



The St. Nicholas Navigator

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Pastoral Epistle: The Great Reset?

In recent months I've heard many references to something called "The Great Reset." This "initiative" is being spearheaded by an organization called the World Economic Forum. If you visit the WEF website, you will read that, "To improve the state of the world, the World Economic Forum is starting The Great Reset initiative." As the website goes on to state, Covid-19 provides a "unique opportunity" to reshape the global social order.

So here we have before us the notion that, whereas our world is a hot mess, this organization, made of up business executives and political movers and shakers, has a plan that will stabilize and integrate the whole world, bringing social justice and economic prosperity into every corner of the land. It certainly sounds impressive, promising something of a heaven-on-earth if everything goes according to plans. I can't help but be reminded of a certain episode in the book of Genesis where a tower was built in Babylon (Babel) that was supposed to represent, through technological prowess, a

kind of utopia and unity of mankind without God. As you may remember, that project didn't end well.

The thing is, since the beginning of time God has called mankind to find its fulfillment in relationship with Him. Every encounter between God and man emphasizes this. Every word of Christ, and every aspect of His Church, underscores the need for us stiff-necked people to die to our own agendas, saying instead, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in

heaven." This is the way out of the mess our world is in; any utopian scheme will be seen in retrospect to have been another failure in the tradition of the Tower of Babel, the Third Reich, and the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, also since the beginning of time, the serpent has hissed its false promises into our ears, suggesting we can have a heaven on earth that excludes God.

As Christians we already recognize the only "Great Reset" that ultimately matters: the Incarnation. Our Lord Jesus Christ has come into the world precisely as an act of "bowing the heavens" — He has brought heaven to us, breaking through into our fallen world with His



uncreated light, establishing the Kingdom of Heaven within us. The feast of the Theophany presents this reality to us in luminous layers: as we see in the icon of the feast, the Trinity is manifested, Christ tramples upon the dragon (serpent), and as He stands in the water of the Jordan, creation is renewed. A new order is established, not by fallen means, but by Divine grace.

I end with these inspired words of His Eminence, Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol (Cyprus), which he spoke last spring:

“Only prayer can change the course of events! This critical situation can be overcome. It can be overcome through prayer. We need to pray a lot. We need people who by the strength of their prayer can reverse the world situation, because in the end, only prayer can change the course of events. All other measures are the work of human hands. They are good and useful, but prayer can truly, in a moment of time, change everything and dissipate this trial, which, by the way, has a positive side, because it teaches us many things.

“What does the pandemic teach us? It teaches us our weakness. It teaches us the vanity of human things. It teaches us that everything we see around us is transitory. We should understand that our main aspiration should be the Kingdom of God. As the Lord says in the Holy Gospel: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. Everything else will be given to you by the Lord of glory, Christ. The Kingdom of God—this is what we’re truly in need of.

“Therefore, the Church calls us to the podvig [struggle] of prayer—prayer coming from repentance and humility. So let us repent of our sins, of the sins of the whole world! Let us offer God the power of prayer, living in a humble and

repentant heart. Then the Lord will have mercy and change the course of history. If we pray, then everything changes. If we don’t pray, then we walk a human path, where it’s unknown how it will be and where it will lead us.

May the Lord grant us, during this new year, the grace of fiery prayer that cleanses our hearts, unites us together, draws us towards the Kingdom, and intercedes for the whole world!

With much love in Christ,
Fr. Daniel

Pilgrimage to the Monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael

by Allen Stephen Lawrence

We left St Nicholas on a Sunday, taking turns driving and arriving safely in Santa Fe on Monday morning around 1:30 am (Mountain Time) to spend the night on the way to Canones, New Mexico.



Monday: Upon arrival at the Monastery, the guest master Father Euphrosynos greeted us with a smile and love; he then showed us to the guest house and let us know where we would be staying. We walked to Vespers, crossing a newly built bridge over the creek.



After Vespers, we went back to the guest house where it was a group effort to fix our evening meal of vegetarian spaghetti, salad, and bread. Fathers John and Daniel led us in the blessing; we ate, talked, and enjoyed each other's company and then retired for the evening. There was NO INTERNET which was nice, since we had no distractions from the outside world.

