

# *St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church*

*30 Cross Street - Auburn, New York 13021 ([www.stnicholasauburn.com](http://www.stnicholasauburn.com))*

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**Office Hours 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Thursday or any time by appointment**

**Reverend Deacon David Donch Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck**

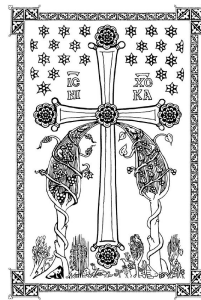
**Reader Nathaniel Donch**

**Sr. Warden - Greg Michaels Jr. Warden – Reverend Deacon David Donch**

**Secretary – Jane Kimak Treasurer – Glenn Peters**

**Sunday, November 3, 2024**

**19th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2.** Martyrs Akepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter, and Aeithalas the Deacon, of Persia (4th c.). Consecration of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George in Lydda (4th c.). Martyrs Eudoxios, Agapios, Atticus, Marinus, Oceanus, Eustratios, Karterios, Nikopolitianos, Styrax, and Tobias, at Sebaste (ca. 320). Ven. Aicepsimas, Hermit, of Cyrrhus in Syria (4th c.). St. Snandulia of Persia (4th c.).



**Saturday, November 2 - 5:00 PM – Great Vespers**

**Sunday, November 3 – 8:40 AM – Adult Education**

**9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy followed by a Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 6 – 8:30 AM - Divine Liturgy**

**Friday, November 8 – 8:30 AM – Feast of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the Heavenly Host.**

**Saturday, November 9 – 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM– Sisterhood bazaar**

**– 5:00 PM – Great Vespers**

**Sunday, November 10 - 9:00 AM – Confessions**

**9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy**

**Many thanks to all who helped with our very successful pork chop dinner. We are blessed to have so many dedicated workers. God bless you all!**

**Our Sisterhood Bazaar will take place Saturday, November 9 from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Please tell friends and family and offer to help if possible.**

**We also thank you for your Food Pantry Ministry donations. Please continue your generous support so that we may assist as many people as possible as Thanksgiving and Christmas approach. Thank you very much!**



**Donation**

**\$100 by Matushka Barbara Mack in memory of Fr. Stephen Mack**

# Hieromartyrs Akepsimas, Bishop in Persia, Presbyter Joseph, and Deacon Aeithalas



Commemorated on [November 3](#)

**Martyrs Akepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter and Aeithalas (Aeithalás) the Deacon of Persia were leaders of the Christian Church in the Persian city of Naesson. His flock devotedly loved their hierarch for his ascetic life and tireless pastoral work.**

**The emperor Sapor ordered his men to seek out and kill Christian clergy. Saint Akepsimas also was arrested, even though he was already an eighty-year-old man. They took him to the city of Arbela, where he came before the judge Ardarkh, a pagan priest of the sun god. The holy Elder refused to offer sacrifice to the Persian gods. For this he was fiercely beaten and thrown into prison, where on the following day the seventy-year-old priest Joseph and the deacon Aeithalas were severely beaten and thrown into jail with him. For three years the saints were held in confinement, and suffered from hunger and thirst.**

**Emperor Sapor came to the temple of the god of fire, located not far from Arbela, and wanted to take a look at the three holy martyrs. Exhausted and covered with festering wounds, the saints were brought before the emperor. When he asked them to worship the pagan gods they firmly refused, confessing their faith in Christ instead.**

**The holy bishop was beheaded, but the presbyter and deacon were taken into the city to be stoned.**

**The execution of the presbyter Joseph was prolonged for several hours. A guard was placed near the place of execution, so that Christians would not take the body of the holy martyr. On the fourth night a strong windstorm raged near the**

**city, lightning killed the guard, the wind tossed stones about, and the body of Saint Joseph disappeared.**

**Deacon Aeithalas was taken to the village of Patrias, where he was stoned. Christians secretly buried his body. A tree grew on the saint's grave, and its fruit brought healings.**

## **Venerable Nicholas, Radiant Star of the Georgians**



Commemorated on [November 3](#)

**Saint Nicholas was the author of many church services, but little else about his life is known. He lived in the second half of the 13th century, and the last years of his life coincided with the reign of King Vakhtang III, the son of the holy king Demetre the Devoted.**

**Saint Nicholas was one of the greatest hymnographers and spiritual figures of his time, but few of his works have been preserved. Catholicos Anton I writes that Nicholas composed numerous canons and services, including a “Canon of Supplication for Rain.” Saint Nicholas enriched the spiritual literature of Georgia with his translations as well. Scholars and historians believe that, as the greatest liturgist of his time, he was probably asked to translate many prayers and services from Greek to Georgian.**

**Among them, they believe, was the “Canon for the Blessing of Holy Water.”**

**The famous 19th-century historian Platon Ioseliani writes that other church services belonging to the pen of Saint Nicholas are included among the manuscripts of the Ivéron Monastery on Mt. Athos.**

