



THE SPIRIT

EDITION — 1

5 JUNE

PENTECOST 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 18th June

Monastery Visit

Contact: Micha Chalhoub
Ph: 0403 277 488

Saturday 18th June

St George Annual Function

Contact: Alia Ayoub
Ph: 0407 393 300

Friday 24th - Sunday 26th
June

Annual Sydney ACOY Retreat

Contact: John Daher
Ph: 0438 457 670

Saturday 30th July

St Nicholas Youth Haffle

Contact: Jane Daher
Ph: 0423 387 930

Wednesday Nights

Feed The Homeless

Contact: Isabel Antoun
Ph: 0414 959 129

Your Parish Priest speaks...

My responsibility as a Father to my children in this Parish is to build and to make them grow in the fullness of Christ. This will be realised when we understand that our aim is Christ Himself. Our love to Christ is still growing because living our life in Christ is an endless process that needs from us commitment which is based on sacrifice.

I am saying this fact because we need people who will dedicate themselves and their lives in order to build our Church not by word

but by work. Therefore, my message to you is to share with me the responsibility and become aware that success is based on cooperation and the opening of our heart to each other so that we may see Christ.

The Youth in St Nicholas Church are very dedicated & organized and I am very proud of them. By their commitments they have become a living example of how to become a Christian. I hope that all of us work for the sake of Christ. May His grace be always with you.

Fr. Dr. John El Karaan

A Word From The Editor

Have you ever left Church wondering 'Is that it for another week?', 'Is that all people do here-pray?', 'What does the Church think of this issue?', 'What does this mean?', 'Is there anything else other than Church on Sundays?', 'Is there anything that interests *me*'?

Welcome to 'The Spirit'. Through this monthly newsletter we aim to answer your questions and to keep you educated, informed and interested- in the Church, the people and the events that are regularly taking place.

So take a look. Flip the page. Read that article.

You may be pleasantly surprised, find out something new or discover that *Hey! They don't only pray!*

Your Sister in Christ

Isabel Antoun

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Nursing Home Visit— Jomana Daher our resident Easter Bunny giving gifts to St Basil's Nursing Home residents.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

'God gave you 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say "Thank you"?'



PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

To keep you informed as to what is happening with the broader Parish community, **Michael Bitar** of the Parish Council has provided us with the following important points:

1. St Nicholas Building Extension committee was formed in November 2010 with its main objective to oversee the building work and raise funds from our Parishioners.
2. A letter from Fr John and Fr Romanos, a pamphlet showing

the 3 stages of the building works and a contact list were posted out to 750 families in April 2011. Full visual displays of the Church renovations and architectural plans were displayed in front of the church for all to view during Holy Week.

3. Stage I of the renovation works has been completed and work has commenced on Stage II. Priority will be given to complete the refurbishment of the hall including a new kitchen, amenities, storage, tiling etc.

4. Donations for the Icons, Wall Icons, Benches, Holy Table, Cantor, Bishop's side thrown and chandelier have all been received.

5. Ladies Committee has submitted a comprehensive program of activities for 2011. Our Annual dinner will be held on Friday 4 November 2011 at The Grand Royale.

Detailed plans of the Church renovations have been made available for viewing on the home page of the St Nicholas website.

www.stnicholaspunchbowl.org.au

DID YOU KNOW?

- On Orthodox crucifixes, Jesus' hands are outstretched, not raised above His head and His feet are placed flat side by side to show that He is not weak despite what He was going through. On Catholic crucifixes, Jesus' hands are nailed above His head and His feet are nailed crossed over.



Orthodox

Catholic

- When making the Sign of the Cross, we join the thumb, the index and middle finger of our right hand together which symbolises the Holy Trinity- Father, Son & Holy Spirit. We also bend the remaining two fingers against our palm which symbolise the two natures of Christ - The Divine and The Human. We touch our forehead which signifies that God is in our mind, touch our chest (God is in our hearts) and touch our shoulders (God is in our body). We cross ourselves from right to left because in the Bible, the Lord separated the sheep from the goats, putting the faithful sheep on His right side and the goats on the left. Also the Bible says Jesus is seated at the RIGHT hand of the Father.

- The word 'Orthodox' is derived from the Greek word 'Orthodoxos', which literally means 'Correct (Orthos) Belief (doxa)'.