Tuesday: We were in the church for Divine Liturgy at 4:00 am. I enjoyed the chanting of the monks. There are nine men total living there, which includes postulants, novices, and the monks. After service, Peter Filipek and I fixed a breakfast of potatoes, onions, and tomatoes along with nuts, fruit, peanut butter, honey, and jelly. While we were eating, it began to snow. Father's John and Daniel and Peter Basil went to Father John's cabin, and we spent most of the day reading, exploring the grounds, and adjusting to the altitude. At Vespers, the monks

invited Thomas to chant with them, and he did so for most of the services afterward. After Vespers, we went to Father John's cabin for a fish dinner, a talk, and then questions. An excellent way to end the day.

Wednesday: Orthros was at 4:00 am, but I stayed back this time, as the altitude and cold have affected me. While everyone was gone, I attempted to start a fire for warmth, creating a nice bed of coals but no rip-roaring fire. Thomas is the master of the fires, and I knew he would get it started. I prayed about the fire, and then the flames leaped up. It was still dark outside, so thank God the monks provided flashlights to get around. When Father Daniel arrived, we left the Monastery and went to Father John's cabin to help insulate and sheetrock the St. Patrick's chapel. So much work, fellowship, and a little fun, but we helped put the schedule ahead of time for the Feast of St. Nicholas. We arrived back at about 8:30 pm and headed for bed.



Thursday: We made it to liturgy at 4:00 am, and afterward, we had breakfast with the monks; at about 9:00 am, we helped cut and clear brush around the guest house, and then Thomas and I cut firewood. Father Daniel, Peter B, Peter, and

Thomas went for a hike up the canyon, and I stayed back and was allowed to work in the kitchen. I was then taught how to make a pesto egg salad. Father Maximus took all the leftovers from breakfast to make the salad; nothing goes to waste. After that, I washed the dishes and put them away. In the

afternoon, we went to the Thanksgiving Vespers and then ate a Thanksgiving feast with the Monks. We arrived back at the guest house around 5:45 pm and went to bed.

Friday: Everyone was at Orthros at 6:00 am. Let me tell you, the sunrise here in the canyon was beautiful. God definitely makes the mesas and the mountains with such beauty all around. After the service, the sun was just beginning to peep over through the clouds and over the mountain tops. That morning the monks brought a 25-pound bag of garlic for us to peel. During this time, Father Daniel, Peter B., and Peter Filipek hiked up the mesa and explored the hermit cave and the top where Pueblo Indians used to live.

When they got back, Peter B. joined us with garlic peeling, while Peter Filipek made a lentil soup for after Vespers. After a light meal, we packed, so we could leave after liturgy the next morning.



Saturday: We were up and ready to go to the 4:00 am Liturgy. When we walked outside, it had snowed. The snow added even more beauty to the canyon and the monastery grounds. It was a nice brisk walk up the hill to the church; liturgy was warm with the fire going in the corner. After the liturgy, Peter B. and another young

man had a snowball fight, we said our goodbyes, and loaded the van - only to have a little trouble getting out of the drive. Father Euphrosynos, Peter, and Thomas ended up pushing us out. The roads down the mountain were slow and steady; Father Daniel is a great driver in the snow.

Take Away: From my personal experience, I had the best rest on this trip. There was no external stress, no hustle and bustle of the city. We were able to read, pray, and work. Would I do it over again? You bet. I had a very relaxing time and enjoyed no phones and no internet. It was a very fulfilling trip, thank God.

God's Kitchen

by Shamassy Monica Olsen

The first week of December, we had our first frost with temperatures dipping down to 27 degrees. Usually, this merely means carrying in the begonias and basil for an overnight stay, but this year was not usual. My three cherry tomato plants woke up in October and started producing again, masses and masses of tiny yellow flowers everywhere.



They had been so prolific that I had started making ripe tomato salads again in November, and with the frost approaching I counted hundreds of green tomatoes and wondered if I could save them somehow. Auntie Leila's Green Tomato Chutney recipe from her blog "Like Mother, Like Daughter" popped into my mind.

Without delay I printed the recipe, noted which ingredients I had and which I needed, ran to Walmart for some more canning jars and vinegar, and enlisted John to help me pick all those little tomatoes. For wages, I allowed him to pitch fast balls from the split or rotten tomatoes. Perhaps there was more baseball than harvesting going on, but I would have struggled to finish without

him, squatting up and down, up and down in the sun.

