



NEWSLETTER OF ST. DEMETRIOS CHURCH North Wildwood, NJ

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METROPOLIS BEACH BLAST



The 3rd Metropolis Beach Blast celebration was held on June 15th and was hosted by St. Demetrios Church.

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thoughts from

FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS
PROTOPRESBYTER



Pastoral Thoughts

Best Day Of My Life!

Today, when I awoke, I suddenly realized that this is the best day of my life, ever! There were times when I wondered if I would make it to today; but I did! And because I did I'm going to celebrate!

Today, I'm going to celebrate what an unbelievable life I have had so far: the accomplishments, the many blessings, and, yes even the hardships because they have served to make me stronger. I will go through this day with a happy heart. I will marvel at God's seemingly simple gifts: the morning dew, the sun, the clouds, the trees, the



flowers, the birds. Today, none of these miraculous creations will escape my notice.

Today, I will share my excitement for life with other people. I'll make someone smile. I'll go out of my way to perform an unexpected act of kindness for someone I don't even know. Today, I'll give a sincere compliment to someone who seems down. I'll tell a child how special he is, and I'll tell someone I love just how deeply I care for her and how much she means to me.



Today is the day I quit worrying about what I don't have and start being grateful for all the wonderful things God has already given me. I'll remember that to worry is just a waste of time because my faith in God and his Divine

Plan ensures everything will be just fine.

And tonight, before I go to bed, I'll go outside and raise my eyes to the heavens. I will stand in awe at the beauty of the stars and the moon, and I will praise God for these magnificent treasures.



As the day ends and I lay my head down on my pillow, I will thank the Almighty for the best day of my life. And I will sleep the sleep of a contented child, excited with expectation because I know tomorrow is going to be the best day of my life, ever!



St. Paraskevi, St. Panteleimon, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou

July 26



Saint Paraskevi, who was from a certain village near Rome, was born to pious parents, Agatho and Politia. Since she was born on a Friday (in Greek, Paraskevi), she was given this name, which means “preparation” or “preparedness” (compare Matthew 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, and John 19:31, where ‘Friday’ is called “the day of the preparation”). From childhood she was instructed in the sacred letters and devoted herself to the study of the divine Scriptures, while leading a monastic life and guiding many to the Faith of Christ. During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, she was apprehended because she was a Christian and was urged to worship the idols, but she answered with the words of Jeremias: “Let the gods that have not made heaven and the earth perish from off the earth” (Jeremiah 10:11). Because of this she endured exceedingly painful torments, and was beheaded in the year 140. The faithful pray to her for the healing of eye ailments.

July 27



Saint Panteleimon, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him. Being proficient in the physician’s vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon (“in all things a lion”), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily renamed Panteleimon, meaning “all-merciful.”

On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name, he enlightened also the eyes of this man’s soul to the knowledge of the truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened, in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately. Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian.

Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.

July 28



Saint Irene, who was from Cappadocia, flourished in the ninth century. Because of her great beauty and virtue, she was brought to Constantinople as a prospective bride for the young Emperor Michael (842-867); however, as Saint Joannicius the Great foretold, it was God’s will that she assume the monastic habit instead. She shone forth in great ascetical labours, and suffered many attacks from the demons; while yet a novice, she attained to the practice of Saint Arsenius the Great, of praying the whole night long with arms stretched out towards Heaven (see May 8). God showed forth great signs and wonders in her, and she became the Abbess of the Convent of Chrysovalantou. She was granted the gift of clairvoyance and knew the thoughts of all that came to her. She appeared in a vision to the king and rebuked him for unjustly imprisoning a nobleman who had been falsely accused. Through a sailor from Patmos to whom he had appeared, Saint John the Evangelist sent her fragrant and wondrous apples from Paradise. She reposed at the age of 103, still retaining the youthful beauty of her countenance. After her repose, marvelous healings beyond number have been wrought by her to the present day.



Dormition of the Theotokos

August 15

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

Introduction

The Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15 each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition and in the Greek *kimisis*) or “falling-asleep” of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the Theotokos.

Biblical Story

The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He saw His mother and His disciple John and said to the Virgin Mary, “Woman, behold your son!” and to John, “Behold your mother!” (John 19:25-27). From that hour, the Apostle took care of the Theotokos in his own home.

Along with the biblical reference in Acts 1:14 that confirms that the Virgin Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the tradition of the Church holds that she remained in the home of the Apostle John in Jerusalem, continuing a ministry in word and deed.

At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see the Theotokos. Except for the Apostle Thomas, all of them including the Apostle Paul were gathered together at her bedside. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ

himself descended and carried her soul into heaven.

