



KOINONIA

NEWSLETTER OF
ST. DEMETRIOS CHURCH
North Wildwood, NJ

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thoughts from

FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS

PROTOPRESBYTER



WHAT IS OUR TRUE PURPOSE IN LIFE?

By Rev. Fr. Michael L. Pastrikos

This is a story about a man called Serapion. He was an Egyptian Hermit who was filled with the gift of philanthropy. He was seen many times dressed just in a white sheet because he gave all of his clothing to the poor. Because of his actions, he was called "Sindonios" in Greek, meaning the sheet man.

During this time Serapion was sold into slavery to an idolatrist actor for 20 pieces of silver. From that point on, Serapion dedicated his life to his master and his family. He worked very hard and his daily meal only consisted of bread and water. Even though many would think that Serapion was mistreated, he was always thankful for what he received. Serapion believed that it was an honor for him to pray to God while he worked and toiled for his master. The Scriptures never left his mind or his lips.

Serapion had a purpose in life and that purpose was to bring this idolatrist family to see the Light of Christianity. Through his prayers and living example, he reached his goal. The family witnessed his true belief and faith in God, and through example, the family accepted Christianity through Baptism. Christianity transformed the family and thus they began a new life, a life in Christ.

One day the master told Serapion that he would give him his freedom because his faith transformed his family and brought God into their lives. A moment of joy came to his heart, but after Serapion received his freedom he thanked him, only to gladly volunteer to be a slave in another household so he may show them the way to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Serapion entered into slavery with another family praying to show them the light of Christ. It is told that through Serapion's faith, the second family accepted God into their lives.

The story of Serapion is an inspiration, for he gave his life for the sake of others. This is a wonderful story of a man who could have led his life in a different direction, but chose to endure a life of sacrifice so he could share his faith and be a loving example to others.

Many times we question our purpose in life. But Serapion accepted his purpose earnestly and he fulfilled it. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was so certain of His purpose, that He shared when and how He would die. We acknowledge what Jesus' purpose was, but now we have to define "WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?". Take a moment and in pray that the Lord, Jesus Christ reveals his purpose for you.

If we truly accept what Christ has done for us, then we must open our hearts and mind for what he intends for our lives.

Every year, the Church gives us an opportunity to change our ways in life through the celebration of Pascha. Pascha comes to us every year reminding us, that if we made mistakes during the year that we still have the opportunity to mend our ways, and ask for forgiveness. Remember the criminal on the cross next to Jesus, who said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Today, ask for forgiveness and, and receive His full compassion and remission of our sins, in order to straighten out our lives.

Look at what the months of March, April, and May bring to us each year, a chance for renewal. These months give us the time to reflect on what is truly our purpose in life. If we call ourselves Christians, then our purpose in life is to follow in the footsteps of Christ. If we take the example of Serapion, his purpose was to bring as many people to Christ. That should also be our purpose in life, but first, we must prepare ourselves in the ways of the Lord, before we can begin to bring people to the Light of Christ. We must rid ourselves of our old baggage that has hindered our lives for so long and realize that all God wants from us is a simple relationship and a true friendship with Him. God wants to be involved in our lives in every way. He wants us to bare our problems, our sorrows and our joys to Him. He wants to be a part of our everyday life because when we think of Him, we are on the right track. When we don't think of Him, then we are heading down the path of destruction. So let's not forget what the word "Pascha" really means. Pascha is the right road to salvation. Serapion chose the right road to salvation, but the question is? WHICH ROAD ARE YOU GOING TO CHOOSE FOR YOUR SALVATION? This is a decision that we must make today.

I realize that we are now in the heart of the Great Lenten Period, and our spiritual journey through Holy Week is coming very quickly. We will once again be witnessing His Passions, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection and finally His Ascension. The Holy Pascha celebrates the promise of life in the face of death. Let us ask our Lord, to bring peace to our souls and forgiveness. Let us make this "Pascha" a special day to behold, through the Cross, joy has come to the whole world.



thoughts from

FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS
PROTOPRESBYTER



ΠΟΙΟΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ Ο ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ ΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΖΩΗΣ

Η ιστορία αυτή αναφέρεται σε κάποιον άνθρωπο ονόματι Σεραπίων. Ήταν ένας Αιγύπτιος ερημίτης που είχε το χάρισμα της φιλανθρωπίας. Τον είχαν δει πολλές φορές ντυμένο απλά με ένα λευκό σεντόνι, επειδή είχε χάρισει όλα του τα ρούχα στους φτωχούς. Γι' αυτό τον ονόμασαν Sindonios. (ελληνικά «Σενδόνιο»).

Κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της εποχής ο Σεραπίων πουλήθηκε σαν σκλάβος σε έναν ειδωλολάτρη, για 20 αργύρια. Από την πρώτη ημέρα ο Σεραπίων αφιέρωσε τη ζωή του στον κύριό του και την οικογένειά του. Εργαζόταν πολύ σκληρά. Το καθημερινό γεύμα του ήταν ψωμί και νερό. Αν και σκεφτόταν ότι τον κακομεταχειρίζονταν, ο Σεραπίων ήταν πάντα ευγνώμων για ό, τι του έδιναν. Ο Σεραπίων πίστευε ότι ήταν τιμή για αυτόν να προσεύχεστε στο Θεό, ενώ εργαζόταν, και έκανε τις δουλειές του. Τα λόγια της Αγίας Γραφής δεν έφευγαν ποτέ από το μυαλό του ή τα χείλη του.

Ο Σεραπίων είχε ένα στόχο στη ζωή του και ο στόχος αυτός ήταν να φέρει την ειδωλολατρική αυτή οικογένεια να δει το Φως του Χριστιανισμού. Με τις προσευχές του, επιτεύχθηκε ο σκοπός του. Η οικογένεια είδε την αληθινή πίστη του, και μ' αυτό το παράδειγμα, ολόκληρη η οικογένεια αποδέχθηκε τον Χριστιανισμό και Βαπτίστηκε. Μετά από αυτό, η οικογένεια άρχισε μια νέα ζωή, μια ζωή εν Χριστώ.

Μια μέρα ο κύριος είπε στο Σεραπίων ότι θα του δώσει την ελευθερία του, ως ανταμοιβή για ό, τι έκανε να φέρει την οικογένειά του πιο κοντά στο Θεό. Η χαρά του ήταν μεγάλη, αλλά μετά που ο Σεραπίων ελευθερώθηκε, ευχαρίστησε το κύριό του, και στη συνέχεια του είπε ότι ευχαρίστως θα ξαναγινόταν σκλάβος σε κάποια άλλη οικογένεια, για να δείξει το δρόμο του Κυρίου και σε άλλους. Έτσι πήγε μακριά και έγινε σκλάβος σε μια άλλη οικογένεια με το σκεπτικό να τη κάνει να δει το φως του Χριστού. Λέγεται ότι έφερε και τη δεύτερη οικογένεια, πίσω στο Θεό.

Αυτή είναι λοιπόν η ιστορία του Σεραπίωνος ο οποίος έδωσε τη ζωή του για χάρη των άλλων. Αυτή είναι η θαυμάσια ιστορία ενός ανθρώπου που θα μπορούσε να ζητήσει τη ζωή του σε διαφορετική κατεύθυνση, αλλά επέλεξε να υπομένει μια σκληρή και άχαρη ζωή, για να είναι το απτό παράδειγμα στους άλλους.

Μιλάμε για σκοπό, ο Σεραπίων είχε ένα σκοπό στη ζωή του και τον εκπλήρωσε.

Ο Κύριός μας και Σωτήρας μας Ιησούς Χριστός ήταν τόσο σίγουρος για τον σκοπό Του, που προέβλεψε πότε και πως θα πέθαινε. Γνωρίζουμε ποιος ήταν ο σκοπός του Ιησού, αλλά τώρα πρέπει να καθορίσουμε "ΠΟΙΟΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ Ο ΔΙΚΟΣ ΜΑΣ ΣΚΟΠΟΣ". Αν θέλουμε πραγματικά να αποδεχθούμε ό, τι έχει κάνει ο Χριστός για μας, τι θα Του δίνουμε πίσω σε αντάλλαγμα;

Κάθε χρόνο, η Εκκλησία μας δίνει την ευκαιρία να αλλάξουμε τις συνήθειές μας στη ζωή. Αυτός είναι ο λόγος της Εορτής του Πάσχα, έρχεται κάθε χρόνο υπενθυμίζοντάς μας, ότι αν κάναμε λάθη κατά τη διάρκεια του έτους, έχουμε την ευκαιρία να τα βελτιώσουμε, να ζητήσουμε συγχώρεση, ακριβώς όπως έκανε ο Χριστός πάνω στο Σταυρό, και να λάβουμε πλήρη συγχώρεση και

άφεση των αμαρτιών μας, για να επανέλθουμε στον ίδιο δρόμο, το δρόμο του Χριστού.

Κοιτάξτε τι μας φέρνουν οι μήνες Μάρτιος, Απρίλιος, και Μάιος κάθε χρόνο. Μας δίνουν το χρόνο να σκεφθούμε ποιος είναι ο πραγματικός σκοπός μας στη ζωή. Αν αποκαλούμε τους εαυτούς μας Χριστιανούς, τότε ο σκοπός μας στη ζωή θα πρέπει να είναι να ακολουθήσουμε τα βήματα του Χριστού. Αν πάρουμε το παράδειγμα του Σεραπίωνος, σκοπός του ήταν να φέρει, όσο πιο πολλούς ανθρώπους κοντά στο Χριστό. Κι αυτός επίσης θα πρέπει να είναι ο σκοπός μας στη ζωή, αλλά πρώτα, πρέπει να προετοιμάσουμε τους εαυτούς μας σύμφωνα με τα διδάγματα του Κυρίου, πριν αρχίσουμε να φέρουμε τους ανθρώπους να δουν το Φως του Χριστού. Πρέπει να απαλλαγούμε από τα παλιά βάρη που δυσχεραίνουν τη ζωή μας για πολύ καιρό, και να συνειδητοποιήσουμε ότι όλα που ο Θεός ζητά από εμάς είναι μια απλή σχέση και μια αληθινή φιλία μαζί Του.

