



St. Nicholas Family Connection

November 2024



Using Incense in the Home



*Anthony M. Coniaris
Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home*

The Orthodox Church brings the good news of Jesus to the total person. She appeals not just to the eye and the ear but also to the sense of smell. A blind and deaf person entering an Orthodox Church would recognize immediately that he is in a sacred place through the fragrant smell of the incense.

We read in the book of Revelation, “And I saw an angel come and stand before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, and the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.”

The clouds of fragrant smoke emanating from the censer symbolize our prayers ascending to God. The “fragrance” of the incense expresses the delight God takes in our prayers.

The early Christians were required by the pagan Romans to burn a pinch of incense each year publicly before a statue of Caesar. By burning incense before Caesar’s statue they would acknowledge that he was divine. Christians refused to perform this act because they considered it idolatrous. For them there was only one Lord-Jesus Christ.

Today the Orthodox priest burns incense before the holy altar. He censes the Holy Gifts (Communion) and the icons. In other words, we burn incense today before the one true God and none other. The act of burning incense before Jesus confesses our faith that He alone is Lord.

After the priest censes the altar and the icons, he turns and censes the worshippers. By this act he pays homage and respect to the icon of God that abides in us, i.e., the image of God in which we were created. This act reminds us that we are important persons in God’s eyes, i.e., His walking images.

Every Orthodox home should have a small portable home censer next to the icon. Parents can teach their children how to light the charcoal and place a piece of incense on it when family prayers are said. Some parents may prefer to light the censer only on Saturday evenings and on evenings preceding major holy days. The meaning of the incense may be explained to the children from an early age so that they may participate meaningfully in this worshipful act.

A good practice would be for the parents to make the sign of the cross with the censer before each child explaining that by this act they are paying respect to the image of God in each child.

Imagine how many beautiful memories this act can instill in children. Every time they come to church as adults they will associate the fragrant incense with a host of endearing memories from their family prayers as children at home. Every time they see the priest censing the altar and the people in the liturgy, they will stand in awe in the presence of the Lord. They will see in the rising smoke their own prayers ascending to the throne of God.

The primary lesson for life must be implanted to the soul from the earliest age. The primary lesson for children is to know the eternal God, the One Who gives everlasting life.



Clement of Alexandria (+ 215)



A Family Project: **RESEARCH NEEDS IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

If we want to make a difference in our world, country, town, or even our household, it is important to learn how to identify where we can make the biggest impact with our work. Before we decide to volunteer or share our gifts, it is important that we find out what the real needs are. This way, we make sure that what we do or give will be an effective way to help.

Take some time to learn about your community -this can be your city or town, neighborhood, school, or parish. As you research, find out what people are in need and what sort of help you can give. Some great ways to do this are:

- Talk to adults and learn about some local charities or groups near you.
- Contact local food banks and shelters.
- Speak with people working in schools and churches who know the community well.
- Search on the internet or social media for local volunteer organizations.

Once you find an organization that is helping people in your area, with a parent or teacher, write an email and ask about the needs of people in the community. Once they respond to you, work with an adult to come up with ways you could share your own gifts to provide for people in need.

Activities through IOCC Prayer Journal
iocc.org/prayerjournal



Cherubs & Parents in the Park

We are excited to announce a new initiative to get our St. Nicholas little kids (under the age of Kindergarten) and parents together both for fun and spiritual growth.

Calling all parents and littles (under the age of Kindergarten) :
Please join us for an upcoming play date at Oak Tree Park in Brentwood on

Saturday, November 16 at 9:30 am.
Please contact: Gracie Livaditis at 314.616.9557
or Dino Livaditis at 314.223.6435
to RSVP if you can or if you have any questions!

We are excited to get this group started and look forward to seeing you there!

Oak Tree Park: 2456 Florence Ave, Brentwood, MO 63144
<https://www.brentwoodmo.org/1852/Oak-Tree-Park>





The Nicholad

Join us for this festive season of celebration, reflection, and gratitude for our beloved St. Nicholas Church family

St. Nicholas Day Vespers
Reception to follow
Thursday, December 5 - 6:30 pm | Family Life Center

St. Nicholas Day Divine Liturgy
Reception to follow
Friday, December 6 - 9:30 am | Family Life Center

Family Fun Night
Friday, December 6 - 6:00 pm | Family Life Center
Tree lighting, Pizza, Christmas Carols, Hot cocoa, and more!

St. Nicholas Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon
Saturday, December 7 - 11:00 am | Algonquin Golf Club

HOPE and JOY Christmas Caroling
Saturday, December 7 - 3:00 pm | Fairmont Senior Living

St. Nicholas Day Luncheon
Sunday, December 8 | St. Nicholas Church
Immediately following Divine Liturgy

Akathist Service
Coffee reception to follow
Monday, December 9 - 7:00 pm | Family Life Center

Upcoming Events:

- November 3 - 5:00 pm GOYA/Jr. GOYA at FLC
- November 8 - 9:30 am Divine Liturgy - Synaxis of the Holy Archangels / Luncheon to follow in Honor of Fr. Michael's Name Day at FLC
- November 10 - Parish General Assembly at Church
- November 16 - 9:30 am Cherubs and Parents in the Park- Oak Tree Park in Brentwood
- November 21 - 9:30 am Divine Liturgy - Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple at FLC
- November 24 - Parish Elections following Liturgy at Church
Harvest Bake Sale following Liturgy at Church
- November 28 - Happy Thanksgiving!