**Saint Nicholas reposed peacefully in the year 1308.**

# **The Eucharist in the Orthodox Tradition**

**Metropolitan Serafim (Joanta)**

**According to my observations, many Christians have some problem with their own Church. Many people think that the Church is a kind of spiritual institution and is limited to those serving at the altar: bishops, priests and deacons who are obliged to celebrate Church services and pray for other Christians. Those who think so believe that it is enough to be baptized and go to church on the major feasts such as Pascha, Christmas and Theophany, or occasionally drop in at church to light a candle.**

**Other Christians are so busy with their daily chores, worries and problems that they do not even find time to think about God, the Church and their spiritual life. They show up in church only on the occasion of a Baptism, a wedding or a funeral, more to observe the tradition. Others turn to the Church in moments of temptation, illness, or setbacks in life to seek a priest's help. And others think in a sectarian way, believing that they do not need the Church because God is in their hearts, and individual prayer at home or anywhere else is enough. Unfortunately, very few Christians live a genuine Church life and understand that Christ heads the Church, and God hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22-23). The Church is the living, mystical Body of Christ.**

**Let's consider more closely what a church is. Firstly, it is a place of worship where the faithful gather for prayer. In the Jewish tradition, the places of worship were the tabernacle, the Temple in Jerusalem and synagogues. In the Christian tradition, these are churches now scattered all over the world. Places of worship are holy because they are dedicated to God, and actions performed there are not only human, but also Divine. The Savior called the Temple in Jerusalem, where He would go to pray and preach to people, My Father's house (Jn. 2:16). That is, a church is a house of God, which is filled with the glory of the Lord—that is, His presence: And, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house (Ezek. 43:5).**

**Church prayer has a special power, because it is not only the prayer of an individual person, but of a whole community, of the whole Church. From a mystical point of view, the Church is a continuation of the redemptive sacrifice and mission of Christ, Who always abides with the faithful: And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Mt. 28:20). The Holy Spirit works in the Church sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Ordination, Confession, Marriage and Unction, as well as in other services and prayers. In the Church we commune with Christ both spiritually and in the form of Eucharistic bread and wine, which, through the prayer of the Church—that is, a community of the faithful—become the Body and Blood of Christ. In this way, we gradually become more and more united with Him and with each other.**

**A true Christian can say with the Apostle Paul: Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2:20); But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16); Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). The Church is a living body in which all those who promised at Baptism to renounce satan and unite with Christ participate. Through Baptism we become members of the Church, in which we grow spiritually through prayer, feasible asceticism and participation in the Church sacraments, Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). Just as a branch torn from its trunk withers and cannot bear fruit, so a Christian who does not abide in God cannot grow spiritually: I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing (Jn. 15:5).**



**What is the Eucharist? It is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, which the Lord Himself established at the Last Supper before His Passion. Indeed, at Vespers on Holy and Great Thursday we hear that the Lord took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me (Lk. 22:19). The Eucharist is the principal sacrament of the Church, which creates it. The Church—that is, a community of the faithful—celebrates the Eucharist, and the Eucharist transforms believers into the Church, into the Body of Christ. By partaking of the Holy Gifts, the faithful become one with Christ and with each other. The early Christians understood this very well and therefore they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42); And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul (Acts 4: 32). Thus, there is an identical internal connection between the Church and the Eucharist.**

**The Orthodox Church believes that Christ is really present in the Eucharistic bread and wine. Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of the Lord through the Descent of the Holy Spirit by the prayer of the faithful presided over by a bishop (or a priest). This is a mystery that our mind cannot fathom, but which we accept through faith. Attempts to explain the Church sacraments intellectually and rationalistically have always led to heresies and divisions among believers. We must not doubt what Christ has told us, namely that the bread and wine consecrated at the Divine Liturgy are transformed into His Body and Blood. If someone doubts the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, it means that he doubts both God's Incarnation and the preaching of the Gospel, which will spread through the Church until the end of time.**

**Since ancient times two Liturgies have been celebrated in the Orthodox Church: those of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Basil the Great (both from the fourth century), and they are very similar. Both consist of two parts: the Liturgy of the Catechumens (that is, the Liturgy of those who are preparing to be Baptized, but in which the baptized also take part), and the Liturgy of the Faithful. The second part is the Eucharistic Canon, or the Anaphora, with the Epiclesis (the invocation of the Holy Spirit to bless the bread and wine), and the Communion of the Holy Gifts by the faithful. The Liturgy of the Catechumens includes readings from the Holy Scriptures (the Epistles and the Gospel), along with prayers in the form of litanies for the faithful and catechumens alike. The Liturgy is preceded by the proskomedia, which the priest performs in concentration before the beginning of the service itself. This service is very rich and full of symbolism, and the**