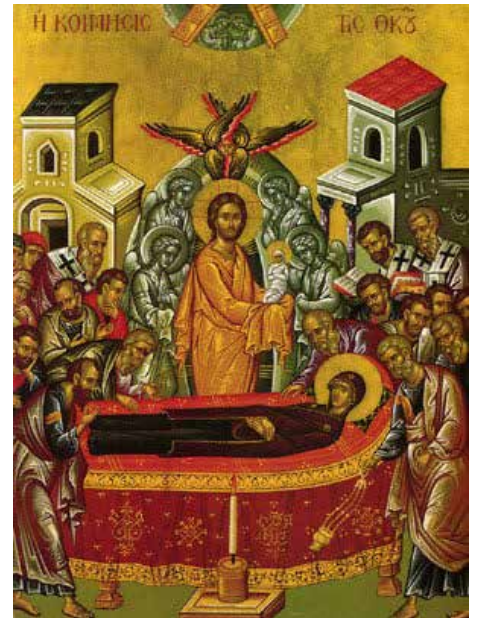
Following her repose, the body of the Theotokos was taken in procession and laid in a tomb near the Garden of Gethsemane. When the Apostle Thomas arrived three days after her repose and desired to see her body, the tomb was found to be empty. The bodily assumption of the Theotokos was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles.

Icon of the Feast

The Icon of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos shows her on her deathbed surrounded by the Apostles. Christ is standing in the center looking at His mother. He is holding a small child clothed in white representing the soul of the Virgin Mary. With His golden garments, the angels above His head, and the mandorla surrounding Him, Christ is depicted in His divine glory.

The posture of the Apostles direct attention toward the Theotokos. On the right Saint Peter censes the body of the Theotokos. On the left Saint Paul bows low in honor of her.

Together with the Apostles are several bishops and women. The bishops traditionally represented are James, the brother of the Lord, Timothy, Heirotheus, and Dionysius the



Areopagite. They are shown wearing episcopal vestments. The women are members of the church in Jerusalem.

In front of the bed of the Theotokos is a candle that helps to form a central axis in the icon. Above the candle is the body of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Standing over His mother is Christ holding her most pure soul. Above Christ the gates of heaven stand open, ready to receive the Mother of God.

This great Feast of the Church and the icon celebrates a fundamental teaching of our faith—the Resurrection of the body. In the case of the Theotokos, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. Like those who gathered around the body of the Virgin Mary, we gather around our departed loved ones and commend their souls into the hands of Christ. As we remember those who have reposed in the faith before us and



Dormition of the Theotokos

August 15

CONTINUED...

have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come.

We also affirm through this Feast as we journey toward our heavenly abode that the Mother of God intercedes for us. Through Christ she has become the mother of all of the children of God, embracing us with divine love.

[Orthodox Christian Celebration of the Feast of the Dormition](#)

The commemoration of the Dormition of the Theotokos and the preparation for the Feast begin on August 1 with a period of fasting. A strict fast is followed

on most of the days (no meat, dairy, oil, or wine), with the exceptions of fish on the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6) and the day of the Dormition. Oil and Wine are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays.

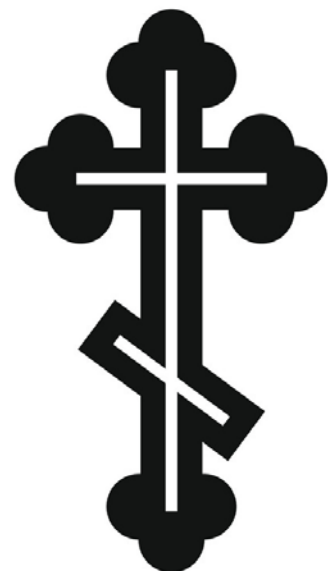
On the weekdays before the Feast, Paraklesis services are held in most parishes. These consist of the Great Paraklesis and the Small Paraklesis, both services of supplication and prayer for the intercessions of the Theotokos.

The Feast of the Dormition is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom which is conducted on the morning of the Feast and preceded

by a Matins (Orthros) service. A Great Vespers is conducted on the evening before the day of the Feast. Scripture readings for the Feast of the Dormition are the following: At Vespers: Genesis 28:10-17; Ezekiel 43:27-44:4; Proverbs 9:1-11. At the Matins: Luke 1:39-49, 56. At the Divine Liturgy: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28.

In memory - In honor

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





Liturgical Calendar

JULY & AUGUST 2024 LITURGICAL PROGRAM

JUNE 30TH- JULY 1ST TO THE 4TH: GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA "NATIONAL CLERGY LAITY CONGRESS".

THIS CONVENTION IS BEING HELD IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA. FR. MICHAEL AND PRESVYTERA DIMITRA WILL BE REPRESENTING OUR PARISH OF ST. DEMETRIOS AT THE CLERGY LAITY CONVENTION. THE CLERGY LAITY CONGRESS WILL INCLUDE ALSO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE (Y.A.L.). THIS WILL BE A HISTORIC AND MEMORABLE EVENT FOR OUR WHOLE ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA.

