quantities of calcium, phosphorus, and iron.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa
- 2 cups vegetable stock or water
- ½ cup hothouse cucumber, diced
- ½ cup tomato, diced
- 2 tablespoons red onion, diced
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 teaspoon chopped jalapeño
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1. Rinse and then cook the quinoa according to package directions, using stock or water. Let cool completely.
2. In a large bowl, combine the quinoa with the remaining ingredients. Toss to mix thoroughly. Serve chilled. Serves 4. ☞

FINANCIALS AND ATTENDANCE

OCTOBER ATTENDANCE

Total Attendance	91
Vespers Attendance	15
New Visitors:	4

OCTOBER FINANCIALS

Income

Tithes	\$1590
Bookstore Sales	\$195

Expenses

Insurance	\$214
Operating Expenses	\$258.60
Tithe to Diocese	\$155.40
Benevolences	\$200

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray each day for the catechumens: Jessica, Anny and Ryan, Dan and Christina, Ashley, Miranda and Ryan and Jacob. Pray also for Anny's husband, Ted.

Pray for Bp. Irineos for safe travels on his trip to Greece. Pray for Fr. Elias and Presbyt-
era Theodosia for safety on their travels to the parish for services.

Pray for the health of Barbara W., one of the founders of the parish.



Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church

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