**atmosphere at church is mystical. All this attunes believers to inner concentration and contemplation of the mystery of our Savior's life. In the Liturgy His whole life is actualized—from His Nativity to Ascension.**

**There is a profound mystery in the Orthodox Church. Every prayer of a believer, even liturgical prayer, must descend from the head into the heart, encompassing his whole heart, because it is the center of a human being. At the same time, the heart is the home of baptismal grace—God abides precisely in the human heart. That is why it is so important when our mind constantly descends into the heart, and then we will find peace. When the mind and the heart are scattered, it leads to mental stress and anxiety, depression and a state of dissatisfaction. That is why concentrated individual and liturgical prayer is so vital.**

**The Divine Liturgy has the nature of a meal and a sacrifice. To participate in it requires special preparation, so that the faithful can partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. In the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1–14) Christ draws our attention to a man who comes there without wedding garments and is driven out. The Divine Liturgy symbolically represents the marriage of our soul with the sacrificial Lamb, before Whom we must appear in wedding attire. Such a robe of the soul is its purity. We attain this through prayer and feasible ascetic life, through good works, through concrete acts of love for others and through confessing our sins to our spiritual father.**

**Nowadays, Orthodox Christians receive Communion quite often, and some at every Divine Liturgy (as is customary, for example, in the Greek, Russian, Antiochian and other Local Churches, and in the Romanian Church, unfortunately, to a lesser extent). In the Romanian Church, confession is not necessarily connected with Communion, but it is connected with sins committed. Thus, in confession we repent of our sins, and especially grave ones, such as renunciation of Christ, murder, adultery, fornication, cohabitation, hatred or oppression of our neighbors. All this separates us from Christ and His Church. Confession is the sacrament of reconciliation with the Church, from which we fell away through sin. This sacrament brings us back to the status of full-fledged members of the Church. Those who commit grave sins can receive Communion again only after confession and the fulfillment of the penance given to them by the priest. In**



**confession we promise God that with His help we will not repeat the sins we have committed anymore.**

**Thus, our “wedding clothes” or “shining baptismal robes”, stained with sin, are cleansed through confession. Remembering our sins, we make even more efforts on the path of prayer and asceticism, which purify our souls and unite us with God. Prayer should become the breath of a believer. We will be able to feel and perceive God as reality, as the deepest foundation of our being provided that we pray much and unceasingly, as the holy Apostle Paul advises us. Therefore, the Holy Fathers of the Church have compiled a number of prayers for all life situations, as well as before and after Communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. Note what prayerful beauty the Anaphora has!**



**In addition to prayer and abstinence—that is, fasting—the struggle against sin to free ourselves from passions is important in the Orthodox Church. The Christian life is essentially an ascetic one: Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (Mt. 7:14). It is accompanied by many temptations and sorrows that we cannot overcome except through patience and perseverance in fasting and prayer, through moderation in everything and abstinence from everything that can harm the soul in its longing for God. Therefore, for instance, the Orthodox Church has preserved the tradition of marital abstinence during Lent. We also fast before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, which is called Eucharistic fast. On the surface of it, this restricts human freedom, but in fact it is through restrictions that we attain real freedom. Salvation, like all good skills and virtues that should adorn a Christian’s life, is a gift from God: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights (Jas. 1:17).**

**But God does not force anyone to accept His gifts. The acceptance of these gifts on our part comes through faith at the moment when we open our hearts to Him. Faith in God is not just a reasonable consent to Divine revelation, but, above all, spiritual consent and feeling that require us to lead a new way of life.**

**Christianity is a new life in Christ. But in order to be able to live this new life we must first abandon the old life, reject the old man, who is used to sin and lust, And... put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). This rebirth into the new man begins with Baptism and should continue throughout our lives. But after being baptized, most of us stray from the right path, and our hearts harden and cease to be receptive to the grace of God. And we no longer allow grace to work in us and no longer co-work with it. If we realize our mistake and awaken, we must run to church and try to start to live its life anew. After all, it is there, through the holy sacraments, that we will be able to receive help on our Christian path. God rewards us for our struggle with passions, for our efforts to acquire the virtues that give us back the freedom that we lost through sin.**

**As a matter of fact, our whole life is a continuous effort to move forward on the path of goodness and virtue to becoming like Christ. And in this striving, we are continuously sustained by the grace of the holy sacraments, especially the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. All the gifts we have always come from God, but at the same time it depends on our will, whether to accept or reject them. The acceptance of Divine gifts takes place through our life according to faith and through ascetic life: Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin (Heb. 12:4); But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (1 Cor. 9: 27). The Eucharist and all the other Church sacraments are a gift from God that sanctifies us and unites us with Christ. But this happens only to the extent that we make an existential effort in faith through prayer and feasible asceticism.**