



NEWSLETTER OF ST. DEMETRIOS CHURCH North Wildwood, NJ

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CELEBRATING ST. DEMETRIOS STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY



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thoughts from

FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS
PROTOPRESBYTER



WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?

I have wanted to write this article for a long time, but the Christmas Spirit comes once a year! (Does it though!) Before I begin, I wanted to give you a little background on what "Christmas" should mean to all of us. Let's take the word "Christmas" - if we break down the word Christmas, we see that the word in English does not really tell us that it is the birth of Christ. What it really means is that Christ is with us, but if we take the word in Greek, "Xristou/genna," we can define the word as truly the birth of Christ or Nativity of the Lord. The Christmas season is such a beautiful time of the year. Lights, candles, cold weather, and snowflakes begin to decorate our streets. People begin to decorate their homes, their businesses with colors of Christmas. We have to ask ourselves a few questions? "What does Christmas really mean to me? "Was Christ born the way the Bibles states? "Who is this Christ child, and why should we believe in this wonderful story?" For one, these questions are very dear to me, but on the other hand, very difficult to answer. Whatever I tell you, it could be biased because as your priest everyone knows where I will always stand on issues like these.

But by balancing over these questions, everyone truly needs to know "The truth about Christmas." During the celebration of the Birth of our Lord, billions of people attend church services somewhere in the world, celebrating this miraculous event. Do you know that more people attend church during the Christmas Holidays, than they do attending any sports activity? People all over the world attend religious services or activities during this Holiday, but do they really know or have an idea why they attend these services. Why do billions of people celebrate the Birth of Christ on December 25th? Many go to church out of tradition because our mom

or dad told us to. Some of us go out of guilt. Many of us go to church out of habit, and many Christians don't attend at all. Which category do you fall into? We should have a message to all those people to remind them, (why we do what we do). Why do we get out of bed to go to church? Did you ever ask yourselves this question? Why do we go to the great expense to build churches, halls, gymnasiums, schools, and parking lots? What purpose is there for us to do all of these things? My brothers and sisters, we do all these things because of Christ. Let's not forget that cold winter night 2,000 years ago on December 25th a Messiah was born to bring redemption and salvation to the world. If it wasn't for the Birth of Christ, it gives me no meaning or purpose even to write this article. Tell all the Disciples, John the Baptist, the Prophets, that the Birth of Christ is a myth and not true. Tell the people who were healed of their infirmities that Christ is a lie. Tell the tons of thousands who gave their life for Him. To those who He changed their lives, how can we erase historical events that happened and were written before our time. But Jesus stated, "Blessed art those who have not seen me and yet believe." There would be no need for all these buildings we have, or the money that our church accumulates throughout the year. We would not need the people of the parish to bustle and hustle to put out fundraisers and activities to keep our community alive. None of the above would have been needed if it wasn't for the Birth of our Lord. It's incredible to see that today in the 21st century 2000 years later, we are still talking about this Christ child that was born of a Virgin Mother on Christmas day. How could an event like this continue to wonder our minds and thoughts, because I will tell you why? It is a true happening, a real event that took place in history and that we as Christians believe whole heartedly. Just open the New Testament and you will find the chapters, which describe this indescribable birth. (St. Matthew's Genealogy of the Birth of Christ) Matthew chapters 1, 2. St. Luke's chapter 3, verses 23-38 and chapter 2, verses 1-7. These chapters of the Bible tell it all. It gives everyone the information and insight of this true reality.

Then why is it that in today's society, we still have millions and billions of people who do not believe in this event? People always give the answer "If I don't see it with my own eyes I will not believe." My brothers and sisters, we believe in many things that we haven't seen in this world. It is impossible to see or witness everything that happens in this world that we live in. But in this Nativity of Christ, we can name people who were true witnesses of this birth. We have Joseph, Mary the mother of our Lord so how could a mother



thoughts from

FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS
PROTOPRESBYTER CONTINUED...

forget the birth of her child. We have the wise men, the shepherds who witnessed the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Ask the 14,000 children that were taken from their families and were killed and slain by King Herod during the first two years of His birth. The relics of those children still remain as visible proof of what happened during the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. If we take the Old Testament, why do the Jews believe in it? From the Book of Genesis until the book of Malachi, why are these books true to their writings and not the Books of the New Testament? That means that we have a society that picks and chooses whatever they want to believe. I could go on and on and give other references that state the birth from the virgin the Book of Isaiah, and the Book of Enoch, but this could continue to be written in other newsletters as reference articles.

But getting back to the main topic of this article, in our society, Christmas has a new meaning. We can see pictures of a jolly old man with snow-white hair and a flowing beard and today we call him "Santa Claus" or "Jolly old St. Nicholas" or in the Greek Tradition "St. Basil." All the children of the world are thrilled at the magical tale, as "Santa Claus" becomes more real to our society than the birth of Christ. By some strange coincidence, the idea of Santa Claus developed in many countries and at the same time was brought here to America by the first settlers, united in an unprecedented manner with Santa Claus becoming the symbol of Christmas and enlightening a whole world of people to a new tradition. But what we should be concentrating on is to bring a real tradition, returning to the real spirit of Christmas, which is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Savior of mankind. But today's world thinks all together differently. We have taken religion out of public schools. We have groups of people that want to deny us the right to celebrate our Major Feast Days as a nation. Commercialism has invaded the sanctity of one of the most sacred feasts of Christendom. Today, Christmas is celebrated not because of the birth of Christ, but more so for financial reasons. They are using "Christmas" as a financial market to gain billions of dollars. We have been guided by them to follow a mistaken direction. When you ask a child, "What do you want for Christmas?" they never express the thought of worshipping and glorifying God.

What they always express, I want the most expensive gift or toy that is on the market. We as parents are not teaching our children what Christmas truly means, we are showing them what they can make out of this Christmas moment. What we need to teach our children is that Christ and the Church should be the center of their lives. When we worship our Lord, we are simply building a lifelong relationship and we are centering and building a life around God. God didn't put us on this earth to live a self-centered life. He didn't put us here for our own personal benefits. He put us on this earth for His benefit. We exit for God and not vise-versa.

How do we know that God exists? Its real simple Just stop worrying. If we stop worrying about everything, we put a stop to all those problems that can destroy us. That's the whole interpretation about the Birth of Christ. Since Christ is in our midst, why worry about non essentials things... because they haven't gotten us anywhere in life. When we cast out Christ from our lives, then our careers, family and our money become the center of our lives. So every time we start worrying about something then we take our focus away from God. The Bible says: in Matthew 22-37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." This is the first and greatest Commandment. This means that the most important thing in life is to know and love God. But how can we know Him if we don't take an active role in coming to church to worship and glorify Him. We always find a way to do everything else that doesn't concern Christ and the Church. I hope and pray that during this Holiday Season that we come back to follow our Christian Orthodox Traditions. That we attend church with our families during the Christmas Holidays. This is the only way to experience that Christ is truly in our midst and that He is the center of our lives. That's what Christmas truly means to me. To begin a more genuine relationship with Christ and to live our remaining years upon this earth as His true warriors and defenders of the faith.

May God Bless everyone and may you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas.





The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh **December 25**

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



INTRODUCTION

The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus is one of the most joyful days of the Orthodox Church. It ranks next to the greatest holiday, the Resurrection of Jesus. The Feast of the Birth of Jesus is also known as the “Incarnation of Christ.” This means that Jesus became a man and came into the world to save us. We also refer to this joyous feast as Christmas.

BIBLICAL STORY

The story of the Nativity of Christ is beautifully told in the Holy Scriptures. The story is found in Matthew 1:18-25 and in Luke 2:1-20. No matter how often the Birth of Jesus is told, we realize that it is an important event.