SUNDAY JULY 7 SECOND SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

SUNDAY JULY 14 HOLY FATHERS OF THE 4TH ECUMENICAL SYNOD ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

SUNDAY JULY 21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

SUNDAY JULY 28 FIFTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

AUGUST LITURGICAL

FRIDAY AUGUST 2 PARAKLESIS SERVICE TO THE VIRGIN MARY 6:00 PM

SUNDAY AUGUST 4 SIXTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

FRIDAY AUGUST 9 PARAKLESIS SERVICE TO THE VIRGIN MARY 6:00 PM

SUNDAY AUGUST 11 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 14 GREAT VESPER SERVICE FOR THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE VIRGIN MARY. 6:00 PM

THURSDAY AUGUST 15TH THE GREAT FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE VIRGIN MARY ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30

SUNDAY AUGUST 18TH EIGHTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30

SUNDAY AUGUST 25TH NINTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW ORTHROS 8:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM

BECAUSE FR. MICHAEL WILL NOT BE HERE ON ST. FANOURIOS DAY, HE WILL BLESS THE FANOUIROPITTES ON SUNDAY AUGUST 25TH.



a message from

NICHOLAS D. KONIDES
PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support to our Church and Community since the beginning of the year. All our events have been a tremendous success because of all your untiring efforts. To all of you I offer my sincere appreciation.

As we move into the busy summer season and the warm weather we look forward to welcoming back all our summer residents, who support our Church and participate in our Sunday services.

As always, we face some building maintenance issues that we need your help with. The following are projects that we need to undertake to insure that our buildings will stay in good repair.

Replacement of the main roof of our Community Center

Replacement of the front windows of the Community Center

Repair of the exterior plaster of both the Church and the Community Center

Power wash and painting of the exterior of the buildings

Repair of the exterior lighting to include the Cross of the buildings

Replacement of the St Demetrios Icon located in the exterior marque

Re-surfacing the stones in our parking area and in the rear of the buildings

The cleaning and resealing of the stained-glass windows of the Church

If anyone is interested in undertaking or donating to any of the projects listed above, please contact Fr. Michael or myself. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Wishing all of you a very healthy and prosperous summer.

With loving wishes,

Nicholas D. Konides

Parish Council President



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 197/2024

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Fourth of July

July 4, 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.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

My beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

The Fourth of July is our National Birthday, celebrating the Declaration of Independence, a truly remarkable document that every American should read every year on this date. For with mere language, it renewed a positive vision for the human *polis*, one that has stood the test of time, but which has always been a process. Through the centuries, our Nation has suffered incalculable harms: slavery, the Civil War to end it, genocidal programs against Indigenous Peoples, and battles for equality, suffrage, and economic opportunity by women and all manner of minorities, racial, ethnic, and otherwise. The Constitution of our Nation, ratified fourteen years after the Declaration of Independence, presciently predicted that our United States of America would always be in process to “form a more perfect Union.”

For “democracy,” the noble experiment conceived by the Hellenic mind over 2,500 years ago, has never been static. Democracies — even a representative one like ours — cannot be reduced to historical models that resemble fossils more than living organisms. And this is why, in the last line of the Declaration, lies a roadmap for how our great country can come together, regardless of the political views one might hold.

We behold how “a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence” is the guarantee of our liberties. On such a basis, without exclusivism, we can “pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.” A belief in a higher purpose for our freedom is ultimately the unifying principle by which we can bond as fellow-citizens, even when there are passionate



differences among us. It has held this great Nation together through the greatest struggles, both foreign and domestic, and it can bind up and heal any wounds in our national consciousness, lest they fester and infect our domestic tranquility and prosperity.

Therefore, on this and every Fourth of July, let us appeal to our Loving and Providential God in unison with all our fellow citizens. Let us remember what it is to love this Land, and be willing to sacrifice our utmost for the benefit of all. If we can thus “mutually pledge to each other” on the foundation of God’s providential love for us, we shall remain a truly United States of America. A blessed and happy Fourth of July to all!

With paternal love in Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ**

Αριθμ. Πρωτ. 197/2024

Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για την ημέρα της Ανεξαρτησίας.

