



**St. Nicholas**

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**Orthodox Church**

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## **December 6, 2020**

*26th Sunday after Pentecost – Afterfeast of the Entry of the Theotokos  
Commemoration of St. Amphilocheus, bishop of Iconium (395 AD)*

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***During the Nativity Fast***, Orthodox Christians prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ. Similar to the period of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast was established by the Church as a time for repentance. If we look around in the church during this time, we do not yet see the Christmas colors of red and green. During the Nativity Fast, we see vestments and cloths that are purple, a color that is a symbol of repentance.

So, two things are happening around us during this time, and both are

called “*the Christmas season.*” Some of the things during this season are “secular” and others, which are more important, are “sacred.” Secular things are not “bad.” There is a time and place for them. But we should not allow secular things and parties to take the place of Church observances.

### ***Why does the Church have time periods called “Fasts”?***

We know that some things are “secular” and some things are “sacred.” If we spend too much time doing what is “secular” then we have less time for God, Who loves each of us and gives us many blessings, for

which we must remember to thank Him. A Fasting period helps us to draw closer to God. The Orthodox Church teaches that there is a close connection between the body and the soul, so what happens to one affects the other. Fasting means abstaining from (avoiding, or not having, or not doing) certain things.

One aspect of Fasting involves eating less and avoiding certain kinds of foods. It's not that God wants us to be undernourished. Food is good for us and necessary for health. But learning to control what we eat and when we eat is a spiritual practice that teaches us self-discipline, which helps us grow in spiritual maturity. Self-discipline is necessary in order for us to have the inner strength to overcome other kinds of behaviors and habits: those that are spiritually unhealthy (sins) and to work to increase our spiritually healthy habits. Therefore, fasting involves repentance and self-discipline. These help a person to become more like God created us to be.

So, the Church teaches that Fasting isn't only about what foods we eat. Through practicing Fasting, a person learns to also "fast" from -- to control -- anger, greed, envy, gossip, and selfishness.

\* In addition to Fasting, almsgiving (charity), such as helping the poor, the sick, and others who are experiencing hardship in their lives, is also important because Christ taught that we must love and help others, as the Good Samaritan did.



**St. Nicholas dinner** will be held on Sunday, December 20 with the option of "eat in" or "take out". Please sign the list on the bulletin board.

**Youth event** The next "*The Vine and the Branches*" online Diocesan Youth event for youth kindergarten to senior high is scheduled for today at 6pm.

**Remember in prayer** John Volk a patient at Washington Hospital.

**Thank you** to Esper Nasim for the donation for the icon of Our Lady of the Sign in memory of his family members.

