

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church**  
**217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602**  
**Phone.....570-645-2772**  
**OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org**

**Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic**

Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky

**Sunday, December 4, 2022**

Choir Director: Wash King

**25<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (11<sup>th</sup> of Luke)**

*Glory Be to Jesus Christ!*

*Glory Be Forever!*

***Services:***

- Sunday, December 4- 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy and Fellowship Hour  
Saturday, December 10- 4:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confessions  
Sunday, December 11- 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, **TF Special Parish Meeting-3<sup>rd</sup> Announcement**  
Saturday, December 17- 4:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confessions  
Sunday, December 18- 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, **Parastas**, and Fellowship  
Saturday, December 24- 4:00 PM – **Great Compline (Christmas Eve)** Eve of the Nativity  
Sunday, December 25- 9:30 AM – **St. Basil Liturgy**, Fellowship (Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ)

*We WELCOME all our visitors today! We want to let you know that we are so glad you came to pray with us. Please come again; join us after the Divine Liturgy in the Church Hall for Coffee Hour. If you do not have a home church, we invite you to become a part of our Church Family.*

**Please Note: *Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.***

**Prayer List:**

Matushka Lisa Weremedic

Andrew Balliet, Michael Birosik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Danielle Bogosh, Emmalyn Naomi Buchanan, Evanna Jane Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Nadine Fegley, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen Harkins, Nancy King, Russell King, Michael Kulick, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mantey, Mildred O'Shura, Dale Renninger, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Olga Sidoriak, Mary Simone, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, George Yurchak, & Marie Yurchak.

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

## Special Parish Meeting: Bylaw Amendment

### Our bylaw Article 3 Parish Property Section 1 Title of Ownership "d"

#### to be consistent with the OCA and Diocese Article XII Section 9 Parish Property "d"

- a. The Parish Corporation holds legal title to all Parish property, assets, and funds. In administering them, the Parishioners and the officers elected by them must always remember the religious nature, purposes, and goal of the Parish and act as trustees of such property dedicated to the service of God and the use of the Church.
- b. All Parish property, assets and funds are and shall be owned and held by the Parish or Parish Corporation in trust for the use, purpose, and benefit of the Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America of which it is a part. This provision shall not limit the authority of the Parish or Parish Corporation in its administration of such property, assets, and funds in accord with the faith, governance, and discipline of The Orthodox Church in America.
- c. In the event the Diocese shall be dissolved or attempt to disaffiliate from The Orthodox Church in America in a disorderly manner, all Parish property, assets and funds of such Diocese are and shall remain subject to the use, purpose, and benefit of The Orthodox Church in America.
- d. *If the Parish is canonically suppressed or otherwise ceases to exist, its real and personal property shall be disposed of in accord with Section 9, b, above. In all cases, the sacred and untouchable items, viz. the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, as well as all Parish records, shall be surrendered to the Diocesan Bishop or his designee.***

#### Candles (November 27)

Altar Candles... In memory of **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

Vigil Crosses... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory of **John Kushnir** offered by Russell & Geri King

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Husband, Frank Forte** offered by Julia Forte

**December Birthdays:** 9- Odess Remington, 11- Stephanie Chmel, 16- Sbdn James Weremedic, 22- Karoline Vavra, 28- Sophia James

**Financials 11/27/22: Operating Acct:** Candles 75, Altar Candles 20, Offerings 467, Holy Days 6  
Thanksgiving 36, Non-Envelope 255, Donation 2,000 = Total \$2,859.00. Poinsettias 10

Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. Thank you!

**Please use Amazon Smile when ordering from Amazon.**

#### **Fellowship Hour Hosts:**

December 4      John Evetushick                      December 11      Lena Berezniak

December 18      Michael Tatusko                      December 25      Gloria Bench

There is a sign-up sheet for **Coffee Hour** in the vestibule if you would like to host.

If you have brown paper bags from groceries, please bring them to church –

They are needed to clean the wax off the carpet



## ROYAL DOORS: A COMMUNION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Certainly the iconostas is one of the most outstanding architectural features of a house of worship. It stands between the sanctuary and the body of the church, between heaven and earth so-to-speak, and serves not so much to divide them but to unite them through the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God.