PAST EVENTS



March-Saturday Night Bowling- A group of 25 or so of the youth headed down to the local bowling alley to play 2 games of bowling, hang out and of course eat together. Letting our competitive streaks shine, we all did our best to out do and out score each other. The night ended on a high, with the winners of each game ecstatic, the losers wiping away their tears and the ones in between blaming the absence of the bumper bars for their mediocre scores. All in all, it was a great night full of laughter, tears and good food. So next time, join us, we might bowl you over.

April 10 2010- Nursing Home Visit - A group of youths along with Father Jean visited St Basil's Greek Orthodox Nursing Home in Lakemba, bearing gifts and wearing bunny ears to help celebrate the Holy Pascha. We chanted various Orthodox verses ending with 'Christos Anesti' when to our surprise and delight, the entire room of residents joined in. With smiles on all staff and resident's faces, we handed out gifts and chatted with residents. In all 200+ gifts were given out and 200+ residents' days were brightened. St Basils greatly appreciated our visit as did we. Each and every person who went felt a sense of community, left happy and were looking forward to returning again.

Wednesday Nights- Monthly- Feed The Homeless- On a cold, dark Wednesday night, we head to Wynyard Park where 15-20 homeless people are waiting for us to arrive. With boxes of Domino's pizza, bags of chips, tea, coffee and biscuits in hand, we serve the homeless and chat to them about anything and everything. I meet a man who used to be a photographer, another with 9 pet rats and an Asian man who loves basketball. We come to realise, that despite the fact that we all come from different walks of life, we are all essentially the same- we love good food, good company and a good chat. After 1.5 hours, we head back home to the comfort of our warm homes, wondering how the people we met will spend their night. Those who have attended so far have found it an amazing, enriching and life-changing experience- one that everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime.



The Lives of Saints - St Paraskevi (Feast Day July 26)

Beautiful. Educated. Rich. Understanding. Kind. Seems like the life and qualities that every woman would want. Not St Paraskevi. Despite her beauty, desirability, and countless marriage proposals, she rejected each one, gave up her riches and followed a life dedicated to Christ in a time of persecution for Christians.

St Paraskevi endured many trials, especially at the hands of Roman emperor, Antonius Pius, from which many miracles occurred. After having her arrested, infatuated by her beauty and humility, he begged her kindly to denounce her faith, offering to take her as his wife, but she refused. Infuriated, Antonius ordered that St Paraskevi be imprisoned and beaten until she died. He had a steel helmet lined with nails placed on her head, he hung her by her hair and burned her hands and arms with torches.

However, these had no impact on her and many who witnessed these miracles converted to Christianity. In a final attempt to kill her, Antonius had St Paraskevi immersed in a cauldron of boiling water, tar, and oil. Miraculously she stood as if she were being cooled rather than burned. Antonius believed magic was used so St Paraskevi took some of the boiling liquid and splashed it in his face, blinding him. She told him that only the Christian God could cure him and immediately he regained his sight and thus is known as the healer of the blind. St Paraskevi was eventually beheaded but not after overcoming many more torturous acts and performing many more miracles. **Want to read more? Visit <http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Paraskevi.htm>**

Q&A

Many of my non-Orthodox friends relatives have been cremated but I don't think anyone Orthodox I know has. Is cremation allowed in our Church?

A simple answer would be no, but let me provide you with the reasons behind this. The Orthodox faith believes that the body is an integral part of the human person and that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The fact and belief that Jesus Himself was resurrected in His whole human nature - both body and soul is the fundamental reason behind the Orthodox Church's rejection of cremation. It is viewed as a direct opposition to this belief and also a deliberate violation and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us. Instead of cremation, we believe in the reverent burial of the body beginning with a proper Church funeral where prayers are read and hymns and psalms are sung for the person who has fallen asleep with the Lord. Myrrh and oil are poured on the body as was done at Baptism. Incense and candles are also used to symbolise our belief that the person has been liberated from darkness and is going to the True Light. The body is then put in a grave facing the East to symbolise the Resurrection to come. The Priest will also go to the cemetery with the family where more prayers are read over the body before burial. Those Orthodox Christians who choose to be cremated will also be granted a Church funeral. However, the Priest will not attend the actual cremation and thus the last prayers are not read.

Source: Why Orthodox Christians Are Not Cremated. Compiled by Fr John Touloumes.

GOT A QUESTION? ... SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS TO: stnicholaspunchbowl@gmail.com.au