The harvest yielded about 18 cups of fruit, sitting happily on the kitchen counter and looking more like a crop of green grapes. The slightest smile smirked my lips as I washed my hands. My eyebrows lifted in satisfaction as I scanned over the recipe one last time. Turning off the kitchen light, I glanced once more at my beautiful harvest, left them on the counter next to the recipe, and went to sleep assuming that I could knock out the chutney in the morning. Naive optimism: that's my personality.

I didn't consider the reality of washing all those cute little ovals. Cute, yes. Efficient to maneuver, no. All those slippery little green tomatoes had to be held in place on the cutting board by someone's hands. All that fruit had to be quartered by a knife sticky with juice in someone's sticky hands. Stretching my fingers, I looked at the oven clock and frowned. It was the time I thought I'd be finished, but instead I was just getting the ingredients into the pot.

The pot proved to be a perfect incarnation of my stubbornness. I was about half way down the list of ingredients... honey, brown sugar, red pepper flakes, apples... when I realized that the ingredients were taking up more than half of my oval yellow enamel dutch oven. The only bigger pot that I own - my big stock pot - was already simmering a bath of glass canning jars. The jars needed to be recently sanitized to prevent spoiling and also needed to be hot coming out of the water in order to receive the hot chutney, lest the shocking change in temperature cause any cracking. So I couldn't use the stock pot to also cook the chutney. With a sigh and a glance at the

clock, I determined *not* to split the recipe in half and cook two batches, doubling the remaining time.

Part of my personality is that I don't require 98% certainty that something will work before I try it. I don't even require 75% certainty. I may look like an average homeschooling teacher on the outside, but on the inside I'm hanging loose with the most chilled out Hawaiians. If there's a 25% chance it might work, I say, *let's go for it!*



I kept piling the ingredients into the yellow dutch oven, repeating in my head, *they will cook down... they will cook down.* Finally, with a slightly mounded hill of ingredients that only barely rose above the top of the pot, I added the spices and turned on the burner. Reaching back to the counter I grabbed the recipe to see how hot and how long, considering that other people, less adventurous people, might have looked at this information before turning on the flame. The recipe said to get it up to a boil and then turn it down to simmer, so I sighed, staring at the bulging mound of raw ingredients. No way could I bring that up to boil until after it had cooked down a little. I turned the flame down to low, and exhaled a deep huff as I noted the digital numbers on the oven clock and set the timer for thirty minutes.

Two hours later the mixture, never having actually boiled or simmered, had settled below the yellow rim of my dutch oven, at least a good $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top. I nodded my head in victory, for this was progress, but since I had to go to work, I turned it down even lower and asked my daughter to keep an eye on it. When I came home three hours later, the chutney mixture was closer to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch below the top. Now, this type of situation is where my bravery thrives. I would not walk into a haunted house, nor would I ride a roller coaster, but with the steely determination of Beowulf, I approached the stove.

*"My heart is firm,
My hands calm: I need no hot
Words. Wait for me close by, my friends."*

*Then Beowulf rose, still brave, still strong,
And with his shield at his side, and a mail shirt on
his breast, strode calmly, confidently, toward the
tower, under the rocky cliffs:
No coward could have walked there!*

Despite the narrow margin of success in not bubbling my mixture up over the pot, I turned up the flame to high. If I didn't get this chutney boiling and reduced quickly, I would be up until midnight. I don't know about Beowulf, but I am worthless the next day if I stay up until midnight in the middle of the week.

Finally, after being washed, chopped up, soaked in a hot tub, and then boiled down in spices, those cheerful little green ovals turned into a dark rich orange relish. The satisfaction of pouring the thick fragrant mixture into the cans was only topped by the satisfaction of hearing the metal tops pop when I removed the cans from the water

bath. The pop means the seal worked and the chutney would stay preserved until opened.

The recipe says that this chutney adds zing if you have found that you made a bland meal. Auntie Leila's family passed it around with a ham dinner, which brought just the right little touch of spirit to the meal.

The whole process, from vines to canning jars, brought just a little touch of Spirit to my thoughts.

As I picked the tomatoes, saving them from frozen death, I wondered how God plucks me from similar situations. The tomatoes did not know a freeze was coming and may have thought it crazy to be removed from the security of the vine. I'm sure I often resent such a harvest in my own life, having no clue why God, in his infinite knowledge, is saving me from my comfortable situation.