4 Ιουλίου 2024

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, 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 Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Ὅσον ἀφορᾷ στὴν ὑποστήριξη αὐτῆς τῆς Διακηρύξεως, ἔχοντας ἀκλόνητη ἐμπιστοσύνη στὴ Θεία Πρόνοια, δεσμεύουμε ἀμοιβαία ὁ ἓνας στὸν ἄλλο τὴ ζωὴ, τὸ μέλλον μας καὶ τὴν ἱερὴ τιμὴ μας»

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ἡ τετάρτη Ἰουλίου εἶναι τὰ ἐθνικά μας γενέθλια, ἡ ἡμέρα ποὺ ἐορτάζουμε τὴ Διακήρυξη τῆς Ανεξαρτησίας, ἓνα πραγματικά ἀξιόλογο κείμενο, τὸ ὁποῖο κάθε Ἀμερικανὸς θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ τὸ διαβάσει κάθε χρόνο αὐτὴ τὴν ἡμέρα. Διότι μὲ ἀπλὴ γλώσσα, τὸ κείμενο αὐτὸ ἔδωσε μία νέα προοπτικὴ σὲ αὐτὸ ποὺ ὀνόμαζαν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι μας πρόγονοι «πόλις», προοπτικὴ ποὺ ἄντεξε στὴ δοκιμασία τοῦ χρόνου καὶ πάντα εἶναι ἐπίκαιρη. Στὸ πέρασμα τῶν αἰώνων, τὸ Ἀμερικανικὸ Ἔθνος μας ἔχει ὑποστεῖ ἀνυπολόγιστες ζημιές: ἡ δουλεία καὶ ὁ ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος ποὺ ἔγινε γιὰ νὰ τερματιστεῖ ἡ δουλεία, οἱ γενοκτονίες κατὰ τῶν αὐτόχθονων πληθυσμῶν καὶ οἱ μάχες γιὰ τὴν ἰσότητα, τὸ δικαίωμα ψήφου, οἱ ἴσες ἐνκαιρίες στὶς γυναῖκες καὶ ἡ κατάργηση τῶν διακρίσεων εἰς βᾶρος τῶν φυλετικῶν, ἐθνικῶν ἢ ἄλλων μειονοτήτων. Τὸ Σύνταγμα τοῦ Ἑθνους μας, ὅπως ἐπικυρώθηκε δεκατέσσερα χρόνια μετὰ ἀπὸ τὴ Διακήρυξη τῆς Ανεξαρτησίας, προέβλεψε σαφῶς ὅτι οἱ Ἡνωμένες Πολιτεῖες Ἀμερικῆς θὰ βρίσκονται πάντοτε στὴ διαδικασία πρὸς τὴν ἐπίτευξη μιᾶς τελειότερης Ἑνώσεως.



Διότι ή δημοκρατία, αυτό τὸ εὐγενὲς πείραμα ποὺ συνέλαβε ὁ ἑλληνικὸς νοῦς πρὶν ἀπὸ 2500 χρόνια, δὲν ἦταν ποτὲ κάτι αὐτονόητο καὶ στατικό. Οἱ δημοκρατίες, ἀκόμη καὶ ἂν εἶναι ἀντιπροσωπευτικὲς ὅπως ἡ δική μας, δὲν περιορίζονται σὲ ἱστορικὰ πρότυπα, ποὺ μοιάζουν μᾶλλον μὲ ἀπολιθώματα καὶ ὄχι μὲ ζωντανούς ὁργανισμούς. Καὶ αὐτὸς εἶναι ὁ λόγος γιὰ τὸν ὁποῖο στὴν τελευταία παράγραφο τῆς Διακήρυξης βρίσκεται ἕνας ὁδικὸς χάρτης γιὰ τὸ πῶς ἡ μεγάλη μας χώρα μπορεῖ νὰ παραμείνει ἐνωμένη, ἀνεξάρτητα ἀπὸ τὶς πολιτικὲς ἀπόψεις ποὺ ἔχει ὁ καθένας μας.

Παρατηροῦμε ὅτι ἡ «ἀκλόνητη ἐμπιστοσύνη στὴ Θεία Πρόνοια» ἀποτελεῖ ἐγγύηση τῶν ἐλευθεριῶν μας. Μὲ ἕνα τέτοιο θεμέλιο, χωρὶς ἀποκλεισμούς, μποροῦμε νὰ «δεσμεύουμε ἀμοιβαίᾳ ὁ ἕνας στὸν ἄλλο τὴ ζωὴ, τὸ μέλλον μας καὶ τὴν ἱερὴ τιμὴ μας». Ἡ πίστη μας ὅτι ἡ ἐλευθερία μας ἀποτελεῖ ἕνα σκοπὸ ἀνώτερο, εἶναι τελικὰ ὁ συνδετικὸς ἵστος ποὺ μᾶς ἐνώνει ὅλους ὡς συμπολίτες, ἀκόμη καὶ ὅταν μεταξύ μας ἔχουμε μεγάλες διαφορές. Αὐτὴ ἡ πίστη κράτησε τὸ ἀμερικανικὸ ἔθνος μας ἐνωμένο στοὺς δύσκολους ἀγῶνες, ἐσωτερικοὺς ἢ ἐξωτερικοὺς, θεραπεύοντας ὅλες τὶς πληγὲς ποὺ ἔμειναν στὴν ἐθνικὴ μας συνείδηση, ἀφήνοντας ἀνέγγιχτη καὶ ἀμόλυντη τὴν ἡρεμία καὶ τὴν εὐημερία μας.

