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Bishop Irinej Visits Saint Nicholas Parish in Steelton



Visit of His Grace, our Bishop and Father, Irinej to Steelton, Pennsylvania

The faithful of St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church in Steelton, Pennsylvania greeted Vladika Irinej on a bright spring morning for the first Sunday of Lent, the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

The Matins Service began at 9:00 am, encouraging all in their preparation for the Holy Liturgy. His Grace led the choir into the singing of the Great Doxology. A fullness of clergy, singers, and faithful came together to celebrate this holy day after a week of prayerful services and fasting, eagerly awaiting the Holy Body and Precious Blood of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Joining Father Christopher Rocknage (parish rector), Protodeacon Milos Zdralic (Episcopal deacon) and Deacon Bojan Gligorevic (parish deacon) was Protopresbyter Stavrophor Ilija Balach

(Popadija Andreja's father), who recently moved to the area in his retirement with Protinica Carole Balach.

His Grace presided at the Liturgy of St. Basil—the liturgy offered on all the Sundays of Great Lent. After the Gospel reading from the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John, Bishop Irinej delivered a powerful homily encouraging the faithful to unite themselves to Christ during this holy season of prayer. He explained that each of the Sundays of Lent would provide more instruction on how to increase our relationship with Christ. This relationship, He described, was a personal relationship made possible in the community of all. He offered that this first Sunday, as we celebrated the continual procession of the restoration of icons in the Church, enabled us to be brought visually into the Kingdom of Heaven through the holy icons. For the first time in the history of the St. Nicholas Church, the new icons adorning the walls of the temple were used as examples to illustrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy homily. His Grace instructed the faithful on how some of the beautiful techniques used in the icons (by the hand of Borislav Zivkovic) shift our perspective from the earthly to the heavenly. Many of the faithful were greatly moved by the words of His Grace.

A small choir of 5 singers, conducted by Nina Radanovic, led the faithful in singing the responses. Afterward, His Grace remarked, “Though small in number, they sang like a full choir!”

The first week of Lent provided many opportunities for the faithful to prepare themselves for the Holy Eucharist. Thus, almost all of those present came to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy celebration continued with a joyful procession of icons around the Church as the faithful sang the Troparion of the First Sunday:

“We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. Of Your Good Will, You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, delivering Your creatures from bondage to the enemy. Therefore, with thankfulness, we cry aloud to You: “You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, for You have come to save the world.”

The procession concluded with His Grace leading the faithful in the reciting of the Synodikon of Orthodoxy and the Holy Creed.

The faithful of St. Nicholas were overjoyed with His Grace's visit. Some even remarked that “it begins to feel like we are coming to the end of this pandemic tunnel.” May God provide for the end of this pandemic, heal those afflicted, and

comfort those grieving the loss of family and friends.

We give thanks to God for His Grace and His pastoral and paternal love for us. May God continue to bless His Grace with an ever-deepening awareness of Christ's Love for Him, that He may continue to do good works in this Diocese of Eastern America, glorifying our Heavenly Father.







Saint Joseph the Hesychast

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