As I swished the little green tomatoes around in the sink, the words of Psalm 50 reminded me, "wash me, O Lord, and I will be clean."

As I sliced through the tiny tomatoes with my serrated knife, I considered how we little humans often need a painful surgery, cut open for the enlargement of our hearts. One of the prayers in the Canon of St. Paraskevi reads, "wound my soul with a longing for God."

It's all well and fine for me to know, standing in my kitchen, that the cutting and boiling down will eventually transform those tomatoes from something sour into a special delight. However, it is much harder to submit when God works the process of transformation in my life. This prayer

from the same canon reminds me that I am not alone in the boiling sea of life.

The transformation of the afflicted and the relief of those in sickness art thou in truth, O Virgin Theotokos; save thy people and thy flock, thou who art the peace of the embattled and who art the calm of the storm-driven, then only protectress of those who believe.



After the storm of kitchen activity was over around 10:30 that night, I examined the finished jars of dark, jewel-colored chutney, ready to bring zing and spirit to future meals. Now, as I think back on that massive but successful undertaking, I pray that when I am in danger of dying, and God plucks me from my seemingly comfortable surroundings to save me and transform me, I would not fight against Him. I pray I can walk bravely like Beowulf into the unknown future. I hope I can remember that my own efforts don't have *even* a 25% chance of success. However, **God** can make me into something filled with the Spirit. Something even with a little zing!



A Saint for Troubled Times: Part 2

The Bolsheviks arrested the holy Patriarch's closest zealots, put them in prisons, sent them into exile, and executed some of them. Before his eyes they closed churches, monasteries, and theological schools; they confiscated holy shrines and opened reliquaries. Many archpastors could not summon any courage and tried to "agree" with the Soviet authorities, going in this way against the head of their Church. Patriarch Tikhon had at times to stand all alone against the soviet persecutions and seek the right path for the Church.

Even while he was alive, the soviet newspapers slandered Patriarch Tikhon unremittingly, humiliated him, and mocked him. When he died, a falsified "will" was published in his name. But no one believed this falsification. Those who knew Patriarch Tikhon believed that he was a holy man. The people trusted him limitlessly, as a saint. Patriarch Tikhon possessed moral authority, which turned out to be an extraordinarily powerful force that united the Church, the clergy, and the entire Russian people.

When Patriarch Tikhon reposed, even worse times began for the Church. The lack of a spiritual leader produced adverse consequences. After his death the soviet authorities began picking people who suited their purposes to fill the position of patriarch. As long as the Patriarch was alive he could be arrested, but it was impossible to compromise him. The people trusted him.

There are firm grounds for speaking about the universal significance of Patriarch Tikhon's heroic labor. The twentieth century is one of the most difficult epochs in human history, when materialism, atheism, and communism spread all over the entire globe, like a plague; when revolutions and antichristian persecutions started happening everywhere. Science claimed that Christ was a legend, a myth, that He never existed. And during this very time a giant of the

Christian faith arises! A true Christian, who manifests Christian sanctity on the Patriarchal throne! A flame of confessing faith stood on a candle stand seen by the whole world, and glorified our Heavenly Father.

Patriarch Tikhon is the image of an Orthodox saint, who stood alone against the hurricane of bloody evil: revolution, civil war, mass violence, executions, and murders. They threatened to kill him also, and sent assassins on several occasions. He did not run away from death.

The only thing that he held dear was service to the Church. He understood that the Lord had placed him as a lighthouse that should shine in the darkness and light the path to Christ. His circulars are patristic teachings to all Christians for all the remaining ages.

What other significance does Patriarch Tikhon's work have?

Patriarch Tikhon, like all holy people, was inwardly very free. He blessed and thus legitimized, as Patriarch and as a saint, frequent Communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. He called the people to this. This blessing has particular meaning to us.

He blessed people for the labor of confession and martyrdom. He showed by his own example how the Church can be victorious over the most terrifying, unbelievable evil.

He showed that the Church can be governed by holy bishops, even if it is deprived of administrative forms. And its life, though outwardly disastrous, is an extraordinary example of faith. The Church called forth these saints. In this sense, the communist persecution was the brightest page in the history of the Christian Church. When has such a host of saints been made known? And the Patriarch was their leader. The warriors of Christ walked under his omophorion. This was unique in history.

