

St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church

28 Cross Street - Auburn, New York 13021 (www.stnicholasauburn.com)

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Pastor

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Fr. Michael's Office Hours Monday and Thursday 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM in the Church Hall Office or by Appointment

Reverend Deacon David Donch Sr. Warden Greg Michaels Jr. Warden Rocco Lupo
Subdeacon Michael W. Speck Reader Nathaniel Donch Reader Peter A. Speck

Sunday, February 17, 2019 - Publican and Pharisee

Sunday, February 17 -10:00 AM Divine Liturgy and Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday, February 20 -No Divine Liturgy
Saturday, February 23 -4:30 PM – Confessions
 -4:45 PM – Ninth Hour
 -5:00 PM – Vespers followed by Family Activity Night
Sunday, February 24 -9:00 AM - Adult Education
 -9:40 AM - 3rd and 6th Hours
 -10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

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**Thanks to all who worked so hard for the Pork Chop Dinner last weekend! It was an extremely successful event and did much to introduce our church to the community. And we also ask that more of our younger members might consider to helping out in the future (as some already have).
God bless you all!**

This week following the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is a fast-free week. The Church wishes to remind us that we must not be prideful in our fasting as was the Pharisee in today's Gospel lesson, but should emulate the humility of the publican and be reunited to God through our repentance.

Memorial and General Donations

\$300 in memory of Mary Coleman - by Fred Coleman of Syracuse - for the Cemetery Maintenance Fund

\$100 Renovation Fund donation for the beautification of the Church -- by Barbara Foster of Port Byron

We Must Not Allow Guilt to Destroy Us.

The conscience is that gift God has bestowed upon us that tells us when we have sinned against Him, and against our neighbor. The conscience calls us to turn from our sin, and seek to change the patterns of behavior that have caused us to sin in the beginning. This tug by our conscience can be counterproductive if we make no effort at changing our behavior. It can also be counterproductive if we simply give in to despair, and resign ourselves to our sinful behavior, as though there is no cure for our illness. That sense of guilt is meant to aid in the fight to turn around our bad behavior.

When we have sinned, and our sins are tormenting us, it is at that moment that we must seek out Christ, for only His sacrifice for our sins is eternal and living. When we lay our sins before the face of that sacrifice, we have nothing to fear, for we recognize that we can not be saved by your own efforts.

If we simply surrender to guilt, we will find nothing but destruction, and our conscience will have been of no benefit whatsoever, and victory will not be ours.

Holding Bad Thoughts Negates Everything Good.

The Fathers, such as Saint Paisius of Mount Athos, teach us that when we hold bad thoughts about anyone, or nurture a grudge against another, we negate everything good that can come from keeping vigil, or fasting. Ascetic discipline is useless if we do not expel bad thoughts against another.

One good thought is more powerful than a long vigil service, for it dispels the power of the devil. Whereas, a bad thought empowers the forces of the underworld against us. When we allow bad thoughts to take up abode in us, we dispel God's grace, and open the door to further attacks of the evil one.

When we encounter ill-will, or hatred from others, we must not allow bad thoughts to further separate us from them, but rather, think only good about them. When we do so, it will leave us open to the grace of God, and we will find it impossible to think ill of them.

With love in Christ,

Abbot Tryphon (All Merciful Savior Monastery)