

LIVING WATER

The Monthly Newsletter of Christ the Saviour Orthodox Cathedral ❖ Dec 2023



Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

One of the perennial problems amongst Orthodox Christians is the confusion between “Big T” traditions and “Small T” traditions. The former consist of official doctrine, liturgical practices, and ascetical discipline. We call this “Holy Tradition.” The latter consist of national and family customs. Ideally, these lesser traditions would build upon or illuminate Holy Tradition and not be confused for a universal teaching or practice of the Church.

A good example of such a positive custom is the adornment of Christmas trees. Although this practice originated in Central Europe in the medieval period and only later spread to Orthodox lands, the Tannenbaum has become a standard symbol of the Nativity in both the private homes of Orthodox Christians and even the temple itself. The evergreen branches represent eternal life, the ornaments represent the fruit of the Tree of Life in Paradise, and the lights represent the Uncreated Light of Christ.

However, there also holiday customs that contradict Holy Tradition. Some of these began as harmless pastimes and only later expanded and began to compete with the true meaning of feast. Or sometimes they come from non-Orthodox origins, and are simply incompatible with Holy Tradition. This is especially the case with Orthodox Christians living in America. We are surrounded by non-Orthodox traditions, and therefore must be very careful in discerning which of these customs we adopt, or how we apply them in our lives.

In Miami, we are immersed in many such customs that originated outside of Orthodoxy. One such practice is “Nochebuena.” This presents a good case study for our American Orthodox Church. The original intent of Nochebuena is indeed good (excuse the pun), as it reflects a desire to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. However, many Orthodox allow this celebration to take the place of the normal cycle of Nativity services, including the Christmas

Eve Vigil and festal Liturgy. Often, this tendency is justified as being a respect for culture or family customs. But when local custom trumps Holy Tradition, this should signal a problem and inspire us to think more deeply.

Holy Tradition has established that Christmas be honored first by preparatory fasting (up through the Divine Liturgy for the feastday) and then by celebrating only after receiving Christ himself in the Eucharist. So how do we balance this “Big T” tradition of Orthodoxy with family commitments and local customs connected to Nochebuena?

At our Cathedral, we were blessed a few years ago by the Archbishop to serve the great feasts in the monastic pattern, with a full vigil on the eve of the feast followed by the Divine Liturgy. This enables us to serve the entire Christmas cycle of services on Christmas Eve and break the fast afterward. For those who celebrate Nochebuena, this is an opportunity to attend the services, and then leave after Liturgy that evening to attend family gatherings and feasts. Of course, this means that the attendees must be willing to sacrifice some of their time with family, or arrive late to the meal.

But these are small sacrifices for our devotion to Christ, and a good way to balance the two “T’s” this season.

Balancing our personal life and family traditions with the Orthodox lifestyle is not always easy. What is important is that we make the effort to follow the ancient way, and put everything else in its proper place. For those who have converted to Orthodox Christianity, there is always room for “Small T” traditions that accentuate the beauty of our faith. But let us be careful to approach these customs in the right way so that they do not conflict with the timeless, universal Holy Tradition established by the Apostles and Fathers.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the author.





**Christ the Saviour
Orthodox Cathedral**
16601 NW 77th Court
Miami Lakes, FL 33016
ph. (305) 822-0437
Cathedral@OrthodoxMiami.org

**Offering the Living Water
to Southeast Florida.**

Visit our website for news, announcements
and changes to our schedule.

www.OrthodoxMiami.org

Announcements

✦ *Parish Work Day*
Parish Work Day will be moved to Dec 16 so that we can prepare the grounds for the upcoming holidays.

✦ *Two Great Saints*
Join us for the Liturgies on Dec 6 and 13 to honor St Nicholas and St Herman.

✦ *Christmas Schedule*
On Sunday, Dec 24 we will serve Liturgy at 10 AM followed by a Holy Supper Agape Hour and performances from the youth. The Nativity Vigil begins at 4 PM that day, followed by Liturgy around 6 PM. You can bring baskets of non-fasting food to share after the service. There will be NO SERVICES on Mon, Dec 25.

Clergy

Fr. Joseph Lucas, PhD., MDiv.
*Rector of the Cathedral
Dean of South Florida*

Dn. Carlos Miranda, MDiv.

Minor Orders

Sbdn. Michael Richards
Rdr. Anthony Brian Allen
Rdr. Nilus Wawerczyk
Rdr. Anthony Saborio

Retired Attached

Fr. Michael Zaparyniuk
Fr. Leonid Palceski

Parish Council

Rdr Nilus Wawerczyk - Warden, Treasurer
Nicole Mary Richards - Secretary
Rdr Anthony Brian Allen - Council Member
Duane Patrick Clarke - Council Member
Vernon Andrew Lee - Council Member
William Wusylko - Council Member
Henry Campos - Social Media Manager

Choir

Elena Voronkova - Director

Orthodox Book Center

Rdr Nilus Wawerczyk - Director

Financial Secretary

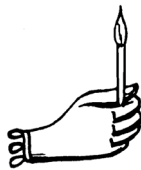
J. Thomas Hornsey

Office Secretary

Hope Petipren

Prayer List for Healing

Bianca Iulia Goean / Ayesha Doten
Elena Voronkova / Karen Vera Budowski
Norma Skuby / Vernon Andrew Lee
Edward White / Georgette Hartner
Melissa Alvarez Font / Angela Allen
Catherine and Elena Morris
Georgina Nikolic / Mary Perkins
Jennifer Mary, Josiah, & Gabriela Heredia



Children,

I beseech you to correct your hearts and thoughts, so that you may be pleasing to God. Consider that although we may reckon ourselves to be righteous and frequently succeed in deceiving men, we can conceal nothing from God. Let us therefore strive to preserve the holiness of our souls and to guard the purity of our bodies with all fervor.

- St Nicholas of Myra and Lycia

December Birthdays

- 2 Hannah Butcher
- 6 Victoria Hornsey
- 6 Skye (Ourania) Martinez
- 7 Ann Zipper
- 7 Camila (Serafina) Sarmiento
- 8 Henry Campos
- 10 Mercedes Cortes
- 10 Daniel Martinez
- 11 Andrei Voronkova
- 12 Marcus Jammes
- 12 James Shiskin
- 14 Natasha Campos
- 14 William Wasylko
- 15 Cristian Lucas
- 16 Ava Campos
- 16 Ioann Pineros
- 20 William Raynes
- 25 Luis Rodriguez
- 27 Edward White
- 31 Nghia Nguyen
- 31 Tamara Wagner
- 31 Carrie Wasylko

December Anniversaries

- 22 Edward & Clarice White
- 23 Marcus & Donna Jammes

Wish List

Creamers and 1/2 & 1/2 for Agape Hour

*Manischewitz Concord Grape Wine
for Zapivka (after communion)*

Olive Oil for Lamps

*Winn Dixie / Publix Gift-Cards
for the Needy*

Books or Rolls of Stamps

Costco Colombian Coffee

*Home Depot Gift Cards
for Parish Gardening / Tools*