Ο Θεός θέλει να συμμετέχει στη ζωή μας ευρύτερα. Θέλει να εκθέσουμε σ' Αυτόν τα προβλήματά μας όπως έχουν, τις λύπες μας και τις χαρές μας. Θέλει να είναι ένα μέρος της καθημερινής ζωής μας, γιατί όταν Τον σκεφτόμαστε είμαστε στο σωστό δρόμο. Όταν δεν Τον σκεπτόμαστε, τότε οδεύουμε προς τα κάτω, στο δρόμο της καταστροφής. Ας μην ξεχνάμε ποια είναι η πραγματική σημασία της λέξης «Πάσχα» σημαίνει ότι είναι ο σωστός δρόμος προς τη σωτηρία. Ο Σεραπίων επέλεξε το σωστό δρόμο προς τη σωτηρία, η ερώτηση λοιπόν είναι, «ΠΟΙΟ ΔΡΟΜΟ ΘΑ ΕΠΙΛΕΞΟΥΜΕ ΕΜΕΙΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑ ΜΑΣ;» Αυτή είναι μια απόφαση που όλοι θα πρέπει να πάρουμε κάποια μέρα.

Αντιλαμβάνομαι ότι τώρα βρισκόμαστε στην καρδιά της περιόδου της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής, και το πνευματικό μας ταξίδι προς τη Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα πλησιάζει πολύ γρήγορα. Θα γίνουμε για άλλη μια φορά μάρτυρες των Παθών Του, της Σταύρωσής Του, της Ανάστασής Του, και, τέλος, της Αναλήψεώς Του. Το Άγιο Πάσχα εορτάζει την υπόσχεση της ζωής κατά του θανάτου. Ας ζητήσουμε από τον Κύριό μας συγχώρεση, να φέρει την ειρήνη στις ψυχές μας.

Ας κάνουμε αυτό το "Πάσχα" μια Εορτή που μέσω του Σταυρού, έφερε χαρά σε ολόκληρο τον κόσμο.

ΣΑΣ ΕΥΧΟΜΑΙ ΚΑΛΟ ΠΑΣΧΑ!





Saturday of Lazarus April 12

COURTESY OF THE ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA WWW.GOARCH.ORG



Reading

Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary, the friends of the Lord Jesus, had given Him hospitality and served Him many times (Luke 10:38-42; John 12:2-3). They were from Bethany, a village of Judea. This village is situated in the eastern parts by the foothills of the Mount of Olives, about two Roman miles from Jerusalem. When Lazarus - whose name is a Hellenized form of "Eleazar," which means "God has helped," became ill some days before the saving Passion, his sisters had this report taken to our Saviour, Who was then in Galilee. Nonetheless, He tarried yet two more days until Lazarus died; then He said to His

disciples, "Let us go into Judea that I might awake My friend who sleepeth." By this, of course, He meant the deep sleep of death. On arriving at Bethany, He consoled the sisters of Lazarus, who was already four days dead. Jesus groaned in spirit and was troubled at the death of His beloved friend. He asked, "Where have ye laid his body?" and He wept over him. When He drew nigh to the tomb, He commanded that they remove the stone, and He lifted up His eyes, and giving thanks to God the Father, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come

forth." And he that had been dead four days came forth immediately, bound hand and foot with the grave clothes, and Jesus said to those standing there, "Loose him, and let him go." This is the supernatural wonder wrought by the Saviour that we celebrate on this day.

According to an ancient tradition, it is said that Lazarus was thirty years old when the Lord raised him; then he lived another thirty years on Cyprus and there reposed in the Lord. It is furthermore related that after he was raised from the dead, he never laughed till the end of his life, but that once only, when he saw someone stealing a clay

vessel, he smiled and said, "Clay stealing clay." His grave is situated in the city of Kition, having the inscription: "Lazarus the four days dead and friend of Christ." In 890 his sacred relics were transferred to Constantinople by Emperor Leo the Wise, at which time undoubtedly the Emperor composed his stichera for Vespers, "Wishing to behold the tomb of Lazarus . . ."

Apolytikion of Lazarus Saturday

First Tone

O Christ our God, before Your Passion, You raised Lazarus from the dead to confirm the common Resurrection for all. Therefore, we carry the symbols of victory as did the youths, and we cry out to You, the victor over death, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

Kontakion of Lazarus Saturday

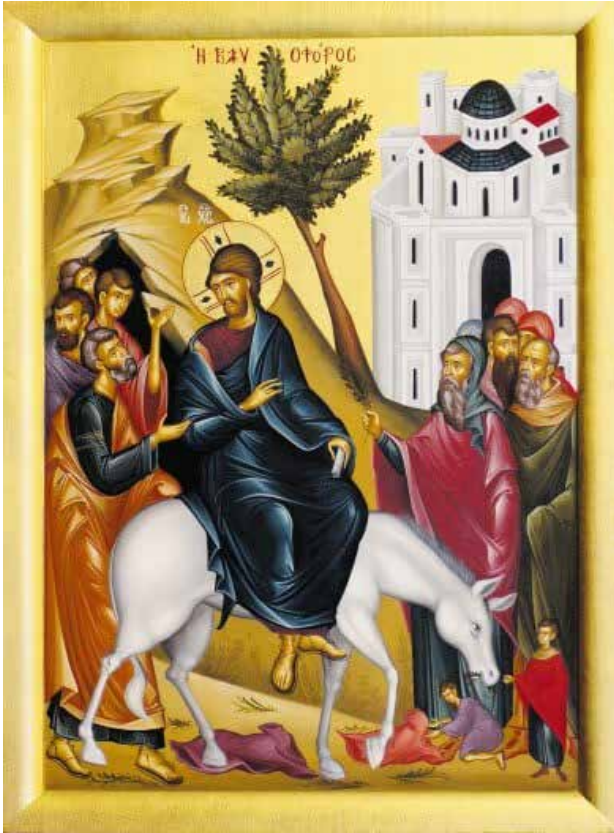
Second Tone

Christ, everyone's joy, the truth, the light, life, the resurrection of the world, has by His goodness appeared to those on earth. He is the archetype of the resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all.



Palm Sunday April 13

COURTESY OF THE ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA WWW.GOARCH.ORG



Reading

On Sunday, five days before the Passover of the Law, the Lord came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Sending two of His disciples to bring Him a foal of an ass, He sat thereon and entered into the city. When the multitude there heard that Jesus was coming, they straightway took up the branches of palm trees in their hands, and went forth to meet Him. Others spread their garments on the ground, and yet others cut

branches from the trees and strewed them in the way that Jesus was to pass; and all of them together, especially the children, went before and after Him, crying out: “Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel” (John 12:13). This is the radiant and glorious festival of our Lord’s entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate today.

The branches of the palm trees symbolize Christ’s victory over the devil and death. The word Hosanna means “Save, I pray,” or “Save, now.” The foal of an ass, and Jesus’ sitting thereon, and the fact that this animal was untamed and considered unclean according to the Law, signified the former uncleanness and wildness of the nations, and their subjection thereafter to the holy Law of the Gospel.

Apolytikion of Palm Sunday

Fourth Tone

O Christ, Our God, we have been Buried with You through Baptism, and by Your Resurrection made worthy of Life immortal. Praising You, we cry out, “Hosanna in the highest, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Kontakion of Palm Sunday

Plagal of the Second Tone

In Heaven, He is seated upon a Throne and on earth He rides upon a foal. O Christ our God, accept the praise of the Angels and the hymn of the Children who cry out to You, “Blessed are You who comes to recall Adam.”



Holy Friday April 18

COURTESY OF THE ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA WWW.GOARCH.ORG



Reading

When Friday dawned, Christ was sent bound from Caiaphas to Pontius Pilate, who was then Governor of Judea. Pilate interrogated Him in many ways, and once and again acknowledged that He was innocent, but to please the Jews, he later passed the sentence of death against Him. After scourging the Lord of all as though He were a runaway slave, he surrendered Him to be crucified.

Thus the Lord Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, was stripped of His garments, was clothed in a purple robe, was crowned with a wreath of thorns, had a reed placed in His hand as though it were a sceptre, was bowed before in

mockery, was spat upon, and was buffeted in the face and on the head. Then they again clothed Him in His own garments, and bearing the cross, He came to Golgotha, a place of condemnation, and there, about the third hour, He was crucified between two thieves. Although both blasphemed Him at the first, the thief at His right hand repented, and said: "Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom," to which our Saviour answered, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." As He hung upon the Cross, He was blasphemed by those who were passing by, was mocked by the high priests,

and by the soldiers was given vinegar to drink mixed with gall. About the ninth hour, He cried out with a loud voice, saying, "It is finished." And the Lamb of God "Which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) expired on the day when the moon was full, and at the hour when, according to the Law, was slain the Passover lamb, which was established as a type of Him in the time of Moses.

Even lifeless creation mourned the death of the Master, and it trembled and was altered out of fear. Yet, even though the Maker of creation was already dead, they pierced Him in His immaculate side, and forthwith came there out Blood and Water. Finally, at about the

setting of the sun, Joseph of Arimathea came with Nicodemus (both of them had been secret disciples of Jesus), and they took down the all-holy Body of the Teacher from the Cross and anointed it with aromatic spices, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. When they had buried Him in a new tomb, they rolled a great stone over its entrance.

Such are the dread and saving sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ commemorated today, and in remembrance of them, we have received the Apostolic commandment that a fast be observed every Friday.

Apolytikion of Holy Friday Plagal Of The First Tone

As the glorious disciples, in the washing of the feet, were enlightened, the profane Judas, ravaged by greed, was benighted. And to the lawless judges he surrenders You the just judge. Consider, you who love money, the one who hanged himself for the sake of it. Shun the insatiate heart that could dare such a deed against the Teacher. Lord, benevolent above all humans, glory to You.

Kontakion of Holy Friday Plagal Of The Fourth Tone

Come, let us all praise Him Who was crucified for us. Mary beheld Him on the Tree and said, "Though You endure even the Cross, You are my Son and my God."

Great and Holy Pascha April 20

COURTESY OF THE ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA WWW.GOARCH.ORG



Reading

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Saviour on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. On the morrow, because of the law which forbids work on the day of the Sabbath, they rested for the whole day. But at early dawn on the Sunday that followed, almost thirty-six hours since the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the sepulchre with the spices to anoint His body. While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, there was a fearful earthquake; and an Angel, whose countenance shone

like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulchre, but did not find the Lord's body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Saviour was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings. Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they

returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions.

Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His "three days" in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that "seventh day" in which it is said that the Lord "rested from all His works" (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose "while it was yet dark, very early in the morning" on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday.

As we celebrate today this joyous Resurrection, we greet and embrace one another in Christ, thereby demonstrating our Saviour's victory over death and corruption, and the destruction of our ancient enmity with God, and His reconciliation toward us, and our inheritance of life everlasting. The feast itself is called Pascha, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means "passover"; because Christ, Who suffered and arose, has made us to pass over from the curse of Adam and slavery to the devil and death unto our primal freedom and blessedness. In addition, this day of this particular week, which is the first of all the rest, is dedicated to the honour of the Lord; in honour and remembrance of the Resurrection, the Apostles transferred to this day the rest from labour that was formerly assigned to the Sabbath of the ancient Law.

Apolytikion of Great and Holy Pascha Plagal Of The First Tone

Christ is risen from the dead, by death, trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

Kontakion of Great and Holy Pascha Plagal Of The Fourth Tone

Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and granting peace to Your disciples, You who raise up the fallen.



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 88/2025

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on Greek Independence Day

March 25, 2025

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America:

The New Creation revealed the Creator by showing Himself to us whom He created
(Akathist Hymn, Third Stasis, N)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The “New Creation” that we celebrate every March 25th is both a spiritual and a political reality for Orthodox Christians of Greek descent, for Philhellenes around the world, and indeed for every human being. What occurred within the Ever-Virgin’s womb is nothing less than the re-creation of the human race and, through us as God’s chosen stewards, the entirety of the created cosmos. And what occurred in 1821 within the hearts and minds of Greek patriots, is nothing less than the re-creation of a Nation, to which we – as stewards – owe a debt of responsibility and fidelity.

The Annunciation of the Theotokos was perfected by the exercise of her freedom on behalf of every man, woman, and child who would ever live. And the Revolution of 1821, an astonishing exercise of liberty, led to the independence and ultimate rebirth of Hellas. The former was a Divine Act enabled by a human being; the latter, a human endeavor empowered

by a Divine Hand. In both, there was the grace of a Virgin Full-of-Grace, a young girl who incarnated the best of our aspirations to freedom, and was the Vessel of the Incarnation of God.

Let us never forget our Virgin Champion who manifests what it means to be truly free in God. And let us never forget the Immortal Heroes of 1821, whose sacrifices showed the world what it means to fight and overcome tyranny, and to protect, defend, and prosper the People of Greece. Let us always choose to be that New Creation in Christ.

Long live 1821! Long live Democracy! Long live Greece!

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ**

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 88/2025

Αρχιεπισκοπική Εγκύκλιος για την εθνική έορτή της 25^{ης} Μαρτίου.

25 Μαρτίου 2025

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, τὶς Πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τὶς Διακόνισσες, τοὺς Μοναχοὺς καὶ τὶς Μοναχές, τοὺς Προέδρους καὶ τὰ Μέλη τῶν Κοινοτικῶν Συμβουλίων, τοὺς Ἐντιμολογιωτάτους Ἀρχόντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἡγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Ἀπογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὁργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Αρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

**«Νέαν ἔδειξε κτίσιν, ἐμφανίσας ὁ Κτίστης, ἡμῖν τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γενομένοις»
(Ακάθιστος Ὕμνος, Στάσις Γ', Ν).**

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ἡ «καινὴ κτίσις» ποὺ ἐορτάζουμε κάθε 25^η Μαρτίου εἶναι ταυτοχρόνως καὶ πνευματικὴ καὶ πολιτικὴ πραγματικότητα γιὰ τοὺς ὀρθόδοξους χριστιανούς ἑλληνικῆς καταγωγῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ γιὰ τοὺς ἀνὰ τὸν κόσμον φιλέλληνες, καὶ γιὰ κάθε ἄνθρωπο. Ὅτι συνέβη στὴ μητέρα τῆς αἰιπαρθένου δὲν εἶναι τίποτε λιγότερο ἀπὸ τὴν ἀναδημιουργία τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου γένους καί, μέσῳ ἡμῶν τῶν χριστιανῶν ὡς οἰκονόμων τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁλοκλήρου τοῦ κόσμου. Ὅτι συνέβη τὸ 1821 μὲ τὴ γενναιότητα καὶ τὴν αὐτοθυσίαν τῶν ἐλλήνων πατριωτῶν δὲν εἶναι τίποτε ἄλλο παρὰ ἡ ἀναγέννηση τοῦ ἔθνους μας, πρὸς τὸ ὁποῖο ἔχουμε χρέος εὐθύνης γιὰ τὴ συνέχειά του.

Ὁ Εὐαγγελισμὸς τῆς Θεοτόκου ἐπιτελέσθηκε μὲ τὴν ἐλεύθερη βούληση καὶ συγκατάθεση τῆς Παναγίας μας, ἡ ὁποία ἐκπροσωπεῖ κάθε ἄνδρα, γυναῖκα καὶ παιδί ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχὴ ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ κόσμου. Καὶ ἡ ἐπανάσταση τοῦ 1821 ἀποτέλεσε μίαν συγκλονιστικὴν πράξιν ἐλευθερίας, καθὼς ὁδήγησε στὴν ἀνεξαρτησία καὶ τὴν ἀναγέννηση τῆς πατρίδας μας Ἑλλάδας. Ἡ πρώτη πράξις ἦταν θεία βούληση, ποὺ ἐπιτεύχθηκε μὲ τὴ συνεργασία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· ἡ δεύτερη πράξις ἦταν ἀνθρώπινη προσπάθεια, ποὺ ἐνισχύθηκε ἀπὸ τὸ χέρι τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ στίς δύο περιπτώσεις, τὸ πρόσωπο τῆς αἰιπαρθένου κεχαριτωμένης νεαρῆς Παναγίας μας ἦταν παρὼν ὡς τὸ κατ' ἐξοχὴν σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐνσαρκώνοντας τὰ ὑψηλότερα ὄνειρά μας γιὰ ἐλευθερία.

Ἀς μὴ ξεχνοῦμε ποτὲ τὴν αἰιπαρθένο προστάτιδά μας, ἡ ὁποία μᾶς δείχνει τί σημαίνει νὰ εἶναι κανεὶς πραγματικὰ ἐλεύθερος μὲ τὸ Θεό. Καὶ ἂς μὴ ξεχάσουμε ποτὲ τοὺς ἀθάνατους ἥρωες τοῦ 1821, ποὺ μὲ τὶς θυσίες τους ἔδειξαν στὸν κόσμον τὸ τί σημαίνει νὰ πολεμᾷς καὶ νὰ νικᾷς τὴν τυραννία, νὰ προστατεύεις, νὰ υπερασπίζεσαι καὶ νὰ ὁδηγεῖς στὴν πρόοδο τὸν ἑλληνικὸ λαό. Ἀς ἔχουμε λοιπὸν κι ἐμεῖς ὡς στόχον νὰ γίνουμε «καινὴ κτίσις ἐν Χριστῷ».

Ζήτω τὸ 1821! Ζήτω ἡ δημοκρατία! Ζήτω ἡ Ἑλλάδα!

Ὁ Ἀμερικὴς Ἐλπιδοφόρος

† Ὁ Ἀμερικὴς Ἐλπιδοφόρος

HOLY WEEK IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Holy Week in the Eastern Orthodox Church consists of various services culminating in the celebration of Easter, the Feast of Feasts. In addition to every Sunday dedicated to the Resurrection, there are a total of 100 days in the calendar year which are dedicated to Easter. Fifty days prior to Easter, including Great Lent, are intended to strengthen our soul and body through repentance (change from our old sinful ways), prayer (deliberate thoughts of God) and self-control (willful control of our mind, tongue and body). The 50 days after Easter are known as the Pentecostarion and are dedicated to the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection.



Saturday Morning of St. Lazarus

On the day before Palm Sunday, we commemorate the rising of Lazarus from the dead. Just prior to entering the holy city of Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus, traveling through Bethany, was informed that His good friend Lazarus was gravely ill. Jesus did not go immediately to see His friend but waited until Lazarus was dead and lying in the tomb for 4 days. When Jesus arrived and found the sisters in mourning, He asked to go to the tomb. After praying, He commanded Lazarus to come out of his dark and dismal tomb. It is this miracle that draws the crowds to praise Him and the desire of the High Priest and elders to have Him killed.

Palm Sunday Morning

On this day, the Sunday before Easter, we celebrate the triumphant entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. Jesus was greeted by a multitude of people holding palm branches and spreading their cloaks on the road in a sign of respect crying out, "Hosanna to the

Son of David, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord." Upon His entry, Jesus went immediately to the Temple, where He prayed and taught. Palm Sunday marks the final joyous event until the proclamation that Christ is risen.

Palm Sunday Evening Bridegroom Service — (*Holy Monday service sung by anticipation on Palm Sunday evening*)

This service marks the beginning of Jesus' suffering. Through the Gospel reading we learn about the plotting by the High Priests and elders to disclaim Jesus as the Son of the Almighty. The church commemorates the blessed and noble Joseph of

the Old Testament who showed complete faith toward God and was not empty of it as were some of the Pharisees. The day also commemorates the fig tree which had leaves but no fruit. Jesus cursed the fruitless tree to become withered which symbolizes those having empty lives and yielding no fruit. We also hear the beautiful "Hymn of the Bridegroom" as portrayed in the Icon of Christ the Bridegroom which is carried by the priest in a procession around the church.

Holy Monday—(*Holy Tuesday service sung by anticipation on Monday evening*)

This service's theme warns us to be prepared and watchful prior to our appearance before the awesome judgment seat of God. The Gospel reading imparts the parable of the Ten Virgins of which five were prepared with enough oil in their lamps to greet the Lord and enter into His bridal chamber. The other five were foolish by not bringing

Holy Week continued...

enough oil and were left out. This parable warns us to be wisely prepared to ensure our entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Holy Tuesday—(*Holy Wednesday service sung by anticipation on Tuesday evening*)

The service this evening counsels us to repent from the life of sin to a life of faith and obedience. Through the act of anointing Christ with myrrh, the woman in the house of Simon the leper, showed sincere repentance of her sins. The Hymn of Kassiane, which relates the story of a repentant woman, is chanted this evening.