Γιὰ αὐτό, λοιπόν, ἂς προσφύγουμε ὅλοι στὸ Θεὸ τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς πρόνοιας μαζί μὲ ὅλους τοὺς συμπολίτες μας. Ἄς θυμηθοῦμε τί σημαίνει ἀγάπη γιὰ αὐτὴ τὴ χώρα, θυσιάζοντας τὰ πάντα πρὸς ὄφελος τῶν ἄλλων. Ἐὰν μποροῦμε νὰ «δεσμεύουμε ἀμοιβαίᾳ ὁ ἕνας στὸν ἄλλο τὴ ζωὴ» μὲ θεμέλιο σταθερὸ τὴν προνοητικὴ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ γιὰ ὅλους μας, τότε τὸ ἔθνος μας θὰ ἐξακολουθήσει πράγματι νὰ εἶναι οἱ Ἑνωμένες Πολιτεῖς τῆς Ἀμερικῆς. Νὰ ἐορτάσετε μία χαρούμενη καὶ εὐλογημένη τετάρτη Ἰουλίου.

Μετὰ πατρικῶν ἐυχῶν ἐν Χριστῷ,

+ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος



St. Demetrios Happenings



George and Tara Tsaketas baptized their little beautiful Agapi on Saturday, June 29, 2024 at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in North Wildwood, New Jersey. Her Godparent was Irene Skabelis.



St. Demetrios is so proud to have Fr. Deacon Luke serving with Fr. Michael, plus the beautiful people who volunteer on the chanter stand. Also the altar servers who devote their time to serve with Fr. Michael. Also we had the pleasure of having with us Manuel Anagnos who came to us from Sts. Peter and Paul's church in Fredrick, Maryland.

Manuel Anagnos chanting with John Carpenter and Rita Handley.





Beach Blast



METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY "BEACH BLAST"

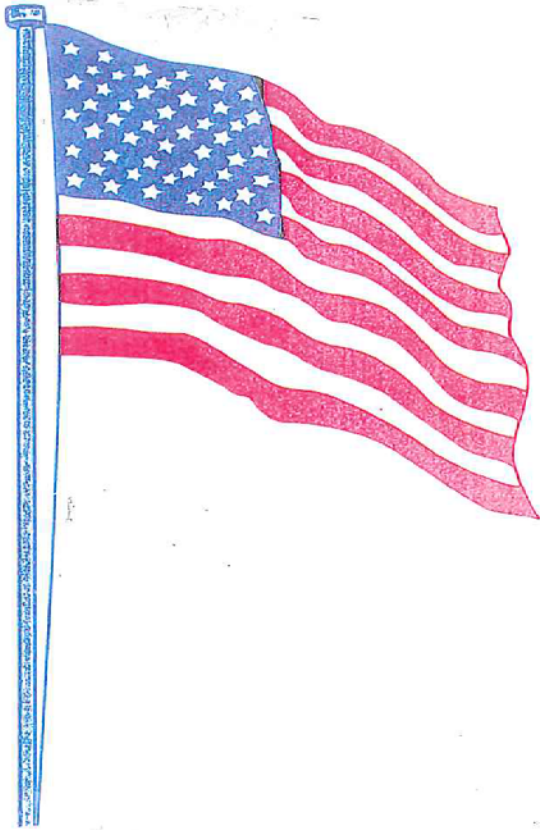
On Saturday June the 15th the St. Demetrios Parish of N. Wildwood, New Jersey hosted the 3rd Metropolis Beach Blast. What a beautiful day that all the kids along with their parents enjoyed a day filled with Sunshine and Ocean. This event started at 10: am and finished on the beach at 4:30 p.m. It was so beautiful seeing the kids interact with each other and enjoying the fellowship that they shared together. Over 80 kids along with Clergy, Parents, and friends and a few members of the Metropolis staff participated in this exciting event. Many thanks to Fr. George Liacopoulos who took the time out of his busy schedule to be with the kids. A special thank you to Agnoul Marcantonis who organized this event on behalf of the Metropolis of New Jersey, and was responsible in making this event a huge success. The event continued after 4:30 pm as the kids walked the famous "Wall" to the Church. There at the church Fr. Michael welcomed the kids and their parents, along with our young and coming chanter Herman Murnaghan who together conducted the beautiful Vesper Service. It was great to witness the kids having the opportunity to share their Christian fellowship with their peers. To end the event, George Mallous and the Kitchen Crew of St. Demetrios prepared the delicious dinner that was served to everyone who participated. A special thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Saad, for their generous and thoughtful gift of \$500.00 which took care of all the expenses for the event. We would also like to thank His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey for giving us his blessings to organize this event that will always be memorable to all who participated. We hope to see everyone again in next year's festivity.





