

# St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church

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

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Parish Priest (315) 246-6051 [mspeck100@gmail.com](mailto:mspeck100@gmail.com)

Office Hours Thursday 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM or 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, September 24, 2023**

**Synaxis of All Saints of Alaska**

**Holy Protomartyr Thekla**



## **Schedule of Services and Activities**

**Saturday, September 23 - 5:00 PM – Vespers**

**Sunday, September 24 – 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy followed by a Panikhida for Marion and Walter Zablotsky and Coffee Hour**

**Wednesday, September 27 – 8:30 AM - Divine Liturgy**

**Saturday, September 30 – 5:00 PM Vespers**

**Sunday, October 1 – 9:30 AM – Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos**

**– 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by a Parish Council Meeting and Coffee Hour**

**Thanks to all who worked making pierogi this week. We are asking that more of our parish faithful begin to participate in the fundraising activities of our church helping with the pork chop dinners and Sisterhood functions. These are really pleasant work sessions. May God bless you for your work!**

**Please support our food pantry ministry this weekend if possible. We will be taking our donations this week because the need is usually greatest at the end of each month. God bless you for your charity.**

**I will be preparing a new Coffee Hour List during the upcoming week. We ask that anybody who does not currently host coffee hour would please offer to do so. Before COVID, all of our parishioners did participate in this parish fellowship. Thanks for your support!**

## Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla



Commemorated on [September 24](#)

The Holy Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla was born in the city of Iconium. She was the daughter of rich and illustrious parents, and she was distinguished by extraordinary beauty. At eighteen years of age they betrothed her to an eminent youth. But after she heard the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul about the Savior, Saint Thekla with all her heart came to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and she steadfastly resolved not to enter into marriage, but rather to devote all her life to preaching the Gospel. Saint Thekla's mother was opposed to her daughter's plans and insisted that she marry her betrothed. Saint Thekla's fiancé also complained to the prefect of the city about the Apostle Paul, accusing him of turning his bride against him. The prefect locked up Saint Paul in prison. During the night Saint Thekla secretly ran away from her house, and she bribed the prison guards, giving them all her gold ornaments, and so made her way into the prison to the prisoner. For three days she sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul, listening to his fatherly precepts. Thekla's disappearance was discovered, and servants were sent out everywhere looking for her. Finally, they found her in the prison and brought her home by force.

At his trial Saint Paul was sentenced to banishment from the city. Again they urged Saint Thekla to consent to the marriage, but she would not change her mind. Neither the tears of her mother, nor her wrath, nor the threats of the prefect could separate Saint Thekla from her love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. Her mother in a insane rage demanded from the judges a death sentence against her unyielding daughter, and Saint Thekla was sentenced to be burned. Without flinching, the holy martyr went into the fire and made the Sign of the Cross over herself. At this moment the Savior appeared to her, blessing her present deed, and inexpressible joy filled her holy soul. The flames of the fire shot up high, but the martyr was surrounded by a light and the flames did not touch her. Saint Thekla, kept safe by the Lord, left the city and with the help of a certain Christian youth, searched for the Apostle Paul. The holy apostle and his companions, among whom was Saint Barnabas, were hidden in a cave not far from the city, praying fervently, that the Lord would strengthen Saint Thekla in her sufferings. After this, Saint Thekla went with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Saint Thekla refused his offer of marriage, and so she was condemned to death for being a Christian. Twice they set loose hungry wild animals upon her, but they would not touch the holy virgin. Instead, they lay down meekly and licked her feet.. The people began shouting, "Great is the God of the Christians!" The prefect himself became terrified then gave orders to set free the servant of God Thekla. With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Saint Thekla then settled in a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. Saint Thekla converted many pagans to Christ, and the Church appropriately names her as "Equal-to-the-Apostles." Even a pagan priest, trying to assault her purity and punished for his impudence, was brought by her to holy Baptism. More than once the Enemy of the race of man tried to destroy Saint Thekla through people blinded by sin, but the power of God always preserved this faithful servant of Christ. When Saint Thekla was already a ninety-year-old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. Envious of Saint Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they came near her, Saint Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and a rock split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. Thus did Saint Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

# Pride is the First Daughter of the Devil



**St. Cosmas of Aetolia**

## **God gave us everything for free**

**First of all, we need to love God, because for this temporary life He gave us such a large, comfortable earth, a great variety of plants, springs, rivers, seas, fish, animals, as well as air, fire, day, night, sky, stars, sun, and moon. All this was created for us. What did we have to do in return? Nothing. God gave everything to us for free. He made us people, not animals; pious Orthodox Christians, not heretics and wicked people. Even though we sin a thousand times an hour, He, like a father, has mercy on us, does not kill us, and does not cast us into hell. He, ready to embrace us, is waiting for us to repent, stop committing iniquities, and begin to do good, confess and reform, in order to accept us into His arms, kiss us, open the doors of Paradise to us, so that we may rejoice forever. Shouldn't we love such a God, such a sweet Lord and Master?**