Holy Wednesday Morning

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated for the last time during Great Lent. This solemn, ancient liturgy offers the Blood and Body of Christ which have been sanctified during the previous Sunday's Divine Liturgy.

Holy Wednesday—Sacrament of Holy Unction

Holy Wednesday is the evening of repentance, confession and remission of sins as the faithful partake of the Sacrament of Holy Unction. Seven epistles and seven gospels are read and prayers are offered to en-

treat the Holy Spirit to bless the oil and transform it into Holy Myrrh which is administered to the faithful.

Holy Thursday Evening—(*Holy Thursday services are sung by anticipation on Thursday morning*)

On Holy Thursday we commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist (thanksgiving) for it is on this day that Jesus went up to Mount Zion and into the Upper Room to partake of His Last Supper with His Twelve Apostles. Jesus instructed His disciples to partake of His Body and His Blood in remembrance of Him and for the forgiveness of sins. Knowing that His betrayal was imminent, Jesus led His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed so intensely that bloody sweat poured from His face. Shortly thereafter, Judas Iscariot, one of His Twelve, betrayed Jesus by placing a kiss on His face. Jesus, the long awaited Messiah, was arrested and taken into custody like a criminal. It is during this Liturgy of St. Basil that the priest prepares the Holy Communion which is kept in the Tabernacle on the Holy Altar table throughout the year to be distributed to the faithful in times of illness. Jesus is forever in our midst.



*Holy Week continued...***Holy Thursday Evening**—*Service of the Holy Passion (Good Friday is sung by anticipation on Thursday evening)*

This is a day of great sadness in our church for on this day our Lord suffered spittings, scourgings, buffetings, scorn, mocking and humiliation; the reed, sponge, vinegar, nails, spear, purple robe, and crown of thorns; the Cross and Death. The King of Glory was crucified on Golgotha, also known as the Place of the Skull. Tradition states that Jesus was buried directly over the grave of Adam, the first man created by God. Death was most difficult for Jesus since He knew He would be separated from His Father. The Church commemorates this day with the reading of the Twelve Gospels which include His last instructions to His disciples, the stirring prayer of Christ and His new commandment. After the reading of the fifth Gospel, the priest carries the Crucifix around the church while chanting the moving hymn, "Today is hung upon the Tree." During the procession, the faithful kneel and then approach to reverently kiss the Crucifix. Many churches such as Saint Nicholas hold all night vigils where prayers are read and hymns are sung until sunrise.

Good Friday Morning

Good Friday is the day Jesus, the Son of God, was placed on the Cross to die for our sins. Since it is a day of extreme sorrow, the faithful observe it with strict fasting, prayer, cleanliness, self-examination, confession, repentance and good works in humility. The Royal Hours which consist of hymns, psalms and readings from the Old and New Testaments are read. It is the only day of the year when Divine Liturgy is not celebrated.

Good Friday Afternoon

This service is a continuation of the morning's Royal Hours memorializing Jesus' death on the Cross. During the Gospel reading, the priest removes the Body of Christ from the Cross, wraps it in a new white linen cloth and takes it into the Altar. The priest then carries the Epitafio (the cloth depicting the body of Jesus) around the church as the faithful are kneeling in reverence, and then places it in the Kouvouklion which symbolizes the Tomb of Christ. The service also commemorates Joseph of Arimathea, who buried the Sacred Body of Our Lord by wrapping It in clean linen and carried It to his unused tomb as was foretold in Old Testament scripture.

Good Friday Evening—*(This service is the Saturday morning service sung by anticipation on Friday evening.)*

This service depicts Christ's descent into Hades where He reconciles to God those who died before His first coming. The service begins with psalms, hymns and readings pertaining to the death of Christ, His divinity and expected Resurrection. Lamentations are sung before the Tomb of Christ, including verses about His unjust punishment and the shedding of His innocent blood. Many churches, such as Saint Nicholas, carry the Kouvouklion out and walk around the church as the faithful follow, carrying lit candles. Although the service

is one of lament and sorrow, we leave with a symbol of hope, a flower from the Tomb.

Holy Saturday Morning—*(Vespers and Divine Liturgy evening sung by anticipation on Saturday morning)*

Today's service is known as the "First Resurrection" as it commemorates the resurrection of Adam and the defeat of death. During the Liturgy of St. Basil's Epistle reading, the priest tosses laurel leaves and rose petals throughout the church proclaiming, "Arise, O God, and judge Thou the earth; for Thou shall take all heathen to Thine inheritance." We also commemorate the Holy Myrrhbearers who, unlike the scattered disciples, appeared at the Tomb of Christ to perform the last act of love to Christ of anointing His Sacred Body.

Holy Sunday of Easter—*(Divine Liturgy of Sunday morning sung on Holy Saturday evening by anticipation)*

The Midnight Easter service celebrates the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. After the Odes of Lamentation are chanted, the church is placed into complete darkness. The priest then emerges from the Royal Doors of the Altar with a candle lit from the vigil light chanting, "Come ye and receive the light from the unwaning light." He gives the light to the faithful who are waiting with their unlit candles. The progression of light throughout the darkened church reminds us that the Light of our Lord permeates every corner of the world. The priest leads the congregation outside to proclaim the Life Giving Resurrection of Jesus Christ and triumphantly sings "Christos Anesti" Christ is Risen! Many beautiful resurrectional hymns are chanted before the faithful return into the church to celebrate the Diving Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and listen to the Homily of St. John Chrysostom. The faithful then receive a dyed red Easter egg and take the light to their homes where the Light of Christ shines all year long.

Easter Saturday Afternoon Vespers—*Agape Service*

Once more the faithful gather with lighted candles and chant "Christ is Risen". The highlight of this service is the reading of the gospel in many languages, attesting that the Good News of the Resurrection has spread throughout the world. Easter is also known as the Sunday of Agape (love feast) as the faithful seek to end misunderstandings and arguments among fellow man.

The President and Parish Council, Presbyteria Toula, my family and I wish every one of you, KAAH ANASTASIH!

Fr. Michael L. Pastrikos, Pastor



Diaconate Ordination

Father Deacon Anargyros Stakias

The Diaconate ordination of Fr. Deacon Anargyros Stakias. May he always be worthy of his ordination. Αξιος, Αξιος, Αξιος. Congratulations and may our Lord continue to bless him in his new Ministry serving in our Lords Vineyard.





Sunday of Orthodoxy

Sunday of Orthodoxy and the procession of the Holy Icons, and the Lenten Meal that the parishioners enjoyed during the Feast for the day.



Father Michael with our parish chanters Herman and Rita.

St. Demetrios Happenings

A Special General Assembly held on Sunday, March 16th. The main topic for the Assembly was to vote on the construction of the new roof for the cultural center and the church. The motion to accept the proposal and the bids were accepted by the members of the Assembly. God bless the members of the parish council and everyone who participated in the Assembly.



Floral arrangements by Melpomene Daglis and Irene Sheets (shown).

The Very Rev. Fr. Bartholomew Mercado received his Doctorate Degree in Theology. He received it in Italy.



Greek Independence Day Celebration

The children of St. Demetrios attended the 25th of March program at City Hall in N. Wildwood, New Jersey. The Mayor of N. Wildwood also was with the group celebrating the March 25th program and was honored for his retirement as Mayor.





Greek School Independence Day Celebration



The children of St. Demetrios celebrated the 25th of March Greek Independence Day with performances and dancing. The event was followed by a reception.



Mr. George Plamantouras received an award for his 10th anniversary as a St. Demetrios Greek School teacher.





Procession of the Holy Cross





St. Demetrios Happenings

*Mrs. Jamie Street was Chrismated as Dimitra on Sunday, March 9, 2025.
Her sponsor was Mrs. Dimitra Mercado.*



*Jamie witht her family
after the Chrismation.*



St. Demetrios Happenings



Congratulations to Christos Bilios of our parish and his coaches and teammates on winning their street hockey championship game! Christos' father Nikolas, his mother Dina, and brother Yianni celebrated with him.



Angel Bilios' soccer team received their Championship trophy and medals after beating the number one team over all by 6 to 1. Congratulations to the coaches and team players for a job well done!

Angel proudly presents the championship trophy.



Ladies Philoptochos Society "Soterios" Chapter 1037

Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
321 Saint Demetrios Avenue, North Wildwood, New Jersey 08260

February 17, 2025

President

Konstantina Bilios
113B Seaview Court
N. Wildwood, NJ 08260

Vice President

Arigi Papaspanos
118 W. Jefferson Avenue
Wildwood Crest, NJ
08260

2nd Vice President

Despoina Katsikaris
102 Hawthorne Drive
Rio Grande, NJ 08242

Treasurer

Maria Kellis
4 Bottle Creek Drive
Cape May, NJ 08204

Secretary

Bessie Giouros
14 Cedar Meadow Drive
C.M.C.H., NJ 08210

Dearest Friends and Family:

Greetings to you all and we hope this letter finds you well.

Please support our annual EASTER CARD fundraiser. To partake in this fundraiser, please send a \$25 donation to our church at the address above and also include the section below with your information.

Please know that all proceeds from our endeavors go to help those in need. We are very proud of our small chapter, who along with the supportive aid from donors like yourselves, we have been able to assist numerous charities, families and individuals, locally and nationally for so many years.

Deadline is April 10, 2025

Please make your check payable to
"Ladies Philoptochos of St. Demetrios G.O. Church"

WE THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

MAY GOD BE WITH YOU ALWAYS

NAME(S) TO BE PRINTED ON CARD:

YOUR ADDRESS:



SAVE THE DATE



***2025 Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of New Jersey***

***Clergy Laity Assembly and Philoptochos
Convention***

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

***The Waterfall
3416 Philadelphia Pike
Claymont, DE 19703***

More information will be forthcoming.