Beach Blast





*Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the
perilous flight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly
streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

-- Francis Scott Key

Fourth of July – Independence Day

The Fourth of July—also known as Independence Day or July 4th—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the [American Revolution](#). On July 2nd, 1776, the [Continental Congress](#) voted in favor of independence, and two days later delegates from the [13 colonies](#) adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by [Thomas Jefferson](#). From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from [fireworks](#), parades and concerts to more casual family gatherings and barbecues. The Fourth of July 2023 is on Tuesday, July 4.



History of Independence Day

When the initial battles in the [Revolutionary War](#) broke out in April 1775, few colonists desired complete independence from Great Britain, and those who did were considered radical.

By the middle of the following year, however, many more colonists had come to favor independence, thanks to growing hostility against Britain and the spread of revolutionary sentiments such as those expressed in the bestselling pamphlet "[Common Sense](#)," published by [Thomas Paine](#) in early 1776.

On June 7, when the [Continental Congress](#) met at the [Pennsylvania](#) State House (later Independence Hall) in Philadelphia, the [Virginia](#) delegate Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion calling for the colonies' independence.

Amid heated debate, Congress postponed the vote on Lee's resolution, but appointed a five-man committee—including [Thomas Jefferson](#) of Virginia, [John Adams](#) of [Massachusetts](#), Roger Sherman of [Connecticut](#), [Benjamin Franklin](#) of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of [New York](#)—to draft a [formal statement justifying the break with Great Britain](#).

Did you know? John Adams believed that July 2nd was the correct date on which to celebrate the birth of American independence, and would reportedly turn down invitations to appear at July 4th events in protest. Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826—the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

On July 2nd, the Continental Congress voted in favor of Lee's resolution for independence in a near-unanimous vote (the New York delegation abstained, but later voted affirmatively). On that day, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2 "will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival" and that the celebration should include "Pomp and Parade...Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other."

On July 4th, the Continental Congress formally adopted the [Declaration of Independence](#), which had been written largely by Jefferson. Though the vote for



actual independence took place on July 2nd, from then on the 4th became the day that was celebrated as the birth of American independence.

Early Fourth of July Celebrations and Traditions

In the pre-Revolutionary years, colonists had held annual celebrations of the king's birthday, which traditionally included the ringing of bells, bonfires, processions and speechmaking. By contrast, during the summer of 1776 some colonists celebrated the birth of independence by holding mock funerals for King [George III](#) as a way of symbolizing the end of the monarchy's hold on America and the triumph of liberty.

Festivities including concerts, bonfires, parades and the firing of cannons and muskets usually accompanied the first public readings of the Declaration of Independence, beginning immediately after its adoption. Philadelphia held the first annual commemoration of independence on July 4, 1777, while Congress was still occupied with the ongoing war.

[George Washington](#) issued double rations of rum to all his soldiers to mark the anniversary of independence in 1778, and in 1781, several months before the key American victory at the [Battle of Yorktown](#), Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday.

After the Revolutionary War, Americans continued to commemorate Independence Day every year, in celebrations that allowed the new nation's emerging political leaders to address citizens and create a feeling of unity. By the last decade of the 18th century, the two major political parties—the [Federalist Party](#) and Democratic-Republicans—that had arisen began holding separate Fourth of July celebrations in many large cities.

Fourth of July Fireworks

The [first fireworks](#) were used as early as 200 BC. The tradition of setting off [fireworks on the 4 of July](#) began in Philadelphia on July 4, 1777, during the first organized celebration of Independence Day. Ship's cannon fired a 13-gun salute in honor of the [13 colonies](#). The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* reported: "at night there was a grand exhibition of fireworks (which began and concluded with thirteen rockets) on the



Commons, and the city was beautifully illuminated." That same night, the [Sons of Liberty](#) set off fireworks over Boston Common.

Fourth of July Becomes a Federal Holiday

The tradition of patriotic celebration became even more widespread after the [War of 1812](#), in which the United States again faced Great Britain. In 1870, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday; in 1941, the provision was expanded to grant a paid holiday to all federal employees.

Over the years, the political importance of the holiday would decline, but Independence Day remained an important national holiday and a symbol of patriotism.

Falling in mid-summer, the Fourth of July has since the late 19th century become a major focus of leisure activities and a common occasion for family get-togethers, often involving fireworks and outdoor barbecues. The most common symbol of the holiday is the American flag, and a common musical accompaniment is "[The Star-Spangled Banner](#)," the national anthem of the United States.



thoughts from

EVA LALLAS



SELF REFLECTION

Summertime has arrived and Wildwood is abuzz with vacationers from near and far enjoying all that this vacation town has to offer. These are the lazy carefree days of summer, well deserved for the regimented routine that the workplace or school year has often demanded of us. As we daydream at the beach or poolside, the author also sees this as an opportune time to glance back at our life during the previous year.