As the story is told by the Apostles, the Roman Empire was powerful. The Romans had conquered much of the then known world. Judea and Samaria, what we know today as Israel, were included in their conquests. Emperor Augustus ordered that a census be taken in all his lands. He needed to know how many people lived in the empire so he could tax them. Everyone had to go to the town of their family's origin

to register for the census. This meant that Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. They were descendants of King David and Bethlehem was the City of David.

Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth and it was a great distance from Bethlehem. It was about 100 miles over very rugged roads. Moreover, Mary was expecting the baby and it was almost time for her to give birth. Bethlehem was a small town and there were many descendants of David who had come to register for the census. By the time Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem there was no place for them to stay. Joseph tried very hard to find a place to sleep that evening. There was no room at the inn. Finally, Joseph found a cave-like place where they could rest. This place was used by shepherds to protect their sheep in stormy weather. It was here that Mary gave birth to Jesus. The baby was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the straw in the manger.

Now, that night the shepherds were out in the fields guarding their sheep. Suddenly, there was a bright light which startled the shepherds. The light was so bright that it turned the night into daylight. Of course, the shepherds were frightened. Nothing such as this had ever happened. Soon an angel appeared and calmed them. The angel said:

“Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior; which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger” (Luke 2:11-12).

Then a larger group of angels appeared. They praised and glorified God and sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). When the angels finished singing, they disappeared and the light began to fade. It became dimmer and dimmer until it was dark again. The shepherds were awed. They didn't know what to do. Finally, they decided to leave their flocks of sheep

and go to Bethlehem. They decided that they wanted to see for themselves what the angels had told them. When they got to Bethlehem, they found Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus. They fell to their knees and adored Jesus.

Some Wise Men came from the East for they knew of the coming of Jesus. They had seen a star that told them that a new king had been born to the Jews. They followed the star and were looking for the child. At this time the governor of Judea was King Herod. He was a wicked man and was feared and hated by the people. When Herod heard about the Wise Men looking for the child, he invited them to his palace. Herod asked the Wise Men to find the child so that he, too, could worship Him. But Herod was lying. He did not want anyone to take his place. The Wise Men went on to look for Jesus. The Star led them to Jesus and Mary. When the Wise Men found Jesus, they fell to their knees and worshipped Him. They gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Wise Men left but did not return to Herod. They had a dream that warned them that Herod wanted to harm Jesus. Instead, they returned to their native country by a different route.

ICON OF THE FEAST

The icon of the Nativity tells the story of Christ's birth from the Scriptures. It also shows that all creation is taking part in Christ's birth. The angels give thanks with their song; the heavens give the star; the Wise Men give their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The poor, humble shepherds give their praise and amazement; the earth gives the cave, and humanity gives the Virgin.

This Holy Icon is an icon with many scenes. First, it stresses the importance of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus. She is placed in the center and is the largest figure in the icon.

CONTINUED...



The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh **December 25**

CONTINUED...

In this icon, she is kneeling with crossed arms, looking at the Christ child. The three stars, denoting her virginity before, during, and after the Nativity, are on her garments. The Christ Child, in the center of the icon, is in swaddling clothes and is lying in the manger. In the background is the dark cave where He was born. In the cave are an ox and a donkey guarding the newborn Babe. Even though the Gospels say nothing of the cave, this information is from Holy Tradition. Neither do the Gospels speak of the ox and the donkey, but all icons of the Nativity include these animals. Including the animals in the icon fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 1:3, "The ox knows his master, and the donkey his master's crib; but Israel does not know me, and the people have not regarded me." The long ray of light from the star points directly to the cave. This ray comes from the star and travels to all parts of the world. It teaches that this bright star is an astronomical happening, and is a messenger from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus.

On the left hand side of the icon is another scene. The Wise Men, who were led by the star, are riding horses to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. The Wise Men are of various ages. One is without a beard. In those days, young men did not wear beards. The other Wise Man has long hair and a long beard, which indicates that he is much older. These details teach that regardless of age and appearance, the Good News was given to each and everyone.

Opposite the Wise Men is the scene with the humble shepherds. An angel proclaims the glad tidings. A young shepherd plays a reed instrument. This scene reveals that the music of the humans was added to the hymn of the angels. Across from the shepherd's scene is the heavenly choir of angels. They are giving glory to God. The angels serve two purposes in the Nativity of Christ. They give glory to God and announce the good news to all mankind.

The background shows a very rugged terrain. This is not a true representation of

the land in this area. Joseph could not find room in Bethlehem, so they went outside of Bethlehem to a cave. This rocky mountain formation only serves as a background for the event.

In the lower part of the icon are two more scenes. In the right hand corner are the two women Joseph brought to take care of the Christ child. They are bathing Him just as any baby is bathed. The humanity of Jesus is clearly shown in this setting.

Opposite the bathing of Jesus scene sits a sad and worried Joseph. He is not part of the central group the Christ Child and the Theotokos. Joseph is not the natural father. Joseph is troubled and despondent. There is an old man talking to Joseph. The old man is Satan. Satan can appear in many forms. Here he is as an old man who is tempting Joseph and disturbing him. Satan is telling Joseph that virgin birth is impossible. He's telling Joseph that he's a fool if he believes this. This story comes to us from Holy Tradition. The sad Joseph shows us not only his personal predicament but the dilemma of all mankind the difficulty of accepting that which is "beyond words or reason."

The tree, which is in the middle of the lower part of the icon, is a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. This tree refers to Isaiah 11:1-2, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." King David was often mentioned as the son of Jesse and Jesus was from the House of David.

The Holy Icon of the Nativity reminds one to praise and glorify the Birth of Christ. The celebration of Christmas each year serves to remind each and everyone of us that Christ came for you and me.

THE ORTHODOX CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

As with Pascha, or Easter, the Feast of the Nativity begins with a period of preparation. It is preceded by a fast corresponding to Lent and lasting for forty days. The fast begins on November 15.

On the Sundays immediately before December 25, special commemorations emphasize the link between the Old Covenant and the New. On December 20 the Forefeast of the Nativity is commemorated, and the daily liturgical texts are directed toward the Feast itself. On Christmas Eve, services include the Great or Royal Hours, the Great Vespers, and the Liturgy of Saint Basil.

On Christmas Day the service commemorates the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, the adoration of the Shepherds, and the arrival of the Wise Men with their gifts. The service held on this day is the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

The days following Christmas are associated with the Theotokos and Joseph. December 26 is the Synaxis of the Mother of God, and the first Sunday after the Feast commemorates "Joseph the Betrothed." December 29 commemorates the Massacre of the Innocents, and January 1 the Circumcision of our Lord. The Nativity season concludes on December 31, but the spirit of the festival extends to the celebration of Theophany (Epiphany), the feast commemorating the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River.





St. Demetrios Happenings



Celebrating the St. Demetrios Ladies Philoptochos Society on Philoptochos Sunday.

Bill Mitchell speaking on the subject of Stewardship. Nick Konides also spoke on the issue. Bill and Nick are members of the Stewardship Committee.



Cathy Wolfe speaking on the subject of Stewardship. We celebrated Stewardship Sunday followed with a Luncheon.





St. Demetrios Happenings



Father Bartholomew and his family visit St. Demetrios Church.





St. Demetrios Happenings



*The youth of St. Demetrios
enjoying a night of bowling with
Father Michael.*



Liturgical Calendar

Sunday, December 1: 14th Sunday of St. Matthew
Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Sunday, December 8: 10th Sunday of St. Matthew
Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Sunday, December 15: 11th Sunday of St. Matthew
Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00

Sunday, December 22: Sunday before the Nativity of Christ
Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Tuesday Evening, December 24: Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm



There will no Church services on Monday morning since we celebrated the Birth of Christ in the evening hours.