If you look at our history in the historical scope of the Universal Church, then we see before us a terrifying picture of a spiritual war, when persecutions are not happening in some distant province where an emperor comes and makes a local pogrom. No, a whole enormous country, the largest country in the world, was subject to persecutions. Throughout Russia the Church was declared illegal. And not just as a temporary measure, but with the intent of destroying the whole Church. The entire episcopate was suffering repression. Almost all the priests were either killed or imprisoned.



Before the [Second World] war, in Russia only a few bishops and about 100 priests remained free.

But the Church proved that it is not an earthly organization that can be closed or destroyed. It is the Body of Christ. It showed that it is not bound by earthly forms. You can destroy all the Church's earthly forms of its life, but it will not become any weaker from this. It answers deadly persecutions with the feat of confession and sanctity, and it is victorious. If you imagine a painting, you would have a battle between good and evil, the righteous and the sinners, and in this picture, at the head of the army and among the warriors, following after Christ and the angelic powers, goes Patriarch Tikhon leading the army. The Gospel shows us a spirit of victorious opposition on the way of the cross. These were Christians who took up their cross and followed after Christ. There were hundreds of thousands

of them. Patriarch Tikhon is a symbol of the era, and an image of ascetic labor in the Church.

Which of Patriarch Tikhon's personality traits are especially important to us?

Those who knew Patriarch Tikhon testified that he was a man of unbelievable humility, meekness, and love. He was perfectly simple. He was a stranger to emotional pathos. He was simple in life, and how he related to people. I say this because my grandfather knew him. He was the dean of Moscow diocese and went to diocesan councils under Patriarch Tikhon.

In Sergiev Posad (then called Zagorsk) there was a remarkable elder, Fr. Tikhon Pelikh, the rector of the St. Elias church beyond the Holy Trinity St. Sergius Lavra. He was born to a peasant family, and sent to the army. Here is his personal account. He reached Moscow in his soldier's overcoat and came to the church where Patriarch Tikhon was serving. He was a young fellow, hungry and cold. He related: "I myself don't know how I ended up in the altar. Some kind of power led me there, and pushed me towards Patriarch Tikhon. I didn't know what to say. I went to get his blessing. The Patriarch affectionately asked me, "What is your name?" I answered, "Tikhon". He said, "My name is also Tikhon." I don't remember anything after that, only that the subdeacons pulled me out of the altar by the edge of my coat." All who came into contact with Patriarch Tikhon were blessed with grace and love.

It is impossible to convey how people loved Patriarch Tikhon. When he came to serve in some regional town, the factories stopped their work, and all the workers came out to greet him, not resuming work until he had gone. His saintliness, love, and dedication to God's will brought Christians together, and helped them withstand the terrible aggression coming from the dark world.

Patriarch Tikhon showed us the ascetic labor by which the Russian Church must go in the last days, because he by his own labors renewed Orthodox life in Russia.

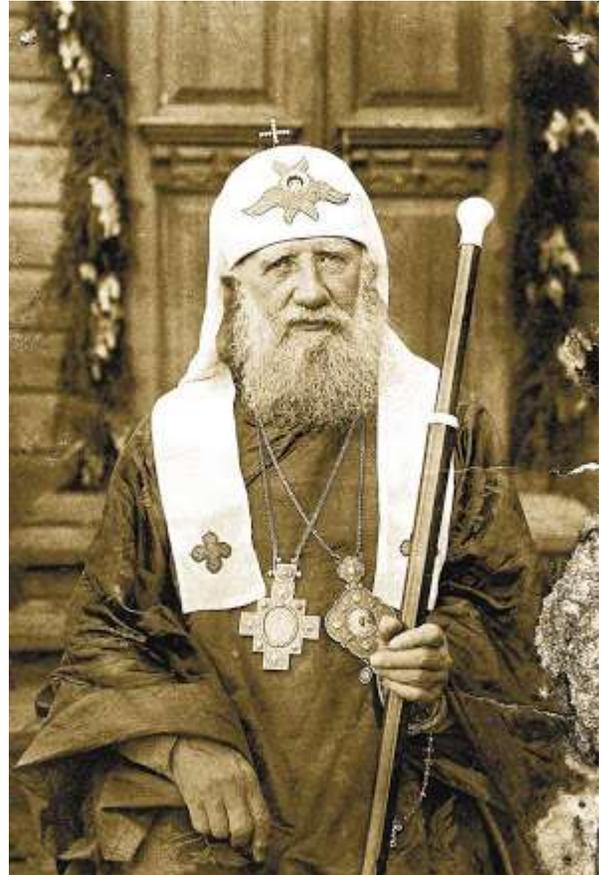
At that time revolutions were happening, there were renovationists introducing reforms to renew the Church, to create a “Living Church”. But Patriarch Tikhon really “renewed” the Church life, again manifesting the sanctity of the Church, and the labor of an archpastor. This is the main path of renovation. He could not bring to pass the reforms decided upon at the Council, but he renewed the spirit of the first Christians, who were ready to give their lives to God and to defend the Christian faith even unto death. We need this spirit also. Our times are very complicated, and the aggression of darkness is not slackening. We can oppose this aggression if we are inspired by the labors of the saints.