In the center of this wall of icons are the **ROYAL DOORS**. They are called this because the King of Glory, Jesus Christ, passes through them in the Holy Eucharist, feeding His family with the Bread of Life. The icons that adorn the Royal Doors vary, but normally bear the image of the Annunciation - the Archangel Gabriel announcing the coming birth of the Saviour to the Holy Virgin. Then, below, are depicted the Four Evangelists - John, Matthew, Luke and Mark, since they proclaimed the Kingdom of God first announced to the Mother of God.

Above the Doors is usually depicted the Last Supper, Jesus offering the Eucharist - first the Bread, His Body, then the Cup, His Blood, to the Apostles. Some churches also depict the Holy Fathers, or Liturgists, in this area. (The doors at the sides, often termed the Deacon's Doors, usually carry icons of Messengers of God, the Angels; or Deacons of the Church, who during their ministry had charge of articles in the sanctuary area and assisted at rites.)

This grand panorama of images began as a vital tool in teaching the Christian faith to people. Today it serves as a graphic reminder that this is the entrance to the "Holy of Holies."



If you have not ordered Poinsettias yet and would like to do so, please send your request "For the Health of \_\_\_\_\_" or "In memory of \_\_\_\_\_" to:

St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Attn: Financial Secretary, 217 First Street, Coaldale, PA 18218-1602, by Saturday, December 17, 2022; so, your name can be included on the List of Donors. Price is \$10.00.

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King

Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King

There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the church to sign up for the **New Year's Dinner** being held after Divine Liturgy on January 1, 2023. Everyone welcome!!!

**25<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Tone 8.** Glorification of Hieromartyr Protopresbyter Alexander (Hotovitzky) (1994). Greatmartyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana, at Heliopolis in Syria (ca. 306). Ven. John of Damascus (776). St. John, Bishop of Polybotum (8th c.)

### **Greatmartyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana, at Heliopolis in Syria**

Commemorated on December 4

**Troparion — Tone 8** - Let us honor the holy martyr Barbara, / for as a bird she escaped the snares of the enemy, / and destroyed them through the help and defense of the Cross.

**Kontakion — Tone 4** - Singing the praises of the Trinity, / you followed God by enduring suffering; / you renounced the multitude of idols, / O holy martyr Barbara. / In your struggles, you were not frightened by the threats of your torturers, but cried out in a loud voice: / "I worship the Trinity in one God-head."

### **Ephesians 4:1-6 (Epistle)**

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

### **Luke 17:12-19 (Gospel)**

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

So, when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

So, Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

The **Holy Great Martyr Barbara** lived and suffered during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-311). Her father, the pagan Dioscorus, was a rich and illustrious man in the Syrian city of Heliopolis. After the death of his wife, he devoted himself to his only daughter.

Seeing Barbara's extraordinary beauty, Dioscorus decided to hide her from the eyes of strangers. Therefore, he built a tower for Barbara, where only her pagan teachers were allowed to see her. From the



tower there was a view of hills stretching into the distance. By day she was able to gaze upon the wooded hills, the swiftly flowing rivers, and the meadows covered with a mottled blanket of flowers; by night the harmonious and majestic vault of the heavens twinkled and provided a spectacle of inexpressible beauty. Soon the virgin began to ask herself questions about the First Cause and Creator of so harmonious and splendid a world. Gradually, she became convinced that the souless idols were merely the work of human hands. Although her father and teachers offered them worship, she realized that the idols could not have made the surrounding world. The desire to know the true God so consumed her soul that Barbara decided to devote all her life to this goal, and to spend her life in virginity.