METROPOLIS OF
NEW JERSEY

SAINT DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

321 Saint Demetrios Street • North Wildwood, New Jersey 08260 • Tel. (609) 522-0152

Nicholas D. Konides
President
Board of Trustees
Bus. (609) 522-5800
Res. (609) 523-9300

William A. Mitchell
Secretary
Board of Trustees
Bus. (609) 465-7510
Res. (609) 522-4098

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OUR PARISHIONERS

AS EXPLAINED AT OUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARCH 16, OUR COMMUNITY CENTER HAS A BADLY LEAKING ROOF WHEN EXPERIENCING HEAVY RAINS. THIS SITUATION CAN CREATE POTENTIALLY UNSAFE AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS AND NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED QUICKLY. WE RECEIVED BIDS FOR THE ROOF REPAIRS FROM THREE RESPONSIBLE LOCAL FIRMS AND CHOSE THE LOWEST BID OF \$47,875.00 FROM MANNY CONSTRUCTION CO., AN INSURED, BONDED LOCAL COMPANY. AS WE DO NOT HAVE AVAILABLE FUNDS, WE WILL TAKE A SHORT TERM LOAN FROM CREST SAVINGS BANK WEALTH MANAGEMENT DIVISION WHERE WE HAVE AN INVESTMENT ACCOUNT OF APPROX. \$54,000.00. WE CAN BORROW HALF OF THAT AMOUNT(\$27,000) TO START THE PROJECT. WE HAVE INITIATED A FUND RAISER. LED BY OUR PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS, WITH THE HOPES THAT OUR PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS WILL RESPOND WITH GENEROSITY AND LOVE IN THEIR HEARTS FOR OUR BELOVED ST. DEMETRIOS CHURCH. THIS FUND WILL ALLOW US TO COMPLETE THE WORK AND, HOPEFULLY PAY OFF THE LOAN QUICKLY.

IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT PRESIDENT NICK KONIDES AT 609-425-0179 OR SECRETARY BILL MITCHELL AT 609-425-4000. THANK YOU.



Liturgical Calendar

APRIL 2025 LITURGICAL PROGRAM

- Friday, April 4:** The Akathist Hymn 6:00 pm
- Sunday, April 6:** Fifth Sunday of Lent (St. Mary of Egypt) Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
- Saturday, April 12:** Saturday of Lazaros Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
- Sunday, April 13:** PALM SUNDAY Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

(Liturgical Schedule for Holy Week Services)

- Palm Sunday Evening:** Bridegroom Service 6:00 pm
- Monday, April 14:** Holy Monday Bridegroom Service 6:00 pm
- Tuesday, April 15:** Holy Tuesday Bridegroom Service 6:00 pm
- Wednesday, May 16:** Holy Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy 9:00 am
- Holy Wednesday Evening:** Holy Unction Service 6:00 pm
- Thursday, April 17:** Vesperal Liturgy (The Last Supper with Christ) The washing of the Apostles Feet)
This service will begin at 9:00 am
- Holy Thursday Evening:** The Reading of the Twelve Gospels 7:00 pm
- Friday, April 18:** Holy Friday Morning The Royal Hours 9:00 am
- Holy Friday Afternoon service:** The Apokathelosis Service (Taking down the Body of Christ from the Cross)
This service will begin at 2:00 pm
- Holy Friday Evening:** The Lamentation service of Christ 7:00 pm
- Saturday, April 19:** Holy Saturday First Resurrection Service Vesperal Liturgy 9:00 am
- Saturday Evening:** Holy Saturday Evening Resurrection Service - This service will begin at 11:00 pm
- Pascha Vigil Service:** (Outside) 12:00 Midnight. After this evening service, we will go into the Church to Celebrate the Orthros and Divine Liturgy.
- Sunday, April 20:** The Agape Vespers: HOLY PASCHA (Easter) 11:00 am

In memory - In honor

Please contact the church at 609-522-0152 or email frmichaelstdemetrios@gmail.com with your memorial information and donation.





thoughts from

EVA LALLAS



**CHRIST IS RISEN!!! ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!!!
CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!**

The most glorious proclamation throughout Christendom. Our Lord's Resurrection is His promise and our **HOPE** of everlasting life for all of us who believe in Him.

As we commemorate the holiest day of the year let us recall the exemplary life of Jesus and His teachings which summon each of us to abide by His Word. During our Easter Liturgy as "Christos Anesti!" resounds, countless lit candles transform a darkened church into a sea of bright light; symbolic of our Savior's Holy Resurrection leading us from darkness to His True Light and the **HOPE** of a new life. Thus, as the saying goes, the Greeks always had the perfect word for things. Easter Sunday is accurately referred to as "Lambri" - - Bright Sunday." When greeting each other during the following weeks we Orthodox Christian exclaim the joyful "Christos Anesti, Alithos Anesti." We are reminded that our Lord's Resurrection is the affirmation of our faith in Christ and His fulfillment of eternal life - - the very essence of Christianity!

Let us note the significance of candles in our Orthodox Church: the candle that brightens our Easter morning, the candle that we light upon entering church, the candle we light in prayer in remembrance of saints and our deceased loved ones, in prayer for the well being of our loved ones who surround us. The candles that are always in the altar during services and accompany the Holy Gospel. Yes, as they burn their bright flames reaffirm our **FAITH** in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

At this time the author wishes to share with you, the reader, the story of the four candles:

Four candles burned slowly, the ambiance so soft you could almost hear them talking.

The first candle said: "I am **PEACE!**" "The world is full of anger and fighting. Nobody can keep me lit."

Then the flame of Peace went out completely.

The second candle said: "I am **FAITH!** I am no longer indispensable. It doesn't make sense that I stay lit another moment." Just then a breeze softly blew Faith's flame.

Sadly the third candle began to speak: "I am **LOVE!** People don't understand my importance so they simply put me aside. They even forget to love, those who are nearest to them." And waiting no longer Love's flame went out.

Suddenly a child entered the room and saw the three unlit candles. "Why aren't you burning? You're supposed to stay lit till the end."

Then the fourth candle answered: "Don't be afraid. I am **HOPE!** While I am still burning we can re-light the other candles." With shining eyes the child took the candle of **HOPE** and lit the other candles.

The Greatest of These is **LOVE**.....but the flame of **HOPE** should never go out of our life! With **HOPE** each of us can live with **PEACE, FAITH, and LOVE.** As we light our very next candle and that of Easter Morning, let us remember what we may have heard the four candles telling us.

**The following is a joyful Easter Poem
by Στέφανο Μπολέτση**

*Χριστός Ανέστη, ω, τι χαρά!
Κάθε καρδιά σαν κρίνο ανοίγει στήν Αγάπη
Κι είναι όλα φως και καλωσύνης προσφορά
Κι είναι ψυχές πανάλαφρες λες κι έχουν
κάτασπρα φτερά!
Χριστός Ανέστη!*

**Wishing you a Blessed Easter!
ΚαλόΠασχα!**



Greek Corner

As we know our Greek culture is very rich as is the Greek language. Through the ages from ancient to modern times parables and sayings have survived and are often found in today's conversations. We offer several of these each month and invite you to submit those that are familiar to you.

1.) Οι μικροί νά είχαν μπόϊ, θά τρώγανε τον κόσμο!

If those short in stature were tall, they would have (eaten) conquered the world!
The so-called Napoleonic complex!

2.) Αφρήζη ξαφρήζη, τον παρά μου έδωσα!

Whether it's sudsy or not I paid for it!
Said of a customer who had ordered feta, and upon eating it found that it was a bar of soap.
No matter what, I paid for it and I'm stuck with it; so I'll continue eating it.
Said of Greeks of a certain Greek island who are known for being cheap. (We will not identify the island.)

3.) Φτῆς την τραχιλιά σου! Δάγκωσε την γλώσσα σου!

Bite your tongue! To avoid saying something at this time.

4.) Τα μάτια σου δέκα!

Have ten eyes!
Be careful! Be ever watchful!

5.) Το έξυπνο πουλί άπ την μήτι πιάνετε!

The so-called "wise" bird can be caught by its beak!
No matter how alert and careful one is, he can sometime fall prey to a rather obvious scheme.



Let's take a look at some common American phrases!

1.) Cut corners - - do something cheaply

2.) Off the beaten track - - unconventional

3.) Keep your fingers crossed - - hope for luck
Χτύπα ξύλο - - knock on wood . " . " "

4.) Catch someone red handed - - catch in the act

5.) Through thick and thin - - during trying and good times



St. Demetrios WEBSITE!



Check out St. Demetrios Church's new website for a variety of information, stewardship and donations, bulletins and newsletters, links, and more!

www.stdemetriosnewjersey.com

Sponsor a Coffee Hour

Attention All Parishioners:

We have resumed the coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy on Sundays. Please consider sponsoring a coffee hour in memory of a loved one, for the health of your family, or in honor of our St. Demetrios Church.

Please call the office at 609-522-0152 to schedule. Thank you.



upcoming events

JOY (AGES 8-10) | HOPE (AGES 3-7)
TWO SATURDAYS PER MONTH

PHILOPTOCHOS
1ST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH AFTER DIVINE LITURGY

GREEK SCHOOL
EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT FROM 4:30 - 7:30 P.M.

directory

PROTOPRESBYTER | FR. MICHAEL PASTRIKOS

CHURCH SECRETARY | TBD

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GREEK SCHOOL | GEORGE PLAMANTOURAS

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H.O.P.E. | FR. MICHAEL PASTRIKOS

PHILOPTOCHOS | DINA BILIOS

CHANTERS | FOTINI ANDY, RITA EFTHIMIOU, CATHY WOLFE

CHURCH: 1.609.522.0152

321 ST. DEMETRIOS AVE, NORTH WILDWOOD, NJ 08260

STDEMETRIOSNEWJERSEY.COM

ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR THE KOINONIA MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 20TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR

donation opportunity

The Parish Council would like to bring to your attention the Golden Leaf Giving Tree. Very few have participated in this memorable way to create ***a lifetime tribute for generations to see and enjoy***. Please take the time to view this lovely Giving Tree and consider displaying your family's name, a remembrance of a loved one or an achievement. We would like to see the tree grow with more care and love!





help us grow with **VANCO GIVING**

It's through your contributions that we are able to carry on important work both spiritually and in our community. Electronic Giving –is the way to go today. It is also a convenient, easy way to support St. Demetrios.

BY GIVING ELECTRONICALLY YOU CAN:

- Give anywhere, anytime from your computer, cell phone or tablet.
- Donate easily for special projects of the Church.
- Give towards your stewardship pledge or other donations such as memorial, endowment and others.
- Set up reoccurring or one time pledges and you will never need to worry if you have your check book or cash on you. VANCO will store your information.
- It is important to note that if you are using a credit card, you may be able to accumulate rewards by your provider.

Show your support and try E-Giving through our VANCO QR Code (located below). Or you can find this code on our website under the DONATE TAB www.stdemetriosnewjersey.com and even easier.... There is a button that states “click here” that will take you directly to the VANCO page. It is as simple as that.

