



THE SPIRIT

EDITION — 3

7 August 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday 19th August
Indoor Sports Competition
 Contact: Bechara Bitar
 Ph: 0425 249 445

Friday 26th August
Vigil Night
 Contact: Micha Chalhoub
 Ph: 0403 277 488

Wednesday Nights
Feed The Homeless
 Contact: Christine Eskaff
 Ph: 0408 684 048

Friday Nights
Monthly Movie Night
 Contact: Micha Chalhoub
 Ph: 0403 277 488

Friday Nights
Scout's Drum Practice
 Contact: Elias Attallah
 Ph: 0416 631 436

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

'It is better to be silent and real, than to talk and be unreal. Whoever truly possesses the Word of Jesus, can also hear His silence.'

-Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to the Ephesians.
 (Chapter 15: 1-2)



THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

What is the Dormition of the Theotokos, you are wondering? What does it mean? Why is it so important? Why is it celebrated? Are all these questions making you feel stressed, confused and curious? Well stress no longer and put your mind at ease, with answers to your questions.

The Dormition or the 'Falling Asleep' of the Theotokos is celebrated on August 15 and commemorates the death, resurrection and veneration of Christ's Mother. Mary died as all people die because of her mortal human nature that was invisibly bound by the corruption of this world. She like us, needed to be saved by Christ from the trials, sufferings and death of this world.

At the time of her passing, the Apostles were preaching the Gospel in all different parts of the world, when they were miraculously transported (except for Thomas) on the clouds of Heaven to the bier of the All-Blessed Virgin and were present with her when she passed.

On the third day Thomas arrived and was greatly saddened that he had not been there at the time of her passing. He asked the Apostles to open the tomb as he wished to bid her farewell. Taking pity on him, the Apostles opened the tomb, only to discover it empty.

Mary was raised, by her Son, Jesus Christ, as the 'Mother of Life' and participates in the Eternal Life of Paradise which is prepared and promised to all who 'hear the Word of God and keep it.' (Luke 11:

27-28).

The Feast is preceded by a strict 14 day Fast (August 1- August 14) to help us in our preparation for the celebration of the Dormition of the Theotokos. The Paraklesis Service (Service of Supplication) is celebrated every week day of the Fast, with the Divine Liturgy being celebrated on August 15.

The Feast reminds us of the Theotokos' intercessory role in Paradise and her unflinching hope and mediation. Neither the tomb nor death had power over her. She was resurrected, both Soul and body as the 'Mother of Life' and taken to Heaven; the same reward that awaits all the righteous on the Last Day.

A Word From The Editor

Welcome to the third edition of 'The Spirit'.

We hope you have enjoyed the first two editions of this newsletter as we are about to make it bigger and better! No you are not seeing double and no you have not picked up two copies attached together. We have expanded the newsletter to 4 pages, so don't worry you are not losing your mind! (Well, for now anyways!). This edition includes new articles, more pictures and now allows you to start meeting others in your Church Youth community through our new Youth Profiling section.

Before you groan and complain that 'Oh no! Now there is more to read!' give it a chance. Flip through the pages. Skim read. Take a peek at the pictures. I guarantee something will catch your eye and once it does, you'll be hooked and wanting more!

As Christopher Morley once said; 'There are three ingredients in the good life: Learning, earning and yearning.' **Learn** more about your faith. **Earn** your Spiritual Reward. **Yearn** for Eternal Life with Christ. Then you will be living the 'good' life. This newsletter aims to help you achieve this. Let us know if it is.

Your Sister In Christ
 Isabel Antoun

P A S T E V E N T S



ACOY Sydney Youth Retreat - Friday 24th June – Sunday 26th June

After a delayed Arab start, a group of St Nicholas Youth along with youth from other Sydney and Melbourne parishes headed down to Crosslands Youth & Convention Centre Campsite nestled away from civilisation and surrounded by the Berowa River. With no reception, internet access or TV's, we had truly left the world behind and had entered what was to be the most amazing weekend away yet.



Keeping to the agenda planned, we played getting to know you games, participated in The Amazing Race and listened to three talks given by Father Basillios, Father Nabil and Father Isaac, all relating to the retreat's theme of 'Vanity Fair'. Also on the agenda was a Q & A session with the Priests, with the floor open to any questions from us retreaters. There were questions about relationships, tattoos, piercing, wearing excess makeup, organ donation and so on.



Each question was answered by the Priests in regards to the Church's views on these topics and opened up for further discussion by us retreaters. After an hour or so of questions, we all headed outside to a huge bonfire, where songs were sung, people were chanting and marshmallows were melting. Free time was spent playing cards, bushwalking, canoeing and capsizing. All in all, it was a great spiritual weekend away, where new friendships were formed, old friendships were strengthened and our faith deepened. A big thank you to all those who helped – cooks, cleaners & event organisers. We hope that the next one will be as good as this.

Punchbowl's Biggest Sebheyyeh – Saturday 9th July

Move over Australia's Biggest Morning Tea! Punchbowl's Biggest Sebheyyeh has arrived in town! And what an entrance it made!