Sunday, December 29: Sunday before the Feast of Epiphany
Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10am

On behalf of the Parish Council, Fr. Michael, Presvytera Dimitra, the Church Staff, and the entire family of our Community, we would like to wish everyone in the Parish a "MERRY CHRISTMAS" AND A "HAPPY NEW YEAR" FILLED WITH MUCH LOVE, JOY, HAPPINESS, HEALTH, AND PROSPERITY.



Dear parishioners,

During this time of giving and goodwill, please remember St. Demetrios church. Our church relies on donations for keep our doors opens and our programs running. Any amount helps!

We appreciate our parishioners and wish everyone a Blessed Christmas and New Years!



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 392/2024

Archepiscopal Encyclical for National Philoptochos Sunday

November 17, 2024

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:

Go, and do likewise. (*Luke 10:37*)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

On this National Philoptochos Sunday, when we remember the parable of the “Good Samaritan” that was read last Sunday, let us take inspiration from the final words that the Lord addresses to the lawyer who was trying to best Him in an argument. “Go, and do likewise,” the Lord said to him, and to all of us. Be merciful! Show compassion! And this is the essence of what it means to be part of Philoptochos.

Our National Philoptochos Societies, with tens of thousands of sisters who labor with love on behalf of others, have learned this lesson well from our Lord and Savior. The core value of their various ministries is to follow the example of the Samaritan and to extend God’s mercy and compassion to anyone who is in need.



Let us support them in their service to our fellow brothers and sisters, knowing that they fulfill a great need in the world. They have taken the word of the Lord to heart. And although we might not be able to be in the trenches with them, we can offer them the resources they require to “go and do likewise.” In this way, we join with them, with the Samaritan of the Gospel, and with our Lord Himself in the redemption of the world.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 392/2024

**Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για την Κυριακή τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Φιλοπτώχου
Ἀδελφότητος.**

17 Νοεμβρίου 2024

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 Ἀρχοντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ
Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἡγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Απογευματινὰ
Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες
Ὁργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς
Αρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποίει ὁμοίως» (Λουκᾶ 10:37).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ἡ σημερινὴ Κυριακὴ εἶναι ἀφιερωμένη στὴν Ἐθνικὴ μας Φιλόπτωχο
Ἀδελφότητα καί, εὐκαιρίας δοθείσης, ἅς ξαναθυμηθοῦμε τὴν παροβολὴ τοῦ
«Καλοῦ Σαμαρείτη», ἡ ὁποία διαβάστηκε τὴν περασμένη Κυριακὴ. Σὲ αὐτὴ
τὴν παραβολή, ὁ Κύριος ἀπευθύνεται πρὸς κάποιο νομικό, ὁ ὁποῖος τὸν ρωτᾷ
γιά τὴ σωτηρία, λέγοντάς του (καὶ μέσω αὐτοῦ σὲ ὅλους ἐμᾶς): «πορεύου καὶ
σὺ καὶ ποίει ὁμοίως»! Γίνετε οἰκτίρμονες καὶ ἐλεήμονες! Αὐτὸ ἀκριβῶς εἶναι τὸ
νόημα τοῦ νὰ εἶσαι μέλος τῆς Φιλοπτώχου Ἀδελφότητος.



Τὰ κατὰ τόπους τμήματα τῆς Φιλοπτώχου Ἀδελφότητος, μὲ χιλιάδες μέλη, ἀδελφές μας ποὺ ἐργάζονται καὶ διακονοῦν μὲ ἀγάπη ἀνιδιοτελῶς πρὸς τὸν πλησίον, ἔχουν μαθητεύσει ἄριστα στὰ πόδια τοῦ Κυρίου μας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ὁ κεντρικὸς σκοπὸς τῶν διακονιῶν αὐτῶν εἶναι νὰ μιμηθοῦν τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦ «Καλοῦ Σαμαρείτη», δείχνοντας τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θεοῦ, συμπονώντας ὅποιον ἔχει ἀνάγκη.

Ἄς τὶς στηρίξουμε, λοιπόν, στὴ διακονία τους πρὸς τὸν πλησίον, γνωρίζοντας ὅτι καλύπτουν ἓνα μεγάλο κενὸ στὴν κοινωνία μας. Ἐχουν βάλει τὸ λόγο τοῦ Κυρίου στὴν καρδιά τους καὶ τὸν κάνουν πράξη. Ἀκόμη καὶ ἂν δὲν μπορούμε νὰ εἴμαστε μαζί μὲ αὐτὲς στὴν πρώτη γραμμὴ, μπορούμε νὰ προσφέρουμε τὸν ὀβολό μας πρὸς ἐνίσχυσή τους, ὥστε νὰ ἔχουν τοὺς ἀναγκαίους πόρους γιὰ νὰ «πορευθοῦν καὶ νὰ ποιήσουν ὁμοίως». Μὲ αὐτὸ τὸν τρόπο συμπράττουμε μαζί τους, ὅπως καὶ μὲ τὸ Σαμαρεῖτη τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς περικοπῆς, καθὼς καὶ μὲ τὸν ἴδιο τὸν Χριστὸ στὸ ἔργο τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ κόσμου.

Μετὰ πατρικῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀγάπης,

+Ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 399/2024

**Archepiscopal Encyclical for Archon Sunday
The Feast of Saint Andrew the First-Called Disciple**

November 30, 2024

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 Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Their sound has gone forth unto all the earth, and the words unto the ends of the
oikoumene.

(Psalm 18:4, LXX)

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

By unanimous decision of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Sacred Archdiocese of America, the honorable and most esteemed Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is to be recognized yearly for the Feast of their Celestial Patron, Saint Andrew the Apostle and First-Called Disciple of the Lord. This year, the commendation of our beloved Order of Archons will occur on Sunday, December 1, with the reading of this first-ever Encyclical.

The Order of Saint Andrew is a venerable organization dedicated to the defense and protection of our Venerable Ecumenical Patriarchate; but it is also so



much more. The Archons represent the interests of the Mother Church and our Archdiocese in all manner of public and private forums. A visit to their website (<https://archons.org>) would reveal an incredible number of initiatives that impact the Church in America in positive, Christ-affirming ways. The Archons exercise a worldwide reach that extends to Greece and the Eparchies of the Ecumenical Throne to promote religious freedom around the globe, and recognize virtuous, humanitarian leadership through the annual Athenagoras Human Rights Award. Indeed, their voices are heard throughout the oikoumene!

Many of our parishes have members who are Archons, an office (*offikion*) that is personally approved and bestowed by His All-Holiness himself. On this Sunday, when we take time to show our respect and esteem for the Archons of our Church who are the Members of the Order of Saint Andrew, let us resolve to stand with them in their spiritual phalanx in defense of the Holy Great Church of Christ. We are all sons and daughters of the Mother Church of Constantinople, and we express our gratitude and appreciation to Her brave and devoted Archons for all that they accomplish on Her behalf. May they enjoy many years of health and spiritual prosperity!

With paternal love in Christ,

+ ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ**

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 399/2024

Ἀρχιεπισκοπικὴ Ἐγκύκλιος γιὰ τὴν Κυριακὴ τῶν Ἀρχόντων.

30 Νοεμβρίου 2024

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 Ἀρχοντες 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 Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν» (Ψαλμός 18:4).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Μὲ ὁμόφωνη ἀπόφαση τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἐπαρχιακῆς Συνόδου τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς μας, τὸ ἐξαιρετικὸ Τάγμα τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέα τῶν Ἀρχόντων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, ἀναγνωρίζεται καὶ τιμᾶται ἐτησίως κοντὰ στὴν ἐορτὴ τοῦ προστάτου του, Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέα τοῦ Πρωτοκλήτου, ἀποστόλου καὶ μαθητοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου μας. Αὐτὸ τὸ ἔτος, ἡ ἐπαινετὴ ἀναγνώριση τοῦ προσφιλοῦς Τάγματος τῶν Ἀρχόντων πραγματοποιεῖται σήμερα, Κυριακὴ 1 Δεκεμβρίου ἑ.ἑ, μὲ τὴν ἐξαπόλυση τῆς παρούσης πρώτης ἐγκυκλίου.