To use the QR code- open your camera on your phone and hover over the code. The VANCO website will appear and then tap on it.

Thank you for all you do to support our St. Demetrios family throughout the year. May God bless you and keep you well and strong.





Support Our Church's Mission Through eGiving



- Give anytime, anywhere using your computer, tablet or mobile phone
- Make regular church offerings without writing a check or preparing envelopes
- Give in the moment with a fast, one-time donation
- Schedule recurring contributions so they arrive even when you can't attend services
- Pay for events and activities using your debit/credit card or banking information

If you would like to give electronically, visit our website or contact the church office.

GivePlus Powered By Vanco Payment Solutions



Stewardship News

Dear Parishioner,

We at Saint Demetrios are thankful to have you and your family here in our church. You are a vital part of our church community. **Unfortunately, the Parish is in great need of your financial help!!**

Your financial support provides the foundation for our parish ministries and our efforts in meeting the challenge of spreading Christ's Word and our Orthodox Faith.

Stewardship also means more than just making a monetary donation. Stewardship is an opportunity to examine our priorities and values, to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves and to grow in grace. It allows us to participate in the vineyard of our Lord. Giving is not a substitute for commitment. It is an expression of your commitment.

Please note there are several ways to pledge: besides printing this form, our Stewardship Pledge forms are also in the Narthex, you may complete one and give it to Parish Council Secretary, William Mitchell. He can also be contacted at 609-425-4000. If you would like to mail your Stewardship Commitment, our mailing address is:

St. Demetrios
300 St Demetrios St
North Wildwood NJ 08260

If Stewardship payment has been made for 2024 please disregard this notice and except our gratitude.

Please respond out of faith and love and help keep our church vibrant for many years to come. **This is YOUR CHURCH! Please, if you have yet to send in your Stewardship, please do so now. Remember the Church is not just here when you need it! Its open every week! If we don't support the Church, who else will?**

Respectfully,
Fr. Michael & The Stewardship Committee

Cut here

Please make checks payable to: Saint Demetrios Church

My Stewardship Commitment is \$ _____ Year _____

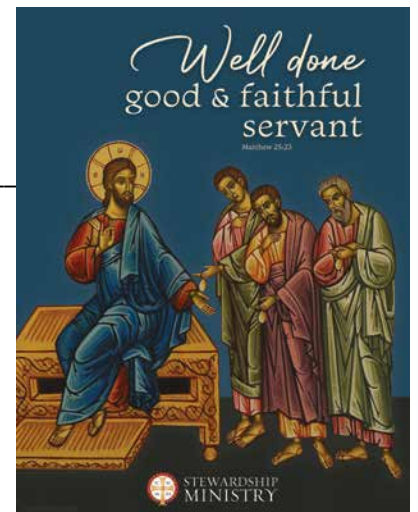
Single/Individual \$500.00

Family \$750.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email _____



SAINT DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

321 Saint Demetrios Street – North Wildwood, New Jersey 08260

PARISH REGISTRY INFORMATION FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

HOME PHONE _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____

DATE OF ORTHODOX BAPTISM/CHRISMATION _____

PROFESSION/OCCUPATION _____

BUSINESS NAME & ADDRESS _____

BUSINESS PHONE _____

SPOUSE'S 1ST NAME & MAIDEN NAME _____

SPOUSE'S DATE OF BIRTH _____

SPOUSE'S PLACE OF BIRTH _____

DATE OF ORTHODOX BAPTISM/CHRISMATION _____

SPOUSE'S OCCUPATION _____

BUSINESS PHONE _____

DATE & PLACE OF ORTHODOX MARRIAGE _____

NAME OF PRIEST WHO DID MARRIAGE _____

CHILDREN'S NAMES & DATES OF BIRTH _____

YES, RETIREMENT INCOME MATTERS

When asked how their workplace plans could be best improved, almost 30% suggested “more investment options designed for after you retire” and adding a “guaranteed lifetime income” option. About 25% thought their plans should better show how much income their savings will produce.

When it comes to retirement, much of the focus has always been on building a nest egg. Here are five reasons why I think that's good:

MORE INCOME STREAMS MEAN MORE FLEXIBILITY

In a perfect world, a single guaranteed, inflation-adjusted stream of income would more than meet your needs. For most, a more realistic scenario includes several sources of income that can be adjusted based on market and economic conditions and changes to your personal situation.

TAXES CAN BE A GAME-CHANGER

Build a plan that includes sources of both taxable and tax-free income streams. The tax code and brackets become your personal playground as you make decisions to increase, decrease or eliminate various types of income to manage taxes. A tax-diversified approach to retirement investing, Roth conversions, municipal bonds, permanent life insurance and careful use of retirement investment distributions can be part of the mix.

**GUARANTEED INCOME STREAMS PROVIDE
PEACE OF MIND**

Safe, stable and reliable income is a beautiful thing, especially in turbulent times. Wild market swings, scary headlines and uncertainty make income streams from Social Security, pensions, military retirement and immediate annuities shine. However, be careful because ...

INFLATION IS EVER PRESENT

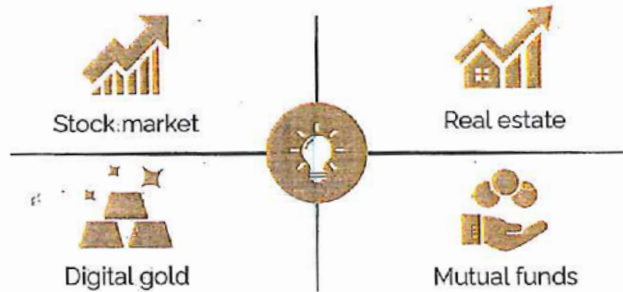
Unfortunately, many guaranteed streams of income don't account for inflation. Military retirement and Social Security are exceptions, but most corporate pensions, government pensions and income annuity options don't include inflation adjustments. Income sources from dividend-paying stocks, convertible

securities and real estate investments may all help on that front. Inflation provides a solid rationale for diversifying your retirement income streams.



EVEN SOCIAL SECURITY REQUIRES IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Where to Invest Money?



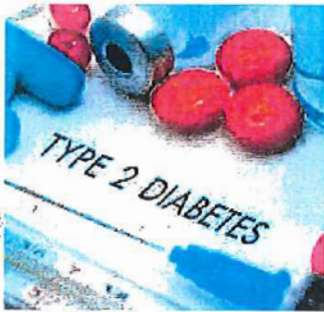
According to Social Security, about 90% of Americans over 65 receive income from this program. That makes it very likely it will be part of your plan. It's important to understand survivor benefits and make smart choices on timing to make the most of it.

If you have focused primarily on building your retirement savings, it might be time to focus on using it ... efficiently.



HEALTHY BODY AND MIND

IS IT POSSIBLE TO REVERSE DIABETES?



Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition affecting millions globally. It poses significant health risks and, left unmanaged, can lead to cardiovascular disease, nerve damage, kidney failure, vision loss and other ailments.

According to the American Heart Association, adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to die from heart disease than those without.

Understanding these dangers and exploring scientifically backed strategies can help reverse type 2 diabetes. Some options:

DIET AND EXERCISE

Type 2 diabetes is often linked to lifestyle factors. Reversal involves achieving normal blood sugar levels without medication, a goal supported by scientific studies.

Adopt a low-calorie diet. A study in the journal *Diabetes Care* shows that consuming 600 to 800 calories daily for eight to 12 weeks significantly reduced fat deposits in the liver and pancreas. This led to improved insulin production and sensitivity. After achieving remission, transitioning to a balanced diet that avoids high-calorie, processed foods is essential to maintain results.

Reduce refined carbs and sugars. This will significantly lower blood sugar spikes. Foods to avoid include white bread, white rice, pastries, sugary cereals, sweetened beverages (like soda and energy drinks), candy, and desserts such as cakes and cookies. Focus instead on a diet rich in whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats and fiber.

Get active. Consistent exercise enhances the body's ability to utilize insulin effectively. Aerobic exercises such as walking and cycling show benefits, along with resistance training.

Try intermittent fasting. Limiting food intake to specific times shows lower fasting glucose levels

and improved insulin sensitivity. Research in cellular metabolism highlights the potential of intermittent fasting to decrease body weight and reduce blood sugar levels.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY



Metformin One of the most widely prescribed medications for managing type 2 diabetes, metformin works by reducing glucose production in the liver, which boosts insulin sensitivity and enhances glucose uptake by muscles. Metformin is often the first-line treatment due to its effectiveness and safety profile.

Semaglutide Increasingly used for managing type 2 diabetes, semaglutide helps regulate blood sugar by mimicking the action of the hormone GLP-1, which increases insulin production in response to meals, slows gastric emptying and reduces appetite.

According to a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, semaglutide also significantly lowers HbA1c levels and supports weight loss, making it particularly effective for those with obesity-related diabetes.

WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

For people with severe obesity, bariatric surgery has been a successful intervention. Procedures such as gastric bypass not only promote substantial weight loss but also have immediate effects on blood sugar control, often leading to type 2 remission.

Roughly 96 million U.S. adults, or 38%, have prediabetes. Without intervention, up to 70% of individuals with prediabetes may progress to type 2 diabetes.





A BREAK IN YOUR DAY

REVISITING THE CLASSICS

GROUCHO MARX OBSERVATIONS

I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member.

Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others.

Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.

She got her looks from her father. He's a plastic surgeon.

I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead, tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I'm going to be happy in it.

Behind every successful man is a woman, behind her is his wife.

The secret of life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made.

Man does not control his own fate. The women in his life do that for him.

A man's only as old as the woman he feels.

Well, Art is Art, isn't it? Still, on the other hand, water is water. And east is east and west is west and if you take cranberries and stew them like applesauce they taste much more like prunes than rhubarb does. Now you tell me what you know.

Marriage is a wonderful institution, but who wants to live in an institution?

One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got into my pajamas I'll never know.



I intend to live forever, or die trying.

I never forget a face, but in your case I'll be glad to make an exception.

I must confess, I was born at a very early age.

I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it.

Getting older is no problem. You just have to live long enough.

Why, a four-year-old child could understand this report. Run out and find me a four-year-old child. I can't make head nor tail out of it.

All people are born alike—except Republicans and Democrats.