The fame of her beauty spread throughout the city, and many sought her hand in marriage. But despite the entreaties of her father, she refused all of them. Barbara warned her father that his persistence might end tragically and separate them forever. Dioscorus decided that the temperament of his daughter had been affected by her life of seclusion. He therefore permitted her to leave the tower and gave her full freedom in her choice of friends and acquaintances. Thus Barbara met young Christian maidens in the city, and they taught her about the Creator of the world, about the Trinity, and about the Divine Logos. Through the Providence of God, a priest arrived in Heliopolis from Alexandria disguised as a merchant. After instructing her in the mysteries of the Christian Faith, he baptized Barbara, then returned to his own country. During this time a luxurious bathhouse was being built at the house of Dioscorus. By his orders the workers prepared to put two windows on the south side. But Barbara, taking advantage of her father's absence, asked them to make a third window, thereby forming a Trinity of light. On one of the walls of the bath-house Barbara traced a cross with her finger. The cross was deeply etched into the marble, as if by an iron instrument. Later, her footprints were imprinted on the stone steps of the bathhouse. The water of the bathhouse had great healing power. Saint Simeon Metaphrastes (November 9) compared the bathhouse to the stream of Jordan and the Pool of Siloam, because by God's power, many miracles took place there.

When Dioscorus returned and expressed dissatisfaction about the change in his building plans, his daughter told him about how she had come to know the Triune God, about the saving power of the Son of God, and about the futility of worshipping idols. Dioscorus went into a rage, grabbed a sword and was on the point of striking her with it. The holy virgin fled from her father, and he rushed after her in pursuit. His way became blocked by a hill, which opened up and concealed the saint in a crevice. On the other side of the crevice was an entrance leading upwards. Saint Barbara managed then to conceal herself in a cave on the opposite slope of the hill.

After a long and fruitless search for his daughter, Dioscorus saw two shepherds on the hill. One of them showed him the cave where the saint had hidden. Dioscorus beat his daughter terribly, and then placed her under guard and tried to wear her down with hunger. Finally he handed her over to the prefect of the city, named Martianus. They beat Saint Barbara fiercely: they struck her with rawhide, and rubbed her wounds with a hair cloth to increase her pain. By night Saint Barbara prayed fervently to her Heavenly Bridegroom, and the Savior Himself appeared and healed her wounds. Then they subjected the saint to new, and even more frightful torments. In the crowd where the martyr was tortured was the virtuous Christian woman Juliana, an inhabitant of Heliopolis. Her heart was filled with sympathy for the voluntary martyrdom of the beautiful and illustrious maiden. Juliana also wanted to suffer for Christ. She began to denounce the torturers in a loud voice, and they seized her.

Both martyrs were tortured for a long time. Their bodies were raked and wounded with hooks, and then they were led naked through the city amidst derision and jeers. Through the prayers of Saint Barbara the Lord sent an angel who covered the nakedness of the holy martyrs with a splendid robe. Then the steadfast confessors of Christ, Saints Barbara and Juliana, were beheaded. Dioscorus himself executed Saint Barbara. The wrath of God was not slow to punish both torturers, Martianus and Dioscorus. They were killed after being struck by lightning.

In the sixth century the relics of the holy Great Martyr Barbara were transferred to Constantinople. Six hundred years later they were transferred to Kiev (July 11) by Barbara, the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenos, wife of the Russian prince Michael Izyaslavich. They rest even now at Kiev's Saint Vladimir cathedral, where an Akathist to the saint is served each Tuesday. Many pious Orthodox Christians are in the habit of chanting the Troparion of Saint Barbara each day, recalling the Savior's promise to her that those who remembered her and her sufferings would be preserved from a sudden, unexpected death, and would not depart this life without benefit of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.



## Martyr John of Damascus

Saint John of Damascus was born about the year 680 at Damascus, Syria into a Christian family. His father, Sergius Mansur, was a treasurer at the court of the Caliph. John had also a foster brother, the orphaned child Cosmas (October 14), whom Sergius had taken into his own home. When the children were growing up, Sergius saw that they received a good education. At the Damascus slave market he ransomed the learned monk Cosmas of Calabria from captivity and entrusted to him the teaching of his children. The boys displayed uncommon ability and readily mastered their courses of the secular and spiritual sciences. After the death of his father, John occupied ministerial posts at court and became the city prefect.