Τὸ Τάγμα τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέα εἶναι βέβαια ἓνας ἀξιοσέβαστος ὀργανισμός, ἀφιερωμένος στὴν προστασία τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ μας Πατριαρχείου, ὅμως οἱ δράσεις του ἐπεκτείνονται καὶ σὲ πολλοὺς ἄλλους τομεῖς. Οἱ ἄρχοντες προστατεύουν τὰ συμφέροντα τῆς Μητρὸς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς μας, μὲ κάθε τρόπο, σὲ ὅλους τοὺς δημοσίους ἢ ἰδιωτικούς ὀργανισμούς. Μία ἀπλὴ ἐπίσκεψή σας στὴν ἱστοσελίδα τους (<https://archons.org>) ἀποκαλύπτει ἓναν ἀπίστευτο ἀριθμὸ ἀπὸ πρωτοβουλίες καὶ δράσεις ποὺ ἔχουν θετικὸ ἀντίκτυπο γιὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησία μας στὴν Ἀμερική καὶ γιὰ τὴ διάδοση τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου. Οἱ Ἀρχοντες ἀσκοῦν παγκόσμια ἐπιρροή, ποὺ ἐπεκτείνεται τόσο στὴν Ἑλλάδα, ὅσο καὶ σὲ ὅλες τὶς ἐπαρχίες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Θρόνου, γιὰ τὴν προώθηση τῆς θρησκευτικῆς ἐλευθερίας, ἀναγνωρίζοντας καὶ τιμώντας ἐνάρετους ἡγέτες ποὺ προωθοῦν τὰ ἀνθρώπινα δικαιώματα, μέσῳ τοῦ ἐτήσιου βραβείου ἀνθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων «Πατριάρχης Ἀθηναγόρας». Πράγματι, «εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐξῆλθον τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν»!

Πολλὲς κοινότητές μας ἔχουν μέλη ποὺ εἶναι Ἀρχοντες. «Ἀρχων» εἶναι ἓνα ὀφφίκιο ἢ ἀξίωμα, τὸ ὁποῖο ἐγκρίνεται προσωπικὰ ἀπὸ τὸν ἴδιον τὸν Παναγιώτατο Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριάρχη. Αὐτὴ τὴν Κυριακή, κατὰ τὴν ὁποία τιμοῦμε καὶ ἀναγνωρίζουμε τὰ μέλη τοῦ Τάγματος τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέα, δηλαδὴ τοὺς Ἀρχοντες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας, ἃς δεσμευθοῦμε νὰ στρατευθοῦμε μαζί τους γιὰ τὴν ὑπεράσπιση τῶν δικαιωμάτων τῆς Μεγάλης τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας. Εἴμαστε ὅλοι μας τέκνα τῆς Μητρὸς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, καὶ ἐκφράζουμε τὴν ἐκτίμηση καὶ τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνη μας πρὸς τοὺς ἐξαιρετικούς καὶ ἀφοσιωμένους Ἀρχοντες, γιὰ ὅλα ὅσα ἐπιτυγχάνουν ἐκ μέρους της. Εὐχομαι νὰ ζήσουν ἔτη πολλὰ, μὲ υἱεὶα καὶ πνευματικὴ εὐημερία.

Μετὰ πατρικῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀγάπης,



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

THANKSGIVING 2024

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

As we gather together in celebration of the beautiful and unique holiday of our great nation, Thanksgiving, we are given the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of this wonderful day in light of all that our almighty God has bestowed upon us. Truly, as we gather around our Thanksgiving tables and offer up expressions of thanks and appreciation for our beloved family members, friends, and loved ones, we must not overlook or neglect to express our gratitude to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for all of His heavenly blessings upon us. This expression of our thanks to our Lord should not be limited to mere reflection or words but should be accompanied with our active participation in living our Orthodox Faith, through our participation in the Holy Sacraments, through our love for our fellow man, and through our acts of charity and philanthropy to all those in need.

Therefore, my beloved in the Lord, I implore you, that as we celebrate this amazing holiday, enjoying the delicious food and the wonderful fellowship, that we remember to reflect on the many gifts that God has blessed us with. Our true appreciation of His love for us is a rich blessing that allows us to continue to grow closer to Him and to continue to follow the path which He has laid for us, which leads to salvation.

Wishing all of you, your families and all the faithful people of our sacred Metropolis a most blessed, healthy and Happy Thanksgiving filled with His blessings from above, I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings

Met. Apostolos of NJ

† APOSTOLOS

Metropolitan of New Jersey



thoughts from

EVA LALLAS



THE NATIVITY FEAST

"100...99...98...days until Christmas" heard daily over our news stations even before the official beginning of Autumn. When you receive this newsletter the count may be 24...23.... These are constant commercial reminders alerting us to do our holiday shopping early before the last minute rush. This year another overwhelming countdown toward Election Day was in progress as November 5th approached.

For us Orthodox Christians November 15th annually begins our countdown as we usher in the Nativity Fast. This forty day period is meant to direct our thoughts and actions INWARD in preparation for the celebration of our Lord's birth. Praying, reading Holy Scripture, attending church services, being mindful of those in need, adhering to the dietary regiment as directed by our Holy Church all help in keeping us focused on the real reason for this Holy Season.

What an ideal time to read and share the Christmas and other Bible Stories with youngsters during their evening quiet bedtime. We can also share some of our time and energy filling a void in the lives of those among us, and support charitable causes. These acts of kindness are pleasing to God. Thus, we joyfully prepare in anticipation of the coming celebration of Jesus, humbly born in a manger who would live among us teaching the message of LOVE, HOPE, and PEACE.

During this time we can put the "frills" of elaborate decorations, shopping, baking, etc., in their rightful place, that of simply enhancing the forthcoming Christmas Day; secondary to our spiritual preparedness. Even as we incorporate lights in our decorations, we should recall the significance of lights --- JESUS, the TRUE LIGHT of the WORLD! As we exchange gifts with each other, let us remember the significance of gifting and keep foremost in our minds the GREATEST GIFT of LOVE which God has given to each of us on Christmas Day: His only begotten Son, Jesus our Lord and Savior....the REAL REASON for this season.

Orthodox Christians are jubilant, we rejoice, and celebrate with festive parties and foods FOLLOWING Christmas Day, not prior; thus, the twelve days of Christmas!

Wishing you a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

In keeping with our Christmas Spirit the author shares the following with you, written by an unknown author.

Let's Keep Christmas

We all feel the presence of approaching Christmas

The traffic is terrible

You can't find a parking space.

The stores are crowded

Mall scenes make shopping a nightmare.

You are thinking about presents - wonder what in the world

can you get for so-and-so

You think of friends and loved ones who are

So hard to shop for.

You can't think of anything they need (which is rather strange

when you take the time to think of it).

Maybe there is nothing in a store they need.

But what about some token of love - what about love itself...

And friendship....

And understanding.....

And consideration.....

And a helping hand....

And a smile.....

And a prayer?

You can't buy these things in any store,

and these are very special things

people need.

We all need them... Blessed will they be who

Receive them this Christmas or at any time.

Let's not permit the rush to crowd Christmas out of our hearts....

For that is where it belongs

Christmas is not in the stores

But in the hearts of people.



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.

Please send them to Father Michael: frmichaelstdemetrios@gmail.com.

1.). Κάθε εμπόδιο για καλό!

Each obstacle gives a positive outcome!
A change in one's plans is advantageous.
A possible bad result can be avoided.

2.). (Παν) Μέτρον Ἀριστον!