More often we do this at the end of the calendar year (when the rush of the holiday season is upon us) assessing how we fared and making resolutions we see fit for the new year. But would this not be a good time for a mid-year check, a reflection on our **character** and our inner self, a sort of “report card” of introspection to approve or take corrective measures in meeting the goals we may have set for ourselves. Our goals may have included achievements in family life and/or career but our **character**, our behavior is what we could think about more closely as we are enjoying our lazy seemingly endless time at the beach.

We could consider answers to the following random thoughts about ourselves:

Have I kept God in my daily life, striving for sinless days?...beginning and ending each day with a prayer of thanks?

Have I lived responsibly, valuing my days; God’s gift to me, by making good use of my work and leisure time?

Have I engaged in positive endeavors along the way beyond the requirements of my job?

Have I gone out of my way to help someone?

Have I been charitable in some way?

Have I been appreciative to those who have shown me kindness?

Have I expressed some pleasantries to those who have crossed my paths...a simple “Hi!,” a smile, a good word?

Are others pleased to be in my company?

Have I been a caring friend?

Have I apologized when I have erred?

Have I tried to look at the bright side of troublesome moments, praying to God for His guidance?

In doubtful circumstances have I let my conscience, my faith direct me?

Have I attended church to worship, praise, and thank God in His house as often as I could?

Have I been a “good” Christian?

Now, as we ponder our answers to those thoughts and many more, what have we learned about ourselves? How do I honestly see myself? Do I like what I see? How do others perceive me? Has my behavior, words, and deeds been Christian-like? At all? Somewhat? How do the grades on my “report card” measure up? Am I pleased with my self evaluation? What character flaws have been revealed? How can I remedy them? What will God’s evaluation, the one that really counts, be?

How can I grow spiritually to become a better Christian, living closer to Christ?

(Continued next page)



thoughts from

EVA LALLAS

Continued...

It has been said that timing is everything. In this light, September is right around the corner...the beginning of our Ecclesiastical Year, a perfect time to take action in resolving our shortcomings. We can now assume the responsibility of addressing those aspects of our character which need mending. The call to bring us closer to Jesus Christ may well be the Liturgy of the Elevation of the Holy Cross on September 14th!

**IN A MIRROR IS WHERE WE FIND
A REFLECTION OF OUR APPEARANCES,
BUT IN A HEART IS WHERE WE FIND
A REFLECTION OF OUR SOUL.**

The author shares the following (somewhat related) poem of self reflection with you.

The Man In The Glass

By: Peter Dale Winbrow, Sr.
1934 Western Maryland College

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself
And see what THAT man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Whose judgement upon you must pass;
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people may think you a straight-shootin' chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of life
And get pats on your back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.



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. Κατά φωνή καί το κορμί ! or Κατά φωνή καί ο γάιδaros !

When someone is mentioned in conversation, or is in thought and he appears or calls!
“Speak of the devil”

2. Υπομονή καί χάρη! or Υπομονή κύριέβη ! or Υπομονή βασιλεύη!

Patience is grace. Patience rules.
It is graceful to be patient. “Don’t jump the gun!” “Don’t hog the situation!”
“Patience is a virtue, posses it if you can.”

3. Λείπη ο Μάρτης άπ την Σαρακοστή;

Do we ever have Holy Lent without the month of March?
Whether Easter is celebrated early or late, the month of March is always present.
An individual who always seems to be present no matter where or when; he appears everywhere!
“Πανταχού Παρόν!”
From the liturgical reference to God. He is always present! He is with us!

4. Την νύχτα μή διαλέγης διαμάντι η. γυναίκα!

Do not select a diamond or a wife at night!
Such choices are important and should be made in the light of day so that
flaws can be determined!

5. Τα παθήματα είναι μαθήματα!

Errors are learning experiences!
Learn from your mistakes! Don’t repeat them.



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

ATTORNEY: MARCUS KARAVAN, ESQ.

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

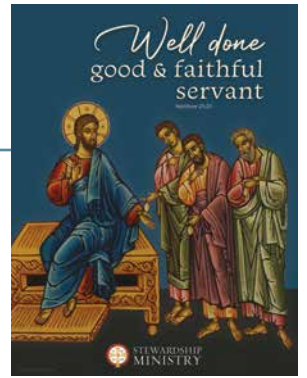
321 ST. DEMETRIOS AVE, NORTH WILDWOOD, NJ 08260

STDEMETRIOSNEWJERSEY.COM

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



stewardship letter



As we enter into another productive year, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. As a community we have a lot of work to do, the groundwork has been started, and we must work even harder to promote a better Christian environment for ourselves and our children. God has blessed our community with parishioners like you, who have supported the church throughout the years. But to continue this success that we have experienced, we need to focus on something very important. We need to understand what “STEWARDSHIP” means.

