



A publication of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Youngstown, Ohio

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PAID  
Youngstown, OH  
Permit No. 321

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church  
220 North Walnut St.  
Youngstown, OH 44503

# June Pastoral Message 2021

By Rev. Fr. Joseph Z. DiStefano

## Wishing You a Blessed Apostles' Fast (All one day of it.)



### Origins

The Fast of the Holy Apostles is dated back to early years of the church. The first evidence of this fast is found in the writings of St. Athanasius the Great (†373). In his letter to Emperor Constance, he writes: *"During the week following Pentecost, the people who observed the fast went out to the cemetery to pray."* Some 20 years later, St. Ambrose (†397) writes: *"On the days following his ascension into heaven, however, we again fast"* (Sermon 61).

The famous pilgrim Egeria mentioned the Apostles' Fast also in her fourth-century writing which records that *"on the day following the feast of Pentecost, a period of fasting began"*. In the same period, the fourth century, the Apostolic Constitutions prescribes: *"After the feast of Pentecost, celebrate one week, then observe a fast, for justice demands rejoicing after the reception of the gifts of God and fasting after the body has been refreshed."*

Until the second half of the 3rd century, the Fast of the Holy Apostles was linked to Pentecost and lasted only for one week (Apostolic Constitutions). Later on, after the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul and following the development of the commemoration of their death around the year 258, the Apostles' Fast became linked to the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29. Consequently, it became a fasting period of preparation for the celebration of the feast of the great apostles.

St. Symeon of Thessalonica (†1429) explains: *"The Fast of the Apostles is justly established in their honor, for through them we have received numerous benefits and for us they are exemplars and teachers of the fast ... For one week after the descent of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Apostolic Constitution composed by Clement, we celebrate, and then during the following week, we fast in honor of the Apostles."*

Subsequently, the duration of the Fast of the Holy Apostles changed from one week to a variable period depending on the date of the Feast of Pascha (Easter).

### Duration of the Fast of the Apostles

The fast of the Holy Apostles starts on the second Monday after Pentecost. The duration of this fast varies, depending on the date of Pascha (Easter). The rule is that the Fast starts on the second Monday after Pentecost and ends on June 29, on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Given this, the Apostles' Fast could last as short as one day and as long as 30 days.

This year, 2021, the second Monday after Pentecost occurs on June 28<sup>th</sup>, one day before Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on the 29<sup>th</sup>, the day in which the fast ends.

## **Fasting Rules of the Fast of the Holy Apostles**

The Fast of the Holy Apostles is not as strict as the Fasts of Pascha and the Nativity of Christ; rather it is more lenient in its duration and rules. The current rules of fasting, during the Apostles' Fast, were established first for the monks of the Monastery of the Kiev Caves by Metropolitan George of Kiev (1069-1072). These rules are still practiced today amongst most Orthodox Christians with minor variations, depending on the jurisdiction.

### **The rules are:**

- 1- *Red meat, poultry, and dairy products are not allowed during the entire fasting period in all weekdays.*
- 2- *Fish, wine, and oil are allowed on all days except on Wednesdays and Fridays.*

### **Conclusion**

The Apostles fast has emerged since the very early days of Christianity. It is honored and preserved in the Church as a part of our Holy Tradition. Like all Fasts in the Orthodox Church, the Holy Apostles' Fast aims to help us put on the "armor of light" to against the attacks of the enemy that may befall during our spiritual journey to become united with God through His grace.

No better words may express the importance of fasting in our life like the words of St. Abba Isaac the Syrian who says, "*... since fasting is a weapon established by God ...the human race knew no victory before fasting, and the devil was never defeated by our nature as it is: but this weapon has indeed deprived the devil of strength from the outset... As soon as the devil sees someone possessed of this weapon (fasting), fear straightway falls on this adversary and tormentor of ours, who remembers and thinks of his defeat by the Savior in the wilderness; his strength is at once destroyed and the sight of the weapon given us by our Supreme Leader burns him up. A man armed with the weapon of fasting is always afire with zeal. He who remains therein, keeps his mind steadfast and ready to meet and repel all violent passions.*"

I wish you all then a blessed, productive Apostles' Fast this year (all one day of it)!

**+Fr. Joe DiStefano**

*Adapted from "Fast of the Holy Apostles" – Fr. Ayman kfouf*

To all my family and friends of St. Nicholas,

I would like to thank each and every one of you who help make our church so beautiful for our holy week from beginning to end. Whether you made a financial donation, helped give me hours of time and labor, or contributed to the luminaries in honor or memory of your family members, we are keeping up with traditions which are very important to me. Knowing I needed Icons and the Epitaphios decorated and beautifying our Church all in white for Holy Saturday to having a light supper after Anastasi. Many thanks to George Coutris, Mary Dimitriou, Joyell Weimer, Bob and Elena Marcum and the Philotochos for all their donations and time. Of course, I need to thank my husband, Rick Noday, for always being there to help me. Father Joe, please accept my personal "thank you" for keeping St. Nick's alive and growing.

Thanks again to everyone.

Love in Christ,

**Teddi Noday**

# Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021



His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh will be with us to celebrate the Divine Liturgy.

*Save the Date!*

## **Liturgy in the Park & Picnic**

Sunday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Boardman Park, 10am

### From the Desk of the Parish Council President

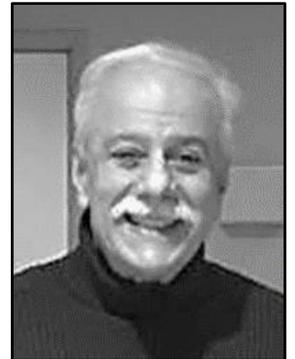
June 2021

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

Christos Anesti!