On the early hours of Saturday morning, when most people sleep in, the St Nicholas Church house was buzzing with activity. From the Ladies Committee making the manoush and cheese manoush, to the youth who were busy preparing the food, cooking the bacon and setting up the tables & chairs, all were working together to ensure that this event was a success. At 9.30am, we had our first batch of people walk through the door (30mins before the event start time – that's a first!). By 10.30am we had approximately 80 people in attendance, many of which had also brought a plate to share with them. As all were taken by the aroma of the food that filled the room, Father John blessed the food and people ate while a welcoming speech was given and a presentation shown. Games, music, raffles and winners of the lucky door prize and olive guessing jar followed but the highlight of the morning had to be the Priests competing in the Peeling the Carrots game. After explaining how to hold a peeler and how it worked, the game was under way with Father Romanos being declared the winner, after being the first to successfully peel 5 carrots.

Thank you to all those who attended the event and helped establish our St Nicholas Charity Fund – an initiative by the youth to help those in need inside and outside of our community. It was truly a fun and original event that brought everyone together- the youth, the Ladies Committee, the Priests as well as the Churches with people from St Mary's and St Peter and Paul attending the event also – a first in as long as we can remember!



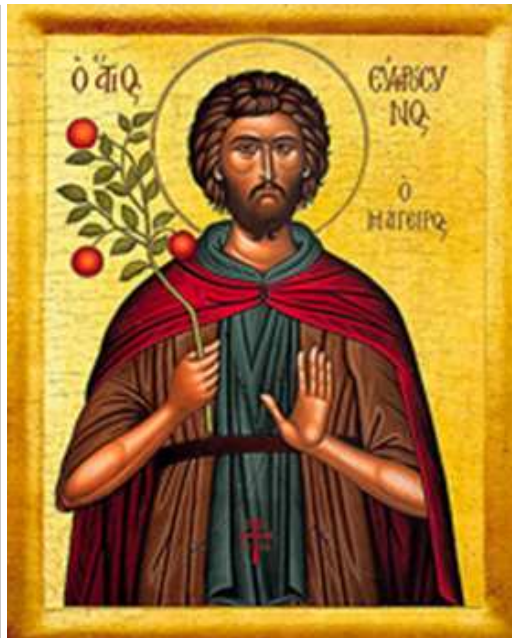
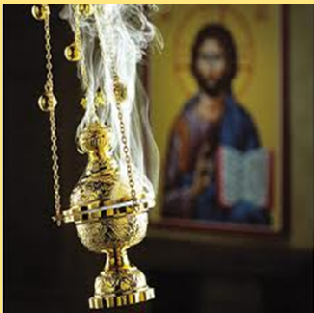
DID YOU KNOW?

-Most icons are painted in egg tempura on wood, but some are created with mosaic tiles, ivory, or other materials.

-The scenes depicted in icons usually relate to liturgical celebrations rather than directly to historical events.

-Orthodox Christians do not worship icons, but they venerate them greatly because of their participation in Heaven's reality.

-A Censer is a symbol of prayer, for as the smoke of incense soars upward, so too prayer ascends to God (Rev. 8:4 and Ps. 141:2).



The Lives of Saints -St Euphrosynos the Cook

Despite suffering continuous abuse and disparagements from his fellow brothers in the monastery where he lived, Saint Euphrosynos remained incredibly patient, humble, obedient and kind.

Euphrosynos laboured in the kitchen day and night over a scorching cook stove to serve his fellow brothers with great humility and submissiveness as though they were not men but God Himself. While labouring for the brethren, St. Euphrosynos focused his thoughts upon God, and constantly fasted and prayed. One day a certain Priest who lived in the same monastery prayed fervently to the Lord and in a dream that night he saw what Paradise is like. He also saw there, the cook Euphrosynos. In this dream St Euphrosynos picked three apples,

wrapped them in a cloth, and gave them to the Priest.

The Priest awoke and found in his handkerchief the three apples that he had received from Euphrosynos in the vision. They gave off an ineffable fragrance. The Priest then found St. Euphrosynos in church and asked him under oath where he was the night before. The Saint answered that he was where the Priest also was.

The Priest summoned the brethren and showed them the three apples from Paradise, and he told them exactly what had occurred. They marveled at what they were told by the Priest. They hurried to find Euphrosynos but he had left the Church and hid from the glory of men, and no one knew where he had gone. It is pointless to inquire into his whereabouts, for if he had access to Paradise, where could he not have hidden himself?

The brethren divided the apples among themselves and distributed pieces of them. Whoever ate of these apples was healed.

By the prayers of the venerable Euphrosynos, may the Lord deem us also worthy to dwell in Paradise. Amen.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — RE-ELECTIONS
MONDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER
HAVE YOUR SAY OR COME ALONG AND NOMINATE YOURSELF
FOR A ROLE!

Contact John Daher on 0438 457 670 for more info.