Moderation in all things.
Don't overdo!

3.). Αν δεν τεργιάζαμε, δεν συμπεθεριάζαμε!

If we were not a match or think similarly, we would not have become in-laws.
Similarities in both sides of the family.

4.). Ότι λάμπει δεν είναι χρυσός!

All that glitters is not gold!
Don't be fooled by appearances!
You can't judge a book by its cover!

5.). Καλο μελέτα, κ έρχετε!

Think positively, and it will come, happen!
Be optimistic!

Saint Demetrios Greek School *December Christmas Events*

The children of **Saint Demetrios Greek school** will be gathering together to bring Christmas cheer to all our friends and family of Saint Demetrios Church. As every year, the children will sing Christmas songs in Greek and English and will be accompanied by live music played by a few of our parishioners. It is a fun time for everyone involved and it is enjoyed by all.

Please let any Greek School parent know if you would like us to stop by your house or your establishment on

SATURDAY - DECEMBER 14, 2024

STARTING TIME @ 3 pm

(Cape May and Cape May Court House area)

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 15, 2024

STARTING AFTER CHURCH SERVICES

(Wildwood area)

Additional Dates to remember:

Christmas Bake Sale-----**Sunday, December 15, 2024**

Christmas Pageant/Santa Visit--**Sunday, December 22, 2024**

***** **WISHING EVERYONE A BLESSED**

HOLIDAY SEASON *****



YOU ARE INVITED!

2024 SAINT BASIL ACADEMY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14
11 AM-2 PM

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

FEATURING A CHRISTMAS PLAY AND MUSICAL
PERFORMANCES BY THE CHILDREN, A FASTING
LUNCHEON, AND OPENING OF GIFTS

ALL ARE WELCOME, FREE OF CHARGE

RSVP TO L.BINIARIS@SBAGOA.ORG

www.sbagoa.org





GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY



***His Eminence
Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey***

*Cordially Invites all of the clergy and
the beloved faithful to the*

**ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING &
OPEN HOUSE**

on

**Friday, December 20, 2024
6:00 – 9:00pm**

At the

***Metropolis Headquarters
215 E. Grove Street
Westfield, NJ 07090***



New Date & Location

10th Anniversary Gala
in Honor of the Episcopal Ordination of
His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey



Monday, January 13, 2025
The Venetian | Garfield, New Jersey



A JOURNEY OF FAITH
To Thessaloniki, Mt. Athos and Constantinople
Led by His Eminence Apostolos of New Jersey
February 21-March 3, 2025: 11 Days / 9 Nights



Thessaloniki & Mt. Athos: See the most important religious sites in Northern Greece. Visit Greece's second largest city, Thessaloniki. Attend Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Demetrios, visit the Monastery of St. John the Theologian in Souroti to venerate the grave of St. Paissios and visit the awe inspiring Meteora Monasteries. Men will depart for the Holy Mountain for two nights and the women will enjoy a visit to Ormylia Monastery and a visit to a museum in Thessaloniki.

Constantinople: Visit the important Greek Orthodox sites: the Ecumenical Patriarchate and St George Cathedral, Agia Sophia, Panagia Vlacherna where the "Te Ypermahou" was first chanted, Chora and Baloukli Monastery - Zoodochos Peghe. Also, visit the Underground Cisterns. Shop at the exciting Grand Bazaar! Enjoy a birthday banquet for His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew as well as a private audience with the Patriarch (subject to confirmation).

SPACE IS LIMITED and on a FIRST-COME BASIS

RATE: Per person double occupancy \$4700* & single occupancy \$5635*

*Rates include the air tax/fuel of approximately \$475 which is not guaranteed until ticketing a month prior to departure. Rate above reflects a 4% check discount which does not apply if payment is made any other way. Due to Aegean Airlines group reservations policy, the air fare between Thessaloniki and Istanbul is not guaranteed and may be subject to fare increases depending on when you make your reservation to join the group. An air supplement may apply.

Deposit of \$800 due by November 20, 2024 or late booking fee of \$50 per person will apply.

YOUR TOUR WILL INCLUDE:

- *Round-trip airfare on Turkish Airlines: EWR / IST / Thessaloniki & IST / EWR & Aegean Airlines: Thessaloniki / ATH / IST
- *Private arrival and departure transfers in a deluxe air conditioned motorcoach with English speaking escort
- *7 1/2 days of private sightseeing for men & 6 days for the women. All entrance fees are included.
- *Women: 6 nts first class hotel in Thessaloniki at the Electra Palace or similar including daily breakfast, all taxes and service fees.
- *Men: 4 nts first class accommodation in Thessaloniki at the Electra Palace or similar including daily breakfast, all taxes and service fees & 2 nts accommodation on the Holy Mountain including meals and transportation on the Holy Mountain & roundtrip private ferries
- *All: 3 nts first class accommodation in Constantinople at the Divan Istanbul Hotel or similar including daily breakfast, all taxes & service fees.
- *1 welcome dinner in Thessaloniki, 1 dinner in Constantinople & a banquet for His. All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
- *Private audience with His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (subject to confirmation)

Cloud Tours Inc. 37-21 78th Street Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Tel: 718-721-3808 Fax: 718-795-4356 Email: stephen@cloudtours.com



**A JOURNEY OF FAITH
TO THESSALONIKI, MT. ATHOS & CONSTANTINOPLE
Led by His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey
February 21 – March 3, 2025: 11 Days / 9 Nights**

I am requesting services for _____ people. The exact name on the passport (s) is/are:

Address: _____

Daytime Tel: _____ Evening Tel: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____ Special Requests: Meals (Diabetic, vegetarian etc.): _____

Rooming with: _____ Wheelchair: Yes ___ No ___ Star Alliance number: _____

SELECT BETWEEN OPTIONS I, II:

OPTION I: Select either double or single occupancy inclusive of air: JFK / IST / Thessaloniki & Thessaloniki / IST & IST / EWR

Per person double occupancy \$4700* x 2 \$ _____

Single occupancy \$5635 * x 1 \$ _____

***Air tax/fuel of approximately \$475 is include in the above prices and not guaranteed until ticketed and subject to change**

OPTION II: LAND ONLY: Select either double or single occupancy. (Transatlantic flights not included. Flights Thessaloniki to IST via Athens are included).

Land only rate per person double occupancy \$3875* x 2 \$ _____

Land only rate single occupancy \$4810* x 1 \$ _____

Departure/Arrival transfers may not be included in Land Only rates

ALL OPTIONS: Please add: Gratuities per person (not optional) \$ 185 x _____ \$ _____

Delivery of documents (not optional) \$ 30 x 1 \$ 30.00

***Rates reflect a 4% check discount which does not apply if payment is made in any other way. Due to Aegean Airlines group reservations policy, the air fare between Thessaloniki and Istanbul is not guaranteed and may be subject to fare increases depending on when you make your reservation to join the group. An air supplement may apply.**

TRAVEL PROTECTION IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING TRAVEL PROTECTION VISIT THE BELOW LINK FOR PLANS AND PREMIUMS

www.travelexinsurance.com/index.aspx?location=32-0603&go=bp

Travel protection is recommended. If you pay for it with your deposit, pre-existing medical conditions are covered

Please mail this reservation form, a copy of your passport and a deposit of \$800 per person payable to Cloud Tours Inc.

SPACE IS LIMITED! RESERVE NOW! DEADLINE: November 20, 2024 or late booking fee, \$50 applies

TOUR INCLUDES:

*Round-trip airfare on Turkish Airlines: EWR / IST / Thessaloniki & IST / EWR & Aegean Airlines: Thessaloniki / ATH / IST

*Private arrival and departure transfers in a deluxe air conditioned motorcoach with English speaking escort

*7 1/2 days of private sightseeing for men & 6 days for the women. All entrance fees as per itinerary are included.

