

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

November 17th, 2024

21st Sunday after Pentecost

St. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neo-Caesarea (266-70)

Ven. Nikon, Abbot of Radonezh, disciple of Ven. Sergius (1426)

Activities and Events this Week

- Tuesday 19 Adult Education 6:00pm
 Thriving Parishes Project Meeting 6:00pm
- Wednesday 20 Great Vespers w/ Litya 6:00pm
 Forefeast of the Entrance
- Thursday 21 Hours 8:40am
 Divine Liturgy 9:00am
 Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos
 St. John Brotherhood Meeting 6:00pm
- Saturday 23 Thriving Parishes Project Training 9am – 2pm
 Catechism 3:00pm
 Great Vespers 5:00pm

Announcements

On the Calendar:

Baptism of Gabriel Hippen Nov. 30 at 11am

Setting up and decorating Christmas tree – Myrrhbearers –Dec. 1st

St. Nicholas Celebration, Sunday Dec. 8 – *In connection to our St. Nicholas celebration. We are asking that parents/Grandparents wrap a gift for each child participating in the St. Nicholas celebration. We are also asking along with the gift you write a brief description of something well your child did to make St. Nicholas proud and something that St. Nicholas noticed needs to be improved upon. These will be shared with the child upon receiving his gift. I have seen where parents make this a humorous time for everyone. We will have our normal program that day. The full program will be forth coming as well as opportunities to help!*

Oiconomia (Economia)

This term refers to “pastoral flexibility” in the application of mercy and practical wisdom in situations where strict adherence to the “letter of the law” might lead to unnecessary hardship or fail to achieve the intended spiritual benefit.

In the spirit of the Nativity Fast some people cannot practice the strict observance of abstaining from meat or dairy foods. Economia which resides with the Bishop, can be applied for individuals that have specific dietary needs or concerns where strict observance may compromise the health of the individual.

In the Orthodox Church of North America (the U.S. in particular) many churches allow or encourage the application of economia for the faithful to participate in our national celebration of Thanksgiving. Of course the faithful, if so desired, are encouraged to keep the integrity of the fast as well. Many Orthodox Christians celebrate Thanksgiving the Sunday prior to the beginning of the fast, as we did here at St. Mary’s and many celebrate Thanksgiving with the Canadians (2nd Monday in October – strange eh?)

Economia also means that something done in this spirit can be removed or done away with. For example it was common for us here at St. Mary’s to sing Panikhida’s on Sundays. Sundays of course are not the proper times for these services as this is our weekly celebration of the resurrection. So though Economia, because many people did not come to church except on Sundays, we started singing the Panikhida on Sundays. In this case what was intended to be an exception became the rule and the Archbishop simply removed the economia from His churches in the Diocese.

Economia is not intended for the spiritually weak, lazy, and indifferent members of the Church. We all need to strive to obey and embrace what the Church offers in asceticism as she offers the great wisdom. Here is an important point! When someone is granted economia, it is necessary that they do not scandalize people. Weaker minded individuals will often think that they too can adopt the economia offered to someone or worse yet, invent their own.

When someone does receive economia, it may be for only a short time. Also understand that no two individuals may receive the same economia for a similar situation. The priest, acting with the mind of the Bishop, also needs to judge based on the individual’s spiritual state as not everyone is on the same level. Some are very advanced in the spiritual way while other still need warm milk. ☺ Brothers and Sisters, if you are capable, embrace the fast. If you are not capable, embrace it in some way! Economia is meted out only in extreme circumstances and ultimately for the benefit of the individual who truly needs the dispensation. So... what happens if we simply disregard the fast? I would say... nothing happens, and that is a problem. Too many of us westerners and even the super duper Orthodox among us are often satisfied with little to no spiritual growth. Many may be more interested in the smells and bells, and not in the real opportunity given to us by the Church to grow in Christ.