I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury.

Women should be obscene and not heard.

I won't belong to any organization that would have me as a member.

I worked my way up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty.

Before I speak, I have something important to say.

Military intelligence is a contradiction in terms.

I'm not feeling very well—I need a doctor immediately. Ring the nearest golf course.

No man goes before his time—unless the boss leaves early.

Quote me as saying I was mis-quoted.

Either he's dead or my watch has stopped.

I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.

If you've heard this story before, don't stop me, because I'd like to hear it again.

If I held you any closer I would be on the other side of you.

A hospital bed is a parked taxi with the meter running.

Humor is reason gone mad.

Military justice is to justice what military music is to music.





No Bars, No Problem

*You can still dial 911
in an emergency*

HERE'S A SCARY scenario: You're driving alone in a remote area. Your car dies. And you can't get a cellular signal in that location.

Don't count out that phone just yet. Just because your particular service provider—say, AT&T, Verizon or T-mobile—has no cell towers in the area doesn't mean you can't call for help.

AAA Senior Automotive Manager David Bennett says many people don't realize that you can still call 911 and probably connect with emergency services, even with a zero-bars reading.

"When you make a 911 call, your phone sends a signal to the nearest cell tower, regardless of your service provider," he says.

The Federal Communications Commission requires all cellular providers to accept all 911 calls, no matter the phone plan. (Newer iPhones also include an Emergency SOS feature to text emergency services via satellite when you're far off the grid.)

Emergency calls can even work with no service plan at all: An old, deactivated phone can still connect with 911 services, so one idea is to keep a backup phone charged in your car. But be aware that it won't give call centers your location automatically. —Selene Yeager

The Deep Need to Live a Life of Purpose

*The Japanese have a word
for it—but the instinct is alive
among older Americans*

BY T.R. REID

ONE OF THE great pleasures of learning a foreign language is the discovery of terms denoting things we don't have a word for in English.

German has a host of them, like *schadenfreude* (the shadow pleasure you feel at somebody else's failure) and *verschlimmbessern* (making something worse when you were trying to make it better).

When I lived in Japan, I came upon words like that all the time—*yūgen* (the profound sense that your existence is just a speck in the vast expanse of the universe).

And then there's the Japanese word *ikigai*. It's written with two characters that stand for "living" and "value." *Ikigai* means making your life worthwhile—living in a way that provides pleasure for you and value to those around you. We don't have this word in English, but we have the concept. Americans generally share the desire to do something useful with their lives.

When I was younger, I had no problems in the *ikigai* department. But now I'm turning 80—and *ikigai* has become a problem. I'm retired. Heck, I could sit around the house all day doing nothing but reading books, playing Wordle and making *umeboshi* onigiri (rice balls filled with pickled plums), a skill I picked up in Japan. Frankly, there are some days when that's all I do. And yet the yearning to be useful remains strong.

This seems to be a common impulse. Many retirees I know have that sense of purpose.

My friend John, a retired Latin teacher, rendered into English an important tract from the medieval theologian Thomas à Kempis. My college roommate Fred dug out his old double bass and started playing with community and university orchestras. My neighbor Daniel became a substitute teacher in the public schools. My pal Eileen volunteered as a guide at the art museum.

Older people are more politically engaged than those younger; folks past Medicare age are more likely to contribute to, and work on, campaigns. Me too. I've campaigned, raised money and written speeches for ballot proposals and candidates. Many of us have found *ikigai* by volunteering for charities. I'm a board member—along with some other 70-somethings—at three local 501(c)(3) organizations. I don't volunteer much for projects or committees anymore, but I do provide institutional memory that may keep the younger board members from committing acts of *verschlimmbessern*.

But I plan to continue the charitable and political work. Because you're never too old to pursue *ikigai*.

T.R. Reid is the author of 10 books in English and three in Japanese.



ONE BIG HAPPY By Rick Detorie



Key strategies to help improve memory

By Howard LeWine, M.D.

Q: I am experiencing more minor memory lapses. What can I do to help my memory?

A: Keeping the brain as healthy as possible might help delay memory issues and other age-related brain changes.

The best way to do that is by living a healthy lifestyle: exercising regularly (at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise, like brisk walking), giving yourself the opportunity to sleep seven to nine hours per night, eating a Mediterranean-style diet, not smoking, limiting alcohol use, managing stress, socializing, and learning new things.

These habits work together to help create new connections between brain cells and to maintain existing ones, which keeps thinking and memory sharp.

A recent large study zeroed in on the po-

tent influence a healthy lifestyle exerts on memory maintenance, even in older adults with a genetic risk for Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia.

The study, published by *The BMJ*, involved more than 29,000 people in China without dementia (average age 72). Participants initially underwent cognitive testing, as well as genetic testing for a variant of the APOE gene, APOE4, which is known to raise the risk for Alzheimer's.

Participants also reported how stringently they stuck to six good lifestyle habits: eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, not smoking, not drinking alcohol, being socially active, and engaging in brain-challenging activities.

Over the next 10 years, participants periodically reported their lifestyle habits and had additional cognitive tests.

By the study's end, people who stuck

with at least four healthy habits exhibited significantly slower memory decline than those who didn't practice any healthy habits — and this was true even among participants with the Alzheimer's-related gene.

To improve memory

In addition, you can help keep your memory in good shape by practicing certain habits.

For learning new information: Pay attention and put effort into the learning process. You can't effectively learn new information when you multitask. If someone is talking to you while you're checking your email or watching TV out of the corner of your eye, you're not likely to remember what they said.

Pay attention, write down the information, say it out loud, or repeat it back to the person.

For memory retrieval: Relax and try

to go back in your mind to the time and place when you formed the memory. Think about the senses that were engaged at the time.

What did you see, hear, smell, taste or touch? What were you feeling at the time? The brain ties those perceptions to memories as a way to help you retrieve them later.

For overall sharpness: Make your brain work harder. Challenge it with exercises such as crossword puzzles.

Studies have shown that doing moderately difficult cognitive tasks is better for your brain than doing easy tasks.

Howard LeWine, M.D., is an internist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School. For additional consumer health information, visit health.harvard.edu.

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Think positively about aging for long life

By Howard LeWine, M.D.

People who tend to be more positive, optimistic and energetic as they get older are more likely to live longer and have healthier lives than those with negative thoughts about aging.

A study published in February 2022 in *JAMA Network Open* found that the people with the highest satisfaction with aging had a 43% lower risk of dying from any cause compared to those who were the least satisfied.

The study also found that people more satisfied with the aging process had a lower risk for diabetes, stroke, cancer and heart disease. They also had better cognitive functioning and were less lonely and depressed.

Here are some ways to help you keep a

younger mind and body.

Reduce stress and anxiety. Adopt practices that help you maximize positive emotions and reduce negative ones, such as setting aside time for meditation, performing relaxation breathing exercises, and spending some quiet time each day expressing gratitude.

Have a sense of purpose. A strong sense of purpose means continuing to pursue goals and to feel life is worthwhile. Explore interests centered on self-development, growth, and connecting with others.

For example, learn an instrument or a language, volunteer for a cause you support, mentor a young person, or take college classes in subjects that stimulate your mind.

Stay connected. Socializing keeps our

minds active and engaged. Studies also show that personal connections help curb feelings of low self-esteem that dampen a positive mindset.

You might find it more natural to bond over a shared activity or interest, so consider joining a walking group, golf or bowling league, card or chess club, or service club.

Another option is to create your own "pod" — a small, intimate group you interact with regularly. Schedule weekly, bimonthly or monthly meetups with friends — in person or via Zoom or a conference call.

Challenge yourself. Find a physical challenge that you can realistically complete, create a plan of execution, and then work to meet that goal.

For example, train for a 5K race, hike a trail, complete a series of boot camp classes, or walk a mile daily for a month. Regular exercise builds confidence in your ability to be active, and setting a challenge helps you experience a feeling of accomplishment. Both can make you feel more youthful.

Ageism — the socially pervasive idea that you are too old to do certain activities — can put a damper on your mindset. It can be tough to overcome, but constantly remind yourself that your age does not dictate whether or not you have the necessary ability, skills or desire to succeed at something.

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Ways to avoid or respond to identity theft

By Mallika Mitra

Eva Velasquez is president and CEO of the Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC), a nonprofit that supports victims of identity theft. Here, she talks about key identity theft problems to know about in 2025.

Q. What are the most common identity theft schemes?

A: Our most recent contact center data shows that 51% of personally identifiable information (PII) compromises — which take place when someone is trying to access your personal information — come from scams, with the most common types of scams being impersonation and employment scams.

Impersonation scams occur when whoever is on the other end of the interaction is not who they say they are. They may say they're from Amazon and your delivery is delayed, or they may pose as a credit card representative, asking whether you authorized a purchase.

With job and employment scams, we're seeing fraudulent postings on legitimate sites such as Indeed and LinkedIn, as well as unsolicited text messages and emails from phony recruiters.

Q. What trends in ID theft do you expect to see in 2025?

A: It's hard to predict the next global event, such as a pandemic or natural disaster, but that's what the scammers love to leverage. During those events, consumers know something is going on but don't have a lot of information, and then they get a bunch of requests for money or information from scammers.

Business impersonation, which occurs when someone claims to be from a company, such as Amazon or your bank, is going to continue to grow in 2025 because bad actors can easily purchase stolen personal information on the dark web and use it to seem credible when they contact victims.

There are also a lot of social media account takeovers, in which bad actors hack into someone's account and then reach out to their connections and friends to ask for donations and information.

Social media companies aren't responding quickly enough to these takeovers, so people end up walking away from hacked accounts. We have a proliferation of accounts that are no longer in the original owner's control.

Q. What can people do to protect themselves from scams?

A: Approach all digital communication with skepticism. If you didn't initiate the contact with an entity that is requesting information or money from you, go to the source and verify that it reached out to you.

That may mean calling the phone number on your credit card if someone purports to be from your card company, responding to a voice message from someone who says they're from your utility company by finding the company's number online, or checking the message center in your Amazon account if you receive an email or text message from someone who says they work for Amazon.

Our recent data also shows that 16% of PII compromises were the result of lost or stolen items, so remember that your smartphone and other devices are just as important as your wallet, and you need to treat them as such.

Make sure that a lock screen is enabled on all your devices, and use biometric authentication of your face or fingerprint. Also, enable "location detection" for your device and the ability to remotely delete information from it if it is stolen.