*Women: 6 nts first class hotel in Thessaloniki at the Electra Palace or similar including daily breakfast, all taxes and service fees.

*Men: 4 nts first class accommodation in Thessaloniki at the Electra Palace or similar including daily breakfast, all taxes and service fees &

2 nts accommodation on the Holy Mountain including meals and transportation on the Holy Mountain & roundtrip private ferries

*All: 3 nts first class accommodation in Constantinople at the Divan Istanbul Hotel or similar includ. daily breakfast, all taxes & service fees.

*1 welcome dinner in Thessaloniki, 1 dinner in Constantinople & a banquet for His. All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

*Private audience with His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (subject to confirmation)

CONDITIONS: Confirmation is subject to receipt of deposit with reservation form no later than Nov. 22 to guarantee your seat. Deposits received Nov. 23 and later are subject to a \$50 late booking fee & applicable air surcharges. Final balance due Dec, 27, 2024. **Air taxes / fuel surcharges are not guaranteed unless ticketed. Ticketing must occur for the group at the same time.** A minimum of 25 people required or additional costs will apply. **Cancellation fees:** Once deposit is received, an administration fee of \$200 per person applies in cases of all cancellations. Additional fees for cancellations received between Nov 23, 2024-Jan 2, 2025, \$800 per person and between Jan 3- Jan 21, 75% of the tour price and between Jan 22, 2025 to day of departure, non-refundable. No refund for no-shows or unused portions of tour. Additional cancellation fees may be imposed by suppliers subject to date of cancellation. Should the group cancel for any reason, including political strife, Cloud Tours reserves the right to charge \$150 per person administration fee, **Travel protection is recommended & must be paid with deposit to waive the pre-existing medical conditions exclusion. Travel protection is nonrefundable. You may request a copy of the Description of Coverage, prior to purchase, which includes the terms, conditions, limitations, and exclusions.** This plan provides insurance coverage for your trip that applies only during the covered trip. You may have coverage from other sources that provides you with similar benefits but may be subject to different restrictions depending upon your other coverages. You may wish to compare the terms of this policy with your existing life, health, home and automobile policies. If you have any questions about your current coverage, call your insurer, insurance agent or broker. The purchase of this plan is not required in order to purchase any other travel product or service offered to you by your travel retailer". Cloud Tours reserves the right to deny service to any person based upon its discretion and/or the particular needs or circumstances of a given group.

**CLOUD TOURS INC. 37-21 78th Street, Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Tel: 718 721 3808 Fax: 718 795 4356 Email: stephen@cloudtours.com**



Ladies Philoptochos News



GREEK ORTHODOX
LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS
SOCIETY, INC.

On November 4, 2024 the ladies Philoptochos Society of St. Demetrios North Wildwood, NJ drew the winners of the Fall Raffle and the first prize winner of the \$1,000 was Darlene Mastrodimos from St. Thomas Church in Cherry Hill, PA. Second prize winner of \$500 went to Daisy Diavastis from St. Demetrios Upper Darby, PA. Congratulations to both the winners.

Along with the thousands of dollars we donate as our obligation to the National and Metropolis Philoptochos throughout the year, we also added a donation of \$500 to Hurricanes Helene and Milton Relief Fund.

Each year we donate to the local charities for Thanksgiving, and this year once again we donated to the Lazarus House (Emergency Food Pantry) the sum of \$500. We also donated \$500 to the Branches Outreach Center.

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of St. Demetrios would like to invite anyone who wishes to become a member of the organization to please attend our Annual Christmas Dinner Meeting which will be held on Thursday, December 12th 5:00 pm at the Olive Branch Restaurant in the Villas. If anyone is interested in attending this wonderful event, we only ask that you bring a \$25.00 gift card from any of the chain stores such as CVS, Walmart, Target, or Walgreens. The gift cards will be collected and donated to the children of St. Basil Academy.

Wishing all of you a Happy and Blessed Christmas with much love, joy, and happiness.



In memory - In honor

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





Dear Parishioners,

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS - Sunday, December the 8th

"ELECTION FEVER" is beginning to grip our Country. During the month of November we will be voting for officials that we elect every four years. I hope that all of you will participate in this Democratic process. Also another election will be taking place in December of this year. It is the election to vote for parish council members to serve our Community. I hope that this also gives us some Election Fever to vote for the new members of the Parish Council. This election will impact our church and Community and the spiritual life of the men and women we elect to help the Parish Priest in the administration of the parish. Are we prepared to give it the same thought effort and consideration as we give the National Elections?

We should be extremely grateful to the Men and Women who have served the Parish Council in past years. With God's blessing their hard work, dedication and sacrifice has given us a Church and facilities that are known far and wide for their beauty and Christian environment. We cannot thank them enough for all they have accomplished. Now if you look carefully at these men who have dedicated their whole life to this Community, you will see that some of them are in their 30's 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's. So we do have a wonderful group of members that are serving presently, and hopefully in these coming elections, we will be able to add more people to the Parish Council.

I have always said that it is time that the younger generation step up to the plate, and get involved in the administration of the parish and learn from these dedicated individuals. Our faith is not a spectator sport. Without action, involvement, dedication, sacrifice and commitment, our faith is in vain.

These Elections will take place on the second Sunday of December 2024. Mark this date on your calendars and come to church ready to vote for the members of the new Parish Council.

Respectfully,

Fr. Michael L. Pastrokos
Protopresbyter



Candidacy Form for 2024 Parish Council Elections

I desire to be a candidate for the Parish Council of St. Demetrios, Greek Orthodox Church, North Wildwood, NJ.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (printed) _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

Email _____

Mobile phone No. _____



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

PARISH COUNCIL:

PRESIDENT | NICHOLAS D. KONIDES

VICE PRESIDENT | DR. GEORGE KOUMARAS

TREASURER | THEODORE KATSIKARIS

SECRETARY | WILLIAM MITCHELL

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL:

KOSTA BILIOS

SPIRO KELLIS

GEORGE MALLOUS

GEORGE TSAMIS

GEORGE PAPAGEORGIOU

SUNDAY SCHOOL | SOPHIA KINIROPOULOS

GREEK SCHOOL | GEORGE PLAMANTOURAS

J.O.Y. | FR. MICHAEL PASTRIKOS

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!





summer drive donations

1. John & Eleen Manetas	\$3,000.00
2. Olympic Flame (Papageorge)	\$1,500.00
3. Bill & Helen Mitchell	\$1,000.00
4. La Mer (Fofo Andy)	\$2,000.00
5. Athens II Motor Inn	\$500.00
6. Adam's Restaurant (Tsiamis)	\$1,000.00
7. Fisher's Restaurant (Koutsimiris)	
8. Hot Spot at Poplar (G. Karavangelos)	
9. Hot Spot Pizza (Marcos Zervas)	
10. Hot Spot # 1	
11. Doo Wop diner (G. Karavangelos)	
12. Vegas Diner	
13. Quebec Motor Inn (Lester Katsanis)	\$2,000.00
14. Schellenger's Restaurant	\$2,000.00
15. Pasta Pesto/Marvis Diners	\$500.00
16. Bagel Time (Angelo Bilios)	
17. Bagel Time (Cape May Bilios)	
18. Acropolis/Newport Motor Inns	\$1,000.00
19. Red Oak Restaurant	\$1,000.00
20. Rio Grande Diner	\$1,000.00
21. Nickel's Family (Primo's)	
22. Court House Diner	\$500.00
23. Olive Branch Restaurant	\$1,250.00 (In Kind)
24. Paul Zografakis	
25. Ocean View (Cape May)	
26. Peter & Bessie Lazos	
27. EnerAir (M. Palapanis)	
28. Nick & Kathy Kantzios	
29. Snow White (Steve Pavlou)	