In Constantinople at that time, the heresy of Iconoclasm had arisen and quickly spread, supported by the emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717-741). Rising up in defense of the Orthodox veneration of icons [Iconodoulia], Saint John wrote three treatises entitled, "Against Those who Revile the Holy Icons." The wise and God-inspired writings of Saint John enraged the emperor. But since the author was not a Byzantine subject, the emperor was unable to lock him up in prison, or to execute him. The emperor then resorted to slander. A forged letter to the emperor was produced, supposedly from John, in which the Damascus official was supposed to have offered his help to Leo in conquering the Syrian capital.

This letter and another hypocritically flattering note were sent to the Saracen Caliph by Leo the Isaurian. The Caliph immediately ordered that Saint John be removed from his post, that his right hand be cut off, and that he be led through the city in chains. That same evening, they returned the severed hand to Saint John. The saint pressed it to his wrist and prayed to the Most Holy Theotokos to heal him so that he could defend the Orthodox Faith and write once again in praise of the Most Pure Virgin and Her Son. After a time, he fell asleep before the icon of the Mother of God. He heard Her voice telling him that he had been healed, and commanding him to toil unceasingly with his restored hand. Upon awakening, he found that his hand had been attached to his arm once more. Only a small red mark around his wrist remained as a sign of the miracle.

Later, in thanksgiving for being healed, Saint John had a silver model of his hand attached to the icon, which became known as "Of the Three Hands." Some unlearned painters have given the Mother of God three hands instead of depicting the silver model of Saint John's hand. The Icon "Of the Three Hands" is commemorated on June 28 and July 12.

When he learned of the miracle, which demonstrated John's innocence, the Caliph asked his forgiveness and wanted to restore him to his former office, but the saint refused. He gave away his riches to the poor, and went to Jerusalem with his stepbrother and fellow-student, Cosmas. There he entered the monastery of Saint Savva the Sanctified as a simple novice. It was not easy for him to find a spiritual guide, because all the monks were daunted by his great learning and by his former rank. Only one very experienced Elder, who had the skill to foster the spirit of obedience and humility in a student, would consent to do this. The Elder forbade John to do anything at all according to his own will. He also instructed him to offer to God all his labors and supplications as a perfect sacrifice, and to shed tears which would wash away the sins of his former life.

Once, he sent the novice to Damascus to sell baskets made at the monastery, and commanded him to sell them at a certain inflated price, far above their actual value. He undertook the long journey under the searing sun, dressed in rags. No one in the city recognized the former official of Damascus, for his appearance had been changed by prolonged fasting and ascetic labors. However, Saint John was recognized by his former house steward, who bought all the baskets at the asking price, showing compassion on him for his apparent poverty.

One of the monks happened to die, and his brother begged Saint John to compose something consoling for the burial service. Saint John refused for a long time, but out of pity he yielded to the petition of the grief-stricken monk, and wrote his renowned funeral troparia ("What earthly delight," "All human vanity," and others). For this disobedience the Elder banished him from his cell. John fell at his feet and asked to be forgiven, but the Elder remained unyielding. All the monks began to plead for him to allow John to return, but he refused. Then one of the monks asked the Elder to impose a penance on John, and to forgive him if he fulfilled it. The Elder said, "If John wishes to be forgiven, let him wash out all the chamber pots in the lavra, and clean the monastery latrines with his bare hands."

John rejoiced and eagerly ran to accomplish his shameful task. After a certain while, the Elder was commanded in a vision by the All-Pure and Most Holy Theotokos to allow Saint John to write again. When the Patriarch of Jerusalem heard of Saint John, he ordained him priest and made him a preacher at his cathedral. But Saint John soon returned to the Lavra of Saint Savva, where he spent the rest of his life writing spiritual books and church hymns. He left the monastery only to denounce the iconoclasts at the Constantinople Council of 754. They subjected him to imprisonment and torture, but he endured everything, and through the mercy of God he remained alive. He died in about the year 780, more than 100 years old.

Saint John of Damascus was a theologian and a zealous defender of Orthodoxy. His most important book is the Fount of Knowledge. The third section of this work, "On the Orthodox Faith," is a summary of Orthodox doctrine and a refutation of heresy. Since he was known as a hymnographer, we pray to Saint John for help in the study of church singing.