Finally, freezing your credit is one of the most robust measures you can take to prevent fraud.

Q. What should you do if your personal information is involved in a data breach?

A: You have limited options once your information has been exposed, but you can react quickly to news of a breach.

The most important first step is to understand what specific data of yours was compromised. If your username and password were stolen, you should immediately change your password on any account where you've used the compromised password.

We have a free tool on the ITRC website, idtheftcenter.org, where you can see whether a company has had a breach before you do business with it. You can also sign up to get an alert if a company you do business with experiences a breach in the future.

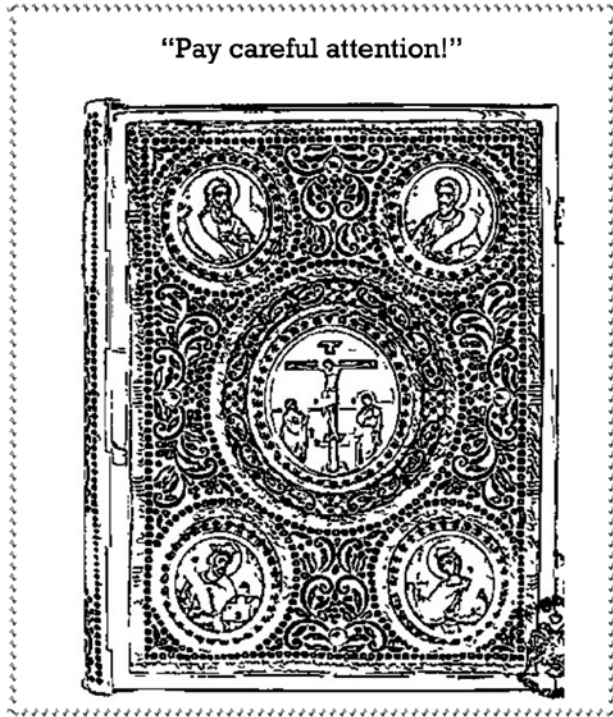
This item first appeared in Kiplinger Personal Finance Magazine, a monthly source of advice and guidance. Subscribe to help you make more money and keep more of the money you make.

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Children's Corner

More available on stdemetriosnewjersey.com!

Courtesy of Presvytera Alexandra Houck



The Children's Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian young people. Copyright 2025 Alexandra Houck. Email is [orthodoxchildrensward\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:orthodoxchildrensward(at)gmail.com). Find it each week at orthodoxchildrensward.org.

The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

Sunday, March 16, 2025

Volume 13, Issue 11

Pay attention!

Has anybody ever told you to pay attention? Probably...maybe every day. Maybe lots of times a day! Your parents might tell you to pay attention to something important, like the cars when you cross the street or what you have to do today. They tell you to pay attention, because it's important!



In today's epistle, we hear that we have to "pay attention" to our faith too. We read, "We must pay the most careful attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." We have to pay attention, because it's important. We pay attention to the Bible. We pay attention to saints' lives. We pay attention to what we hear our priest says. We pay attention because it's important.

But what's so important? Well, our life with our Lord, Jesus Christ. God loves us so much. God wants us to be with Him. God wants to save us. God wants us to pay attention, so we don't ignore the life we can have with Him.

We have a lot to "pay attention" to—our school work, our life at home, sports, and more. But "we must pay the most careful attention" to our life with our Lord. How? Can you think of some ways you can pay attention to your life with God? What can you do during Lent that helps you pay attention to Him?

WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

Attention	A	T	T	E	N	T	I	O	N
Britain	B	R	I	T	A	I	N		
Celebrate	C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	E
Cuthbert	C	U	T	H	B	E	R	T	
Drift	D	R	I	F	T				
Epistle	E	P	I	S	T	L	E		
Gospel	G	O	S	P	E	L			
Missionary	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	A	R
Saints	S	A	I	N	T	S			

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

Here is another icon of Saint Cuthbert, whom we celebrate this week.

Can you find some of the animals St. Cuthbert was kind to?

They're otters!

EVERY DAY IS A SAINT'S DAY!

SAINT CUTHBERT OF LINDISFARNE

You probably didn't know that Thursday is Snowman Burning Day. This is a wacky holiday that some Swiss people (and Americans too) celebrate to officially say goodbye to winter. You can find something funny to celebrate on any day of the year. But did you know that every day is a saint's day too?

On Thursday, we celebrate St. Cuthbert of Britain. St. Cuthbert lived in the 600s, and when he was eight years old, a three-year-old foretold that he would become a priest and then a bishop! As a monk, St. Cuthbert was very strict with his prayers. For many years, he lived on a little island, way up in the northern part of England. He lived by himself for many years, and he was especially kind to the animals that lived there on the island.

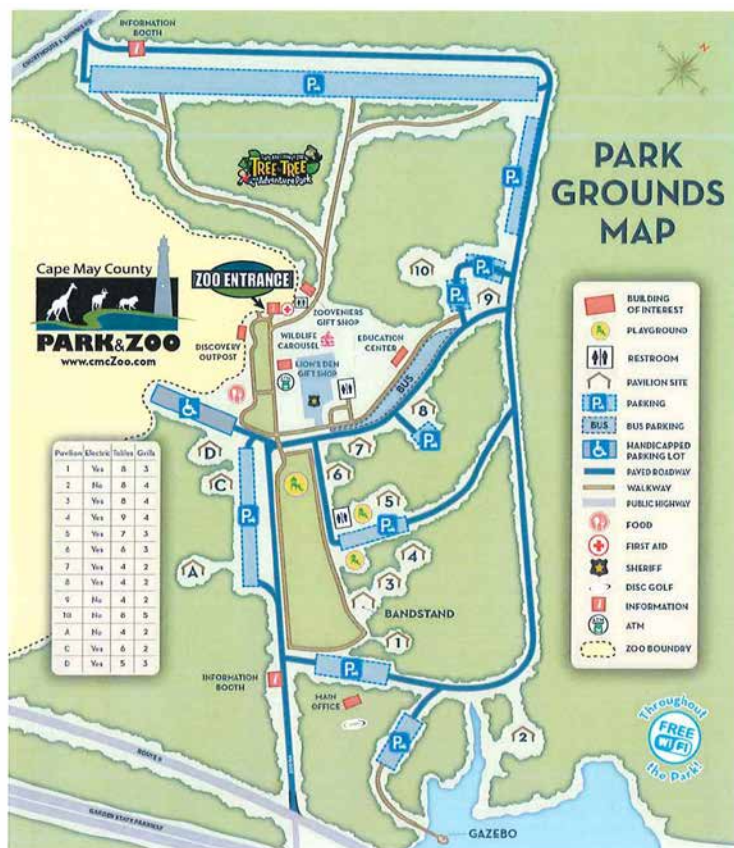
Cuthbert also traveled all around Britain, telling all about Jesus Christ to people who had never even heard of Him. And St. Cuthbert did become a priest and later a bishop, just as the three-year-old had predicted.

If you go to the little island of Lindisfarne, you can see where St. Cuthbert lived, by himself, but always close to God!

St. Cuthbert of Britain

We celebrate St. Cuthbert on Thursday, March 20th (OC: April 2nd).

*Come join us for an afternoon of
fun at our lovely Cape May
County Park and Zoo for all our
members, friends and families.
Music Food and Drink*



From the West or Northwest:
Take Route 55 South to Route 47 South. Then take Route 83 East to Route 9 South.
The Park & Zoo entrance will be 5 miles ahead on the right at Zoo Rd.

Notices



GOYA OLYMPICS

DATE:
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
MAY 24-25
2025

LOCATION:
MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
WEST LONG BRANCH,
NEW JERSEY

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:
[HTTPS://WWW.NJ.GOARCH.ORG/GOYA-OLYMPICS](https://www.nj.goarch.org/goya-olympics)



GOYA OLYMPICS 2025

Memorial Day Weekend May 24-25, 2025
Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey

Events Include:
Swimming, Track and Field,
Volleyball and 5K Run

For registration information or questions, contact:
Andy Hios, Chairman (201) 538-1975 Arch Deacon Konstantinos Loukas (443) 813-1731

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY 2025 GOYA OLYMPICS

The Olympics are open to registered GOYANS from all 55 parishes of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey which includes New Jersey, Philadelphia area, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

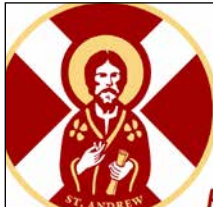
SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 24, 2025

8:00 - 9:00 am	Arrival/Check-In Pick-up dorm keys/wrist bands at check-in tables in parking lots 1 and 3 Luggage drop-off at assigned residence halls.
9:00 - 9:30am	Arrive at Kessler Stadium. Mandatory Coaches meeting
9:30am	Opening Ceremony/Parish Parade
10:00am	Track events begin at Kessler Stadium
12:00 - 3:00pm	Lunch available at Samuel Hays Magill Commons
3:00pm	Volleyball and swimming begin at Boylan Gym
7:00 - 9:00pm	Dinner available at Samuel Hays Magill Commons
9:00 - 11:00pm	GOYANS Outdoor Activity Hangout
11:00pm - 11:30am	Everyone returns to residence halls/lights out.

Sunday, May 25, 2025

8:30 - 10:00am	Divine Liturgy at the Pollak Theater - mandatory attendance for all
10:00 - 11:30am	Churches will be staggered to brunch based on what time they arrived at liturgy and Breakfast at Samuel Hays Magill Commons Breakfast at Samuel Hays Magill Commons
10:45-12noon	Churches will switch, those that ate brunch will Check out of Residence Halls, those that have already checked out will eat breakfast.
12:30 noon	Track events begin at Kessler Stadium
2:00 - 3:00pm	Return all room keys to MU staff at Boylan Gym
3:00 - 4:00pm	Chris Gacos Memorial 5K run at Kessler Stadium
4:00 - 6:00pm	Father Dean Martin Award Ceremony




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Notices



NATIONAL Hellenic SOCIETY
HERITAGE GREECE
camp saint paul

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JUNE 6, 2025 @ 7:05PM

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June 15 - 21, 2025

Virginia
July 6-12, 2025

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July 13 - 19, 2025

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More Information
<https://www.nj.goarch.org/camp-good-shepherd>
908-301-0500



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