\$18,250.00 as of 9/30/24





stewardship news

Pledges for 2024

Εθελοντική Προσφορά 2024

MR/MRS ANAGNOS DEMET & ELENI
 MRS ANDY FOTINI
 DR/MRS AUGOUSTIDES YIANNI & ANNA MARIA
 MR/MRS ANTONAKAKIS STAVROS & ELENI
 MRS BENNETT MELISSA
 MRS BOULAGERIS ALEXANDRA
 MRS BOULAGERIS EVANTHIA
 MRS BUTLER ANNA
 MR/MRS CAMMARANO ANDREW & SOPHIA
 MR/MRS CAMMARANO MAURO & ANGELA
 DRS CARPENTER JEFFREY & JUDY
 MR/MRS CHLETOS PETER & MARGOT
 MR/MRS CRAVER CHESTER & ATHENA
 MRS CVETKOWSKI
 MRS DAGLIS MELPO
 MR/MRS DECTIS PETER & JULIE
 MR DONAHUE BERNARD & PATRICIA
 MRS DONAHUE STAVANNA
 MRS EFTHIMIOU ELEFThERIA
 MR/MRS ERMENTROUT GERALD & ELAINE
 MR/MRS FOURNARIS EMMANUEL & EVIE
 MR/MRS GIOUROS EVANGELOS & BESSIE
 MR GOGATS CARL
 MR/MRS HOLTON JOHN & KATERINI
 MR/MRS HUNSICKER SCOTT & MARISA
 MRS KALLOS ETHEL
 MRS KARAVANGELES ANASTASIA
 MRS KARAVANGELOS ANNA
 MR/MRS KARAVANGELOS GEORGE & ANNA
 MRS KARROS IRENE
 MR/MRS KARROS ANASTASIOS & DENISE
 DR/MRS KATSANIS LESTER & ELENI
 MR/MRS KATSIKARIS THEODORE & DESPINA
 MR/MRS KELLIS PETER & VASSO
 MR/MRS KELLIS SPIRO & MARIA
 MR/MRS KINIROPOULOS STEFANO & SOPHIA
 MRS KLINGOS ELENI
 MR/MRS KOLAITIS JERRY & MARINNA
 MR/MRS KONIDES NICHOLAS & JENNIFER
 MS KONIDES NICOLE
 MS KONIDES SOPHIA
 MRS KOUMARAS ALYSSA
 MR KOUMARAS CHRISTOPHER
 DR/MRS KOUMARAS GEORGE & MARIA
 MR/MRS KOUTSIMIRIS ANTONIOS & ELENI
 MR/MRS KRARAS CHISTOS & ANN
 MR/MRS KRARAS DEAN & JENNIFER
 MR/MRS LABE GREG & STEPHANIE
 MR/MRS LOMAS RAYMOND & KRISTEN

MR/MRS LAZOS PETER & VASILIKI
 MRS MALLOUS ATHENA
 MRS MALLOUS SAMANTHA
 MR/MRS MALLOUS GEORGE & BEVERLY
 MR/MRS MANETAS JOHN & ELLEN
 MR/MRS MCSHAFFRY STEVEN & MARIA
 MR/MRS MERCADO LUIS & DEMETRIA
 MR/MRS MITCHELL WILLIAM & HELEN
 MR/MRS MURIANKA STEPHEN & MICHELLE
 MR/MRS NANNAS TED & ALEXANDRA
 MS ORGINOS IRENE
 MS ORGINOS HELEN
 MR/MRS PADUSSIS GARY & DONNA
 FR. PASTRIKOS MICHAEL & PRESVYTERA DEMETRA
 PRESVYTERA PANTELIS KATINA
 MRS PAPADOPOULOS ANGELA
 MR/MRS PAPAGEORGE GEORGE & STELLA
 MR/MRS PAPAIOANNOU STELIOS & TINA
 MR/MRS PAPASPANOS KOSTAS & ROULA
 MR/MRS PARSON JAMES & NIKKI
 MRS PAVLOU HELEN
 MR/MRS PAPAGEORGIOU TONY & VETTA
 MR/MRS PARDALIOS ANTONIOS & MARIA
 MR/MRS ROYER MICHAEL & CHRISTINA
 MR/MRS SAKOULAS JOHN & ELIZABETH
 MR/MRS SHEETS WILLIAM & IRENE
 MR/MRS SQUICCIMAIA LOUIS & ELLIE
 MR/MRS STAMATACOS VASILIOS & ELENI
 MRS STAVROPOULOS ELLIE
 MR/MRS THOMAS EDWARD & KATHY
 MR/MRS TRAFICANTE CHRIS & ROSE
 MR/MRS TSAMIS GEORGE & DIMITRA
 MR/MRS TSIARTSIONIS GEORGE & ALEKA
 MR WALLGREN WILLIAM
 MR/MRS WOLFE DAVID & KATHY
 MR/MRS ZAMPIRRI SALVATORE & VAIA
 MR/MRS ZOGRAFAKIS PAUL & OLGA

Thank you
 FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Stewardship Sunday

By: Kathy Wolfe

The word steward, as a noun, is a person who takes care of the people on a ship. It actually states that the steward is a person, to bring food to the people of the vessel. I find it interesting that it is a ship in the definition as in many instances Christ and the church is referred to as a ship. The very word nave, where we sit in the church, is from the Latin word *navis*, which means ship. Christ, the captain, has laid down his cross to form this ship. We understand this as churches are physically built like crosses.

However, before he laid down this cross, he chose the first twelve stewards to take care of the ship. Now they also had a special job because not only were they to take care of this upcoming ship, but they also had the responsibility to fill the ship by going out and preaching the gospel to the world.

We as Christians, as Orthodox Christians, have been chosen as well to continue the care of this ship of our Lord's. The Christian definition of the world's stewardship is a responsibility that we have as Orthodox Christians to maintain and wisely use the gifts that God has bestowed on us. Of course, monetarily, is the first thing we think of, but as stewards we also have to take care of the people in the ship, and we have to nourish and support one another. We can do this by trying to give our time with whatever talents we have that can possibly benefit the church and the people.

The Epistle readings are examples of this. The various disciples write letters telling how they are ministering to all the early churches. They travel from church to church. They record what they have done. They mention names of the new Christians who are coming and going, bringing support to one another, to the different parishes. They instruct how a parish should receive these visitors and help them and care for them. In my



mind I see it as a time of bustling activity and growth. Of course things did not happen as fast as we read them now. If it was not for the tenacity and love they had for our Lord, these early stewards, we would have not had our Apostolic history and succession!

The word steward, as a verb, means to manage another's property. Christ left us with his precious ship! Our beautiful Orthodox church and faith. We must take care of his property. and we must nourish it with whatever time and talents and gifts that we have, that we can share. Just like our chosen first 12 stewards, we have the same job in all aspects to do.

In a final note, let us go back to the Old Testament for a moment. This is when the world was misbehaving and God instructed Noah to build the ark to save his family and all the creatures of creation. I'm adding this note, because this was the first ship of salvation. God did not want his work totally destroyed, but things were getting too much for him to bear. We cannot even imagine how his heart was pained, because after all he is the creator. So because of his great love for his creation he saves it. He chooses Noah and his family to be the new stewards of his plan and to move forward to the coming of Our Savior Jesus Christ to fulfill the gift of our salvation! Then he chooses us to be the stewards! He chooses us to continue the good work that was created when he laid down his cross for the foundation of the ship! May we all find the true desire and strength to offer whatever stewardship we can to keep our ship floating for all our generations to come.



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.





