



St. Nicholas Family Connection

September 2023



Have Your New Home Blessed

It is a wonderful Orthodox Christian practice to invite the priest to bless your new apartment or home. This can be done either before you move in or after you are settled. The priest will conduct a brief prayer service after which he will bless each person in your family and each room of your home with holy water.

We read in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and eat with him, and he with me." This is a beautiful picture of what Christ wants to do when we move into a new home or apartment. He wants us to open the door to let Him come in to bless us. He wants to stay and fellowship with us in a very intimate way as expressed through eating and the drinking together.

This is what we do when we invite the priest to bless us and our new home: we open the door to let Jesus come in. If we have a new icon for our home, we shall give it to the priest at church for the formal blessing. He will bring it with him to install it in its proper place in your home and light the votive light before it for the first time.

In addition to the blessing received, such a home visit by the priest will afford your children an excellent opportunity to get to know the parish priest as a dear and personal friend in Christ. It will also teach them that Orthodox Christians seek God's blessing before every important venture in life.

I shall never forget the testimony of a friend, "When I was a very small child, a pastor visited in our home. His presence was so impressive that today, 45 years later, I can still describe where he sat. I do not remember the words he spoke, but I remember his presence. Our family must have been very important for him to visit us. At least, I felt very important."



September Activities:

- September 10 at 5 pm -Jr. GOYA and GOYA
at the Family Life Center
- September 14 at 9:30 am-Divine Liturgy
Elevation of the Cross
at the Family Life Center
- September 17- -First Day of Church School
- September 24 at 4 pm -Church School Open House
and Family Potluck



Patriarch Macarius is standing in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate.



Your Home's Sacred Space; The Icon Corner

One of the distinguishing characteristics of an Orthodox home is its sacred space; the icon corner. The icon corner becomes the spiritual heart of the home – a constant reminder to pray, an intersection between the family and the greater family of saints, a sanctuary of rest and renewal in the midst of the world.

Where should we place our Sacred Space?

Ideally and traditionally, an icon corner should be on an eastern-facing wall. Early Christians interpreted Matthew 24:27 (that the coming of the Son would be like lightning that comes from the East) to mean that the triumphant return of Christ would come from the East. We anticipate this return by facing the East when we pray. However, some houses simply do not have an eastern-facing wall available. In that case, it is perfectly fine to locate the icon corner elsewhere.

The icon corner should also be in a place that is visible to all family members and easily accessible. It should be an integral part of the daily life of the household. A place where we can pray together as a family, as well as by ourselves.

What do I include in my icon corner?

The simple answer is to start with icons of Christ and the Birthgiver of God, also a candle. This is the beginning of your icon corner or wall. As time goes by you may build your spiritual corner with icons of saints that are meaningful to the family, for instance, the saints of the name days of the family. Another option is the icons of feast days. In addition, your Icon corner may contain candles,

holy water, palm branches, incense, prayer books, prayer lists, or any item to appropriately support the spiritual needs of your family.

If you have any question regarding your Icon Corner, please contact Father Doug or Father Michael. Our parish priests are there to support your spiritual needs and would be happy to help in this way.



"Be the Bee"

Find updates of "Be the Bee"
using the above QR code or Y2AM
"Be the Bee" Playlist on YouTube

Be the Bee is a FUN and informative video series about finding God in everything, everyday.. To accompany each brief video, the above QR Code link (<https://www.goarch.org/be-the-bee>) provides lesson plans via PDF's for you to download and use for your family.

The series is a production of the GOARCH Department of Youth and Young Adult ministries and a presentation of Ancient Faith Radio, this brief weekly video podcast will focus on the various ways in which God has infused all of creation with goodness and beauty. The title refers to the metaphor of the bee and the flies that was used by Elder Paisios to describe how Christians should approach life. The host of the program is Steven Christoforou, the Interim Director of the GOA Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

"When somebody opens your heart, I want him to find nothing else there but Christ".

-St. Amphilochios Makris of Patmos