What does Patriarch Tikhon mean to you?

I knew about Patriarch Tikhon from early childhood, because he was very revered in our family. My grandfather associated with him personally. We preserve like a relic a Paschal egg that Patriarch Tikhon gave our grandfather. We have a whole series of documents signed by him.

I knew an old lady who suffered in childhood from a terrible case of epilepsy—eighteen seizures per day. Then she was a girl who didn’t believe in God. On the night of his repose, Patriarch Tikhon appeared to her and blessed her. She was healed and became a deeply believing Christian. There are very many such testimonies to the sanctity of Patriarch Tikhon. For me he was a saint even before his canonization. I would go to his reliquary in the Donskoy Monastery. I especially learned much about him through Mikhail Efimovich Gubonina, who served in the altar at Patriarch Tikhon’s services, and deeply revered him and collected many documents about his life.

Alexander Filipov
spoke with Archpriest Vladimir Vorobiev
Translation by OrthoChristian.com
From: <https://orthochristian.com/88587.html>



Announcements

(see calendar for times)

January 6 & 7 - Theophany Liturgies & Water Blessings

January 9 - Red River Blessing

January 15 - Inexhaustible Cup Akathist

January 16 - “Wannabe WAMP” (Teen Event)

January 23 - Liturgies & Home Blessings
Texarkana

December Birthdays

- 6 Lilly Vargo
- 7 Dn. Nicholas Olsen
- 9 Russell Jones
- 12 Ashley Busada & Andreea Kenley
- 13 Eddie Marsh
- 16 Nabil Moufarrej, Nathan McCoy, Rebecca Berry
- 20 Troy Floyd
- 25 Tim Vargo
- 28 Dara Katsufraakis
- 30 Matthew Baker, John Gill

December Name Days & Anniversaries

- 6 Dn. Nicholas Olsen, Nicholas Casten, Nikolai Filipek, Nicholas Newman, David Freeman, Nicholas Bradfield
- 9 Anna Bloss, Eddie Marsh, Anna Stewart
- 13 Eleora Lucia Floyd, Troy Herman Floyd
- 17 Fr. Daniel, Denise Dionysios Busada
- 22 Dara Anastasia Katsufraakis
- 27 Allen Stephen Lawrence, Joseph Aboufaycal, Matthew James Baker
- 29 Jeremy & Maria Frank
- 30 Ted & Maria Casten

January Birthdays

- 1 Kimiko Fujimura
- 5 Bruce Busada, Juliana Meeker
- 7 Kiki Casten
- 8 Elizabeth Casten Russell
- 11 Alaina Freeman
- 12 Mary Blackwell, Olivia Floyd
- 13 Maria Gill

- 22 Kael Floyd
- 24 Oxana Denison
- 25 Timothy Vargo
- 26 Ali Vargo
- 28 Hanan Moufarrej

January Name Days & Anniversaries

- 1 William Basil Casten
- 2 Dewayne Seraphim Williams, Juliana Meeker
- 3 Jenny Genevieve Bradfield
- 7 John Moufarrej, Fr. Ioannis Krokos
- 13 Fran & Jim Presley
- 17 David Dumestre, Anthony Bradfield
- 21 Maximus Olsen
- 22 Gary Timothy Galloway
- 24 Kimiko Xeniz Fujimara
- 30 Paul & Erika Hand



Have you thought about our new building lately? The kids have! Here is their Lego version for the St. Nicholas Creative Arts Festival. May it be blessed!



The

**St. Nicholas
Navigator**

October / November 2020

**St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church
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