BOOK REVIEW

Want to read a book, but don't know what? Check this out:

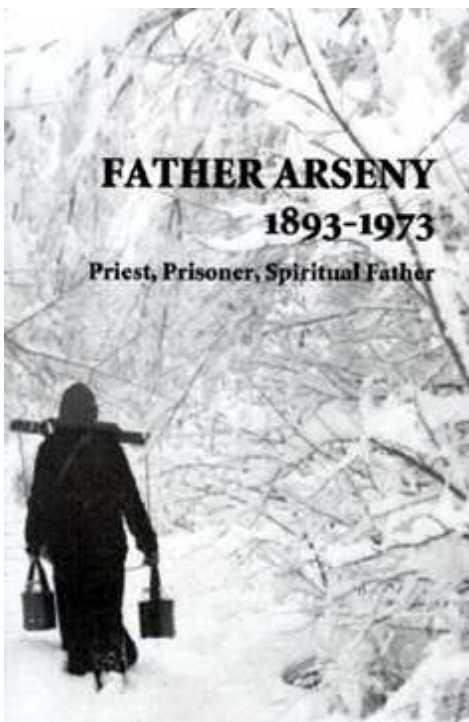
Title: Father Arseny 1893-1973: Priest, Prisoner, Spiritual Father

Description: It is one of the great mysteries of life that in atmospheres of the harshest cruelty, a certain few not only survive but emerge as beacons of light and life. Father Arseny, former scholar of church art, became Prisoner No. 18736 in the brutal "special sector" of the Soviet prison camp system. In the darkness of systematic degradation of body and soul, he shone with the light of Christ's peace and compassion. His sights set on God and his life grounded in the Church, Father Arseny lived by injunction to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

This narrative, compiled from accounts of Father Arseny's spiritual children and others whom he brought to God, gives stirring glimpses of his life in prison camp and after his release. It also tells the stories of people whose lives, often during times of almost unimaginable crisis, were touched and transfigured through their connection with Father Arseny.

Emerging from the context of the particular tragedies of Soviet Russia, this book carries a universal impact certain to be felt by readers in the West today.

AVAILABLE FOR BORROWING AT THE NEW ST NICHOLAS LIBRARY, OPENING SOON!



Youth Profiling

Name: Sally Attallah

Age: 29

Role: Bookshop Assistant

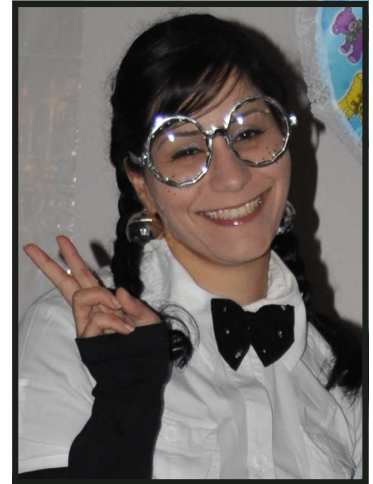
Favourite Colour: Blue

Favourite Food: Ice cream

Favourite Day of the Week: Any day except Monday to Friday

Favourite TV Show/Movie: 7th Heaven & Touched By An Angel

Favourite Quote: 'Sharing is Caring'



If you could do one thing that will help make a difference to people's lives, what would it be?

I'm not really good at answering these kind of questions. I don't know how to put words to paper or how to express what I would like to say. I wish I had more time to be able to make a difference. How? By pretty much being there, lending a hand. St Nicholas Youth every so often will do community work. I'd like to be more part of that especially helping with feeding the homeless. But we can always start improving the community by just walking outside. A simple smile will always make a difference to that one individual it's aimed at. It's an amazing feeling, smiling at a stranger and you see their face just light up. I always like to make sure that whoever I meet knows that I'm always willing to help whenever needed.



Q & A How often should we receive Holy Communion?

To receive Communion two or three times a year is good and helpful, but to receive Communion more frequently is far better. Remember, the nearer a person comes to the Light, the more Light he gets. The closer he draws to the fire, the warmer he is. The nearer he approaches sanctity, the more saintly he becomes.

It will be nice for a Christian person to be united with the Lord once or twice a month in order to live a good and active spiritual life. It is a grave sin not to receive Holy Communion for many years, except if the Spiritual Father has put a restriction for a period of time. The maximum period of time for which a restriction can be put in place according to the Canon Law is two years, in extreme conditions.

"My friend, if you are worthy to make your Communion two or three times a year, you are worthy of making it more often"; as St John Chrysostom tells us, by maintaining your own earlier preparation and worthiness. But what does stop us from taking Communion? The answer is our carelessness and laziness, and we give way to these faults so much that we are not sufficiently prepared to be able to receive Communion.

It is both necessary and very beneficial to the Soul for a person to receive Communion frequently. It is also in obedience with the commandment of God. It is a good deed well done and well-pleasing to God.

However it is important to note that not anybody can receive Holy Communion. First of all, one must fast and go to Holy Confession, in order to clean oneself from any temptation in deed and in thought.

Thus it is important to receive Holy Communion as frequently as possible but only when one is prepared; that is, when one has fasted and confessed their sins. Through Holy Communion, we form a closer union with our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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