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 2023 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 _____

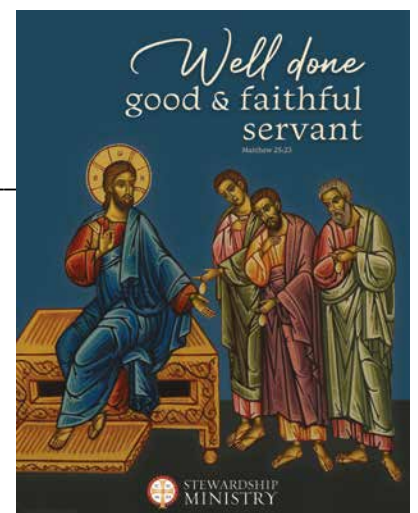
Single/Individual \$500.00

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 _____

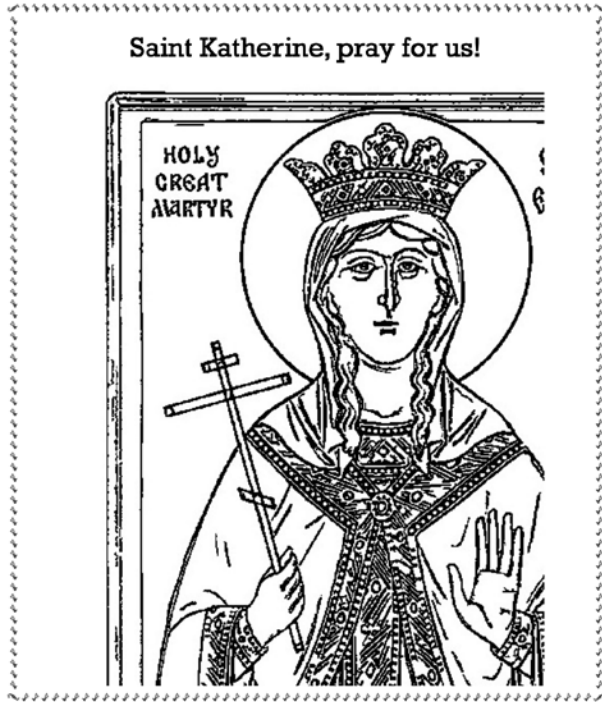
NAME OF PRIEST WHO DID MARRIAGE _____

CHILDREN'S NAMES & DATES OF BIRTH _____

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 2024 Alexandra Houck. Email is orthodoxchildrensword (at) gmail.com. Find it each week at myocn.net.

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, November 24, 2024

Volume 12, Issue 47

A Ministry of the
Orthodox Christian Network
OCN

Boasting in the Cross

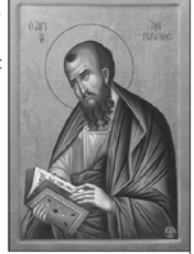
Have you ever bragged about something? Maybe you won a game. Or maybe you got a toy that nobody else got. Or maybe you got the best grade in your class. Sometimes it's hard to keep from bragging and boasting when something good happens to you.

In today's epistle though, Saint Paul tells us we shouldn't boast and brag about these things. Saint Paul tells us he boasts about only one thing, and that thing is what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us.

Saint Paul writes, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Saint Paul had a lot to boast about. He was one of the best helpers the Church had. He was really great, and he had a ton of followers. He could have boasted about how great he was. But he didn't.

Good things happen to us all the time, and we may be happy about them. But the thing that we can boast about is how Christ died on the Cross for us so we can have life forever with Him. That's what we can boast about!

When we boast about Christ's Cross, we tell other people about the Good News. When we boast about Christ's Cross, we aren't showing off what we did, but we're showing off what Christ did. Let's boast like Saint Paul did!



WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

Boast
Cross
Emperor
Epistle
Faithful
Katherine
Martyr
Saint Paul
Symbols
Witness

E C A L Z N T S J A E I K S B
M I L U D S S C R O S S Y O X
P K U A D E X W O F U M A N C
E H J P N C I E N U B S I L S
R O Z T B Y P L P O T P W X S
O R I N K V X Y L I O H Q I K
R W O I W X N S D J S V U P Y
W Y I A K E N I R E H T A K A
I K T S L U F H T I A F L Z V
A T F R N G P A H E K W C E H
Y A F C A P R X C C S J U C V
T X A S Q M B Z H H F I B L V
I Z V R V T C L V M M U Q C P
Q A J X V T C Y K Z W L X Q S
Y O B U R I A M I B X Q Q K H

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?



Did you know that everything in an icon means something? Look at the icon here and in the icon of Saint Katherine. What are the saints holding? Holding the cross means they are all martyrs—they died for their faith!

SAINT KATHERINE

STANDING UP FOR THE FAITH



When you think of a strong person, who do you think of? A weight lifter? A super hero? Today we remember a saint who reminds us all to be strong people, not with our muscles but with our faith! She reminds us to be strong Christians. Saint Katherine lived many, many years ago, when Christians were not allowed to be Christians—or at least not out in the open.

But Saint Katherine knew that it was more important to be on God's side than to be on the emperor's side. So, Katherine visited the emperor and told him she was a Christian. She told him why he was wrong to believe in idols. She told the emperor the only God was her God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

The emperor was really angry then! He brought together 50 of the smartest men around—to show Katherine SHE was wrong. But Saint Katherine, who was only a teenager, convinced these men that her God was the true God—not their silly idols. When these men became Christians too, that was too much for the emperor.

He ordered Saint Katherine to be awfully hurt and to be killed. But all the time, Saint Katherine was strong in her faith. And for that, she is a saint in Heaven forever!

We celebrate St. Katherine tomorrow, November 25th (OC: December 8th).

© Alexandra Houck 2024



Save the Date

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey



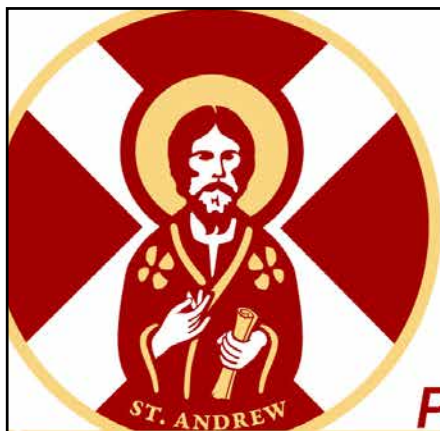
Music & Dance Festival
Philadelphia: February 14-16, 2025

*President's Day Weekend (February 14 – 16, 2025) at the
Sheraton Hotel - Downtown Philadelphia.*

Categories include:

- *Greek Folk Dancing
(JOY, GOYA and Young Adult Groups)*
- &
- *Parish Youth and Young Adult Liturgical Choirs*

Registration Packets will be coming shortly



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Educational Global Initiative
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IN CELEBRATION OF ARCHON SUNDAY

archons.org/sprouts



Notices

Are you a high school junior or senior?

Fill Your Summer With What Counts

CROSSROAD INSTITUTE

EXPLORE WHAT'S NEXT

Application Deadlines
 Priority: January 21, 2025
 Regular: February 18, 2025

Four Sessions
 Session 1 | Boston June 7-17
 Session 2 | Boston June 21-July 1
 Session 3 | New York July 5-15
 Session 4 | SoCal July 20-30

CrossRoad is a ten-day immersive summer program designed for **YOU** as you prepare to make big life decisions and start new adventures.

By connecting with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition in a deep and meaningful way, you will find a place to form authentic and lifelong friendships, ask hard questions, and explore what it means to be an Orthodox Christian in the 21st century.

APPLY TODAY:
CrossRoadInstitute.org



CROSSROAD INSTITUTE


Orthodox Youth Take the Challenge

MAKE YOUR SUMMER COUNT

Are you an 11th or 12th grade high school student?

You are invited to the CrossRoad Summer Program! Choose from multiple locations to immerse yourself with other Orthodox Youth from around the country. This 10-day academic and fun-filled time is focused on making big life decisions.

Ask hard questions, build lifelong friendships, and explore your calling as an Orthodox Christian in the 21st century.



Explore further at crossroadinstitute.org to discover more!