Christ has risen, He truly has given a climax to the story of Christ, the Son of God on Earth. His story is packed with many wonders, yet His resurrection stands as the greatest of all wonders!

Wherever Jesus went, he found a moral catastrophe, sadness, confusion, sin and death. Wherever he was received, he brought joy, love and new life. For Jesus, the Son of God, the passage of time is never an emergency. He possesses an infinite measure of it! His will is done, in His time! He knows what is best for us. It amazes me that someone would willfully suffer and be abused and die for His love, honoring God's will and thus opening the path for us, the morally fallen children of God to enter the presence of God. He redeemed us, this was and is God's will.



Thus, through Him we have hope, and a sure and certain future of eternity with Him as children of God as long as we believe in Him and have developed a relationship with Him and have repented our sins, transgressions, improper thoughts, actions, words and deeds.

Thus, the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ set Christianity in a category unlike any religion or philosophy or moral code. Do we realize what our divinely ordained purpose is here on earth? It is surely much more than a mere mundane existence, an imitation of life. There is a future to look forward to and the choices and decisions we make, can alter the shape of that future. We are to realize that God commands our love, honor and respect for Him and wants us living a Christ like life and doing God's will, rather than someone else or our own. This will determine our future. Don't put off making your total commitment to God. This life is not a dress rehearsal, so live life to its fullest and witness the joy and love God holds for you. Today do all you can to enhance His church, His family, and all that grows your love for your family and the brotherhood of man.

Jesus was sent by God, the Father, to be born by a human that he found worthy of the honor. Thus, He was always God, but lived and experienced life as a human. He showed us love, He taught, He served and worked miracles and suffered, was humiliated and died for us and rose, literally and physically. His glorious resurrection should and must galvanize us as orthodox Christians, for we were among the first Christians and the Greek language was one of the earliest languages that the Gospel was written in. We must be fearless and a world changing force for good in this constantly challenging world.

The salutations to the Virgin Mother, Palm Sunday and Holy week brought me and St. Nicholas church a special blessing for I can't recall so many Brothers and Sisters in Christ with their children, families and friends who came and prayed together, lit candles in Honor of the most Holy Theotokos and our Lord Jesus Christ. Good Friday services and the Anastasis service were especially heartfelt by all and love reigned in this family of Christ. We thank all of you for making this year's Easter such a well-attended and respectful honor of our God.

I especially want to thank Teddi and Rick Noday, their daughter Joyell Weimer, George Coutris, Mary Dimitriou and family and the entire Philoptochos Society and all who made it so memorable through their presence, expressions of love and donations.

We now begin to prepare for our Summerfest that will take place on July 15, 16, 17, and 18 and we need your help and donations to cover some of the expenses of this upcoming event.

Believe in the risen living savior, Jesus is Lord overall! He is alive in our hearts and asks us to love one another.

### **Socrates Kolitsos**

Your brother in Christ and fellow servant of the Lord

P.S. Christ is risen and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life reigns. St. John Chrysostom

"I am He who lives and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen and I have the keys to Hades and of death." Revelation 1:18



ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

# SUMMERFEST '21

220 N. Walnut St. Youngstown, OH  
Across from Chofin Center

Thurs., Fri., Sat., Sun.  
July 15, 16, 17, 18  
Thursday, 11am - 6pm  
Friday & Saturday 11am - 9pm  
Sunday 11am - 6pm

Lamb & Chicken Dinners All Four Days

Fish Dinners Friday Only · Gyros  
Souvlaki · Pasticho · Moussaka  
Loukoumathes · Greek Pastries

Thursday & Friday Lunch Carryouts

# Summer Camp 2021



REALIZE | REPLACE | RELEASE | RECEIVE | REJOICE

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,  
FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS"

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

**GOYA Week 1:** June 20 - June 25

**GOYA Week 2:** June 27 - July 2

**GOYA Week 3:** July 4 - July 9

**JOY Week (Online):** August 1 - August 6



**Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh Summer Camp**  
at Camp Nazareth, Mercer, PA

For more information, please visit [y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp)  
Need-based scholarships are available thanks to the generosity of Leadership 100

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

# June 2021

May '21							July '21							August '21						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1							1							1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				
30	31																			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 Great Vespers 4:30pm
6 Sunday of Blind Man Orth 9am / Liturgy 10am <i>Metropolitan Savas will be with us to celebrate</i>	7	8	9 Apodosis of Pascha Ascension Great Vespers 4:30pm	10 Holy Ascension Orth 9am / Liturgy 10am	11	12
13 Fathers of 1st Council Orth 9am / Liturgy 10am	14	15	16 Paraklesis 4:30pm	17	18	19 Great Vespers 4:30pm
20 Father's Day Holy Pentecost Orth 9am / Liturgy 10am Kneeling Prayers 11:15am	21 Fast Free	22 Fast Free	23 Paraklesis 4:30pm	24 Fast Free	25 Fast Free	26 Great Vespers 4:30pm Fast Free
27 Sunday of All Saints Orth 9am / Liturgy 10am	28 Apostles Fast Begins Fish Allowed	29 Saints Peter and Paul Orth 9am / Liturgy 10am Apostles Fast Ends	30 Paraklesis 4:30pm Wine Allowed			
		Notes				