## **Pride is the first daughter of the devil**

**When a person repents, prays, and fasts, the devil becomes scorched and leaves him. When the first rank of angels fell from glory and turned into demons, the other nine ranks humbled themselves, fell on their faces, and bowing to the Most Holy Trinity, remained in their ranks to rejoice forever.**

**We, my brothers, should also understand what evil pride is: it cast the devil out of the glory of the angels and prepared for him eternal torment. Humility kept the Angels in heaven, and they eternally rejoice, seeing the great glory of the Holy Trinity. We must also know that the All-Good God does not accept the proud, but**

**loves the humble. And not only God, but we ourselves look at a humble person as an Angel, and a proud person as a devil. Let us avoid pride, since it is the first daughter of the devil, the path leading to destruction. But let us take care to acquire angelic humility, which opens the way to Paradise for us.**

### **A body without a soul is like a stone**

**There were no men and women on earth. The All-Good God took earth, clay, and created man, breathed life into him and gave him an immortal, angelic soul. Just as women mix flour and water to obtain bread, so God mixed clay with spirit to form man. We must reflect on what the soul is and what the body is. The body is earth, clay, and tomorrow it will become food for worms, and the soul will forever rejoice in Paradise if it has done good, and burn in hell if it has done evil.**

**Brothers, the body that we see is not the man himself, but only the garment of the soul. The soul is a person, it sees, hears, talks, walks, learns to read and write, and learns sciences and crafts. It gives life to the body, and does not allow it to decompose. As soon as the soul leaves the body, the body immediately begins to rot and becomes food for worms, because by itself, the body is not a person. The body has eyes but it does not see, it has a mouth but it does not speak, it has hands but it cannot grasp, it has legs but it cannot walk. A body without a soul is like a stone.**

### **You are the root of your children**

**When you cut a tree, its branches immediately dry up, but if you water its roots, the branches are filled with strength. So you, parents, can be likened to a tree: you are the root of your children, and when you “water” yourself with fasts, prayers, alms and good deeds, God protects your children too. If an apple tree produces sour apples, who is to blame: the apple tree or the apples? The apple tree. So, do the right thing, parents, so that your apples become sweet.**

### **Forgiveness enlightens and scorches**

**Brothers, forgiveness has two properties: on the one hand, it enlightens, on the other, it scorches. I, Christians, advise you to forgive your enemies for your own good. And you, who offended your brothers, when you hear that I told them to**

**forgive you, do not rejoice, but cry and howl! This forgiveness will burn you if you do not give back what you took from your brothers, and if you do not cry with tears for the forgiveness of those you have offended. You will not be forgiven, even if all confessors, patriarchs, bishops, priests, and laity forgive you. Who has the ability to grant you forgiveness? Only from the one offended by you. You must repay the one you offended fourfold, and then you will receive forgiveness - this is what it says in the Holy Gospel.**

### **Divine Secrets**

**My children, tell me, is the sun bright or dark? Everyone knows that it is bright and illuminates everything. But there are some animals (for example, owls and bats) that go blind in the light of the sun, but see well at night. So it is with the Divine Mysteries: they enlighten a good person and make him equal to the Angels, but they darken a sinner and liken him to the devil. Fire does not burn everything: gold, for example, having been in fire, becomes even brighter and purer. Let us also become like gold, and not like brushwood, destined to be burned.**

### **Properties of love**

**Love, my brothers, has two properties: to give us strength to do good and to kill evil. Imagine: a mother takes bread to eat, but at this time her child begins to cry. Forgetting about food, she rushes to console her child. What motivates a mother? Love for a child. Or, say, a child cries when his mother is sick. And then she immediately forgets about her illness and hurries to her child. What motivates her? Love. If I love you, then my love fetters my hands, and I can neither kill you, nor rob you, nor betray you, nor take revenge, nor do you any other harm.**

**If I tell you that I love you, then I must love not only you, but also your child - only then is my love true. If I say: "I love you, but I hate your son," my love for you is false and worthless. If I say that I love God (even though I don't see Him), but I don't love you, my brother, whom I see every day, then in that case I am nothing more than a liar. Therefore, my brothers, if we want to be saved, let us not look here on earth for anything other than love for God and our brothers.**