



SAINT IRENE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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33rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS

My dear parish family of St. Irene's,
It is with a heavy but grateful heart that I am writing this letter to you.
How quickly time flies! After three and a half very joyful and rewarding years serving this community, Bishop Thomas Olmsted has given me a new assignment. I remember walking into the parish hall and later into our beautiful church like it was yesterday. I celebrated the first Divine Liturgy on August 4, 2019 here as Pastor of this amazing parish. Since that first moment of encounter, we have been through a lot together and, I believe, have become a closer family as a result. My greatest treasure is the openness with which you shared your lives with me. From the joy of Baptisms, Weddings, First Communions, Solemn Communion, Chrismation, and our celebration of the Eucharist together to the sadness of praying by the bedside of a loved one and anointing them with the blessed oil (Anointing of the Sick) and even the grief of laying a loved one to rest in the hope of eternal life (Funeral and Burial).
You prayed and worked with me. You laughed with me and you cried with me. I want to thank each and every one of you for the kindness and love you have shown me during these years together. I have learned that you love your priests, no matter how imperfect we may be. As a parish family, we managed to do several joint projects.
However, the church is people, not a structure. The greatest challenge for the future lies in bringing a renovation to living stones, which is a much harder process because it deals with the changing of minds and hearts. I truly believe that the best days of St. Irene Parish lie ahead as individuals and families decide to become Eastern Catholics and choose St. Irene as their spiritual home.
I have every confidence that Fr. Daniel Dozier will become a good leader of our parish community for the coming years and continue the work that we have begun to become "one body, one spirit in Christ." Change can be difficult, but as parish priests, we pledge our obedience to the Bishop as he discerns what is best for our Eparchy. I am very grateful to him for giving me such a wonderful assignment at St. Irene Church, an assignment that I will never forget. I ask you to please pray for him and for all our Eparchial priests. Change is never easy; everyone wants things to be different but hesitates when it directly impacts them. This will be no different for a parish community that is slowly developing to answer the call of discipleship at this time and season in the life of the Church. Like a child maturing into adulthood, growth can sometimes be a key process as muscles, tendons, and bones expand, but the end result is maturity. My prayer is that you will grow to maturity together, even if it sometimes hurts, causes confusion, or even stirs within us our deepest fears. The call of the gospel is demanding, but it can be accomplished through love.
Words cannot express how grateful I am for your love and support during these past few years. The only thing I ask of you is that you pray for me, as I pray for you. Know that you will always hold a special place in my heart and that no matter where the Lord might call me to serve in the years ahead, you will always remain in my prayers. I will be forever grateful for your patience, understanding, faith, and, above all, your love.
I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely apologize to anyone I may have treated rudely, did not have time for, or if I did anything to offend you. Please know that that was never my intention, and I ask for your forgiveness.
This farewell has allowed me to pause, look back, and count my blessings that I have received while serving this community. I can see how God has guided me along the way and helped me to lead others to Christ. I pray to God that he will continue to shower his blessings and love on this community.
The fundamental rule of my life is to follow Jesus. As I follow him into this new avenue of ministry, please pray for me and for my family that we will be a blessing to St. Nicholas Church. Pray that God will increase that parish and let the parish of St. Irene also grow by the grace of God.
From the very bottom of my heart, I thank you for these amazing and fruitful years together. I will miss you a lot. May God abundantly bless you and keep you; may the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. May the peace of Christ be with you all.

Fr. Vasyl, Pastor of St Irene Byzantine Catholic Church

Please remember in your prayers:



For health and salvation: Fr. Christopher Andrews, Fr. Chris Zugger, Tony and family, Michael Baron, Ed, Dennis, Max, Pani Mary, Mary, Vasyl Zhabko, Faye, Jessica, Sophia, Diane Pierce, Vincent Carich, Tusita Docie & Scott Docie, Sarah Docie, Emily Docie, Mia Docie, Martin, Louis Boudousquie, Bill Reid

For the repose of the departed: +Bishop Gerald N Dino, +Fr. Frank Knusel, +Brenda Washicko, +Frank Sliwinski, Jr., +Lawrence & Lucille Carich, +Ivan & Matilda Carich, +Josip & Amanda Grabovac, +George Pavlakovich, +Carol Pavlakovich, +Bud & Virginia Arnold, +Israel Castillo Lara, +Jesse Gonzalez, +John, +Lucy Ortiz, +Martha Williams, +Martin Brandenfels, +Gail Parker, +Manuel Rodriguez, +Elizabeth Rodriguez, +Diane Walsh, +Fransica Rodriguez, +Nancy Bailey
Please let Father know if you would like to add new names to our prayer list.

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL: "Today salvation has come to this house." Our Great God and Savior has come to save the world. Have you experienced His salvation in your "house"? Would you like to share this life with the world through a calling to holy orders, religious or monastic life? Contact the Vocations Office at 206-329-9219 or email: vocations@ephx.org

Thank you to all who helped to undecorate our church and hall last Sunday. May God bless you!

Thus it was spoken by the One Whose word is life and joy and restoration of the righteous. Just as the bleak forest clothes itself into greenery and flowers from the breath of spring, so does every man, regardless of how arid and darkened by sin, becomes fresh and youthful from the nearness of Christ. For the nearness of Christ is as the nearness of some life-giving and fragrant balsam which restores health, increases life, give fragrance to the soul, to the thoughts and to the words of man. In other words, distance from Christ means decay and death and His nearness means salvation and life.

"Today, salvation has come to this house" said the Lord upon entering the house of Zacchaeus the sinner. Christ was the salvation that came and Zacchaeus was the house into which He entered. Brethren, each one of us is a house in which sin dwells as long as Christ is distant and to which salvation comes when Christ approaches it. Nevertheless, will Christ approach my house and your house? That depends on us. Behold, He did not arbitrarily enter the house of the sinner Zacchaeus, rather He entered as a most desired guest. Zacchaeus of little stature climbed into a tree in order to see the Lord Jesus with his own eyes. Zacchaeus, therefore, sought him; Zacchaeus desired Him. We must also seek Him in order to find Him and desire Him in order that He would draw nearer to us and, with our spirit, to climb high in order to encounter His glance. Then He will visit our house as He visited the house of Zacchaeus and with Him salvation will come. Draw near to us O Lord, draw near and bring to us Your eternal salvation. To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

St. Nikolai Serbian

On-line Giving:



or go to web page
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click on "DONATE"

Thank you for your donation!
God save you!

Tithes & Attendance:

January 15

- Tithes: \$331.00**
- Candles: \$70.05**
- Christmas offering: \$250.00**
- Christmas flowers: \$100.00**
- Manger (Nativity Basket): \$7.75**
- Gift shop: \$198.00**
- Attendance: 23**

Thank you for your support and love for our Parish.

2022-23 Fall / Winter ECF Class

All courses are offered as live webinars, free of charge. Register at <https://godwithusonline.org/events/lifting-the-veil/>

LIFTING THE VEIL

Mystical Understanding of the Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy makes present the events of salvation history and allows us to participate in the worship of God along with the whole cosmos. In this series, guided by Scripture and saints such as Maximos the Confessor and Symeon of Thessaloniki, we will explore the Church's mystical interpretation of the Divine Liturgy and how it draws us to participate in the entirety of salvation.

Instructor: Rev. Thomas Moses

When: Wednesdays, January 25th @ 8 - 9pm ET