

St Nicholas August Bulletin 2009

Wake up Orthodox parents!!!!

Religious commitment as a child and teenager may be related to whether or not that child remains Orthodox as an adult, or changes his/her religion. A recent study of Catholics and Protestants finds key differences in the religious commitment between former Catholics who left the church and those who have kept their childhood faith. Former Catholics, who are now no longer going to any church or have converted to a Protestant church, are much less likely to have attended Mass regularly or to have had very strong faith as children and teenagers. This is very relevant to Orthodox as well. While it is important for parents to make sure their young children attend church and Sunday School, it is **especially** important that the faith is taught, reinforced and committed to as teenagers, ages 13-18. This is a very crucial time for the young to be made firm in their Orthodoxy. Currently former Catholics are less likely than those who have remained Catholic to say they had a very strong faith as children or teens. The study also finds major differences in childhood religious practices and commitment between lifelong Protestants and those who have left Protestantism. Former Protestants who are not now affiliated with the church of their youth are less likely to have regularly attended worship services as a child and even less likely to have attended regularly as a teenager. They also are much less likely to report having attended Sunday school or having had a very strong religious faith as a child or a teenager. A recent study of 'ethnic' or 'cradle' Orthodox, finds that not only regular church attendance but remembering holidays at home according to Orthodox tradition reinforces a teen's belief in the church. Also Orthodox adults who had a strong religious upbringing do better psychologically dealing with life's problems, than those who were Orthodox in name only.

From Father: I cannot stress the **importance** of bringing your children to **church** and also allowing them to go to **Sunday School**. My own grandson, Adrian, who is just 4 years old, is always asking questions: 'Why did they have to take the roof off the house of the Paralytic?' 'What time exactly did the Samaritan woman go to the well?' 'Why was Jesus killed?' 'I saw them take Jesus down from the cross and lay Him in the tomb.' 'I want to go to the Midnight Service and bring my Pascha basket.' 'Why do we say 'Christ is Risen' for 40 days?' 'Is Jesus leaving us now that He ascended?' 'Will He still pray for us?' 'Why was the Blind Man born blind?' 'I understand how important the Virgin Mary is now.' 'Can I bring my own special icon for the procession?' 'I want to see the other services the church has. Let's go.' And, showing he is just like his 'Babushka' who asked the same question at age 4, 'why aren't there any women priests?' The point of this is that if a child of 4 can hear and understand enough to ask questions, what are we doing about it? **Psychological studies** indicate an adult going through a major life crisis is better able to handle what is happening if he or she has participated in church activities during childhood and teenage years..... Parents, grandparents, Godparents **awaken now!**

Sunday School classes begin: Sunday, September 20. Complete schedule will be published later.

Don't think **one person** can make a difference? Think again. Right after the Pascha Service she attended, a 90+ year old woman died. What a joy to die on Pascha! She was rewarded for her

good work on earth! And what work she did! At the age of 88, this woman went to her priest and said she was disgusted that their parish had such a small Sunday School when there was potential for a very large Sunday School. She said she **understood the need for religious education for Orthodox children** and why it was so important. She said she was not going to sit back but **do something** about it...and, something she did. **One woman**, an elderly 'Babushka', took it upon herself and built the parish Sunday School to over 300 kids! See what can be accomplished? **One volunteer. Just one.** And on Pascha she entered into the joy of heaven, hearing those words, 'well done **Thou good and faithful servant.**' Now 300 kids is something we can strive for in the future, but **right now**, how about **100**? Where is our good and faithful servant? Come on, let's get 20, 30, 50, 75, 100 kids.....and who knows what we can accomplish?

Have you removed the word 'volunteer' from your personal vocabulary or do you stand ready to commit to helping at church? Become a volunteer today! It doesn't matter whether you are native born American, émigré, or convert. We need you!

Former Russian tennis star, **Anna Kournikova** says she has not yet decided what to do with her life so she is devoting her time, energy and money to charitable work. She also spoke about Orthodoxy and how she and her 'Babushka' make blini before Lent, etc. We have a contact address for her. Anna may be able to help our Renovation project **BUT** we need **YOU**, who can help compose a letter to Anna asking for her help. Please, someone who has a Russian font computer, won't you help us help St. Nicholas parish? Email Fr. Kirrill at protoierei.kirrill@stnicholasftl.org if you can help. Thank you! (If you have any suggestions what other 'big names' may help us, please submit those to Father too.)

Thursday August 6th is the Feast of the Transfiguration. Jesus is transfigured upon a mountain (Mt Tabor). Jesus becomes radiant, speaks with Moses and Elijah, and is called 'beloved Son' by God. Jesus tells the witnesses (Peter, James, & John) not to tell others what they saw until He has risen on the third day after His death on the cross. Because this is such an important Feast Day and we want as many people as possible to experience it, we will be celebrating it on **Sunday, August 9th. Please bring your fruit baskets into the church to be blessed.**

Saturday, August 15th, Liturgy 10AM for the Dormition (Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary). According to Orthodox Tradition, The Virgin Mary **died** like all humans, 'falling asleep,' so to speak, as the name of the feast indicates. She died as all people die, not 'voluntarily' as her Son, but by her **mortal human nature**. The Apostles were present except Thomas when the Theotokos passed away and she was buried. Thomas arrived a few days later, and desiring to see her one more time, convinced the others to open her tomb. Upon doing so, the Apostles discovered that her body was no longer present. It is believed she was 'assumed' into heaven.

August 1-15 **Fast** period. August 29th, Beheading of St. John the Baptist--**strict** Fast day!