Our main concern in writing this letter is to have a better communication with the members of our St. Demetrios family. Somewhere down the line we have forgotten what it means to be a Good Standing Member of the Church. At the core of any Stewardship Program, the main characters and pillars of the church are the Stewards. A good steward is neither a miser nor a spendthrift person. A good steward is not one who economizes but one who is a good manager of what has been entrusted to him/her.

Some of us have forgotten what it means to be a Good Standing Member of the Church. As members of our St. Demetrios Parish, we have by our own choice undertaken a responsibility to become a good member of the Church. That means we must love it, care for it, be concerned about it, support it, and promote its Christian work and mission. How well we are going to accomplish these major tasks is solely up to all of us as Christian Stewards.

We have the opportunity and the responsibility to help our St. Demetrios Community grow. But we have “Stewards that for years have never made any attempts to send in their Pledge Cards...We send out Stewardship information every three months to all our registered families, and along with that information, we also include a Pledge Card. It brings us to the question “WHY”. Most of our parishioners were raised in the parish of St. Demetrios. You went to Greek School, Sunday School, Joy, GOYA, Dance Groups, and etc. Talking to people in the parish, you hear stories about how proud they are to have grown up in the Church of St. Demetrios and that they also want their children to experience that same tradition that their parents felt growing up in the parish. Many of our young people, who are out of college, single, married and raising their families, are the groups that we need to communicate with, giving them the understanding that we truly need their help and support. Our young people need to step up to the plate and make their commitment to the church.

Remember when we give to God, we must give with the attitude of how much we can give...not with the attitude of how much should we give...or how much did John Doe give and so I will give. This is why it's called (fair share), because everyone is part of the puzzle and everyone is responsible for their share.



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 _____

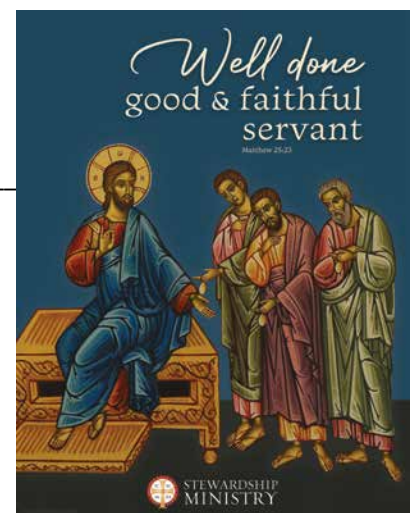
Single/Individual \$500.00

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 _____

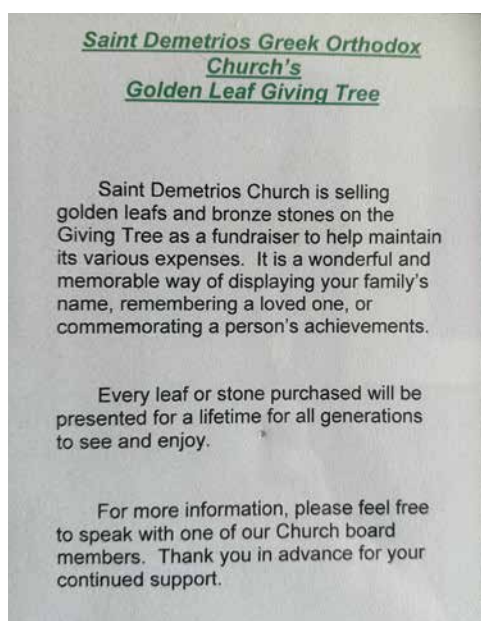


church NEWS

All our local and seasonal members and visitors are invited to register and enroll in our parish for the 2024 membership and join in weekly worship and to support our parish “Stewardship Program” and ministries. The annual minimum enrollment offering is \$750 per family, and \$500 for single people. Please complete the parish membership registry forms that are available in the Narthex. Families that are in arrears are invited to reinstate their membership and participation in our parish life and ministries.

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!





The Living Tradition of the Eucharist

It is interesting to emphasize another form of the Synodical system, which accentuates the importance of Tradition: the Eucharist itself. In the Eucharist, all Orthodox Christians meet together and in absolute agreement, in doctrine and practice witness the presence of the Holy Trinity on the altar of the Church. The bishop and the priest pray to God the Father to send the Holy Spirit and transform the bread and wine into the very body and blood of Christ. All the faithful present are called to receive Communion and become active members of the Body of Christ. In the liturgy, as it was instituted by the Lord Himself, the whole Church meets every day to proclaim and live the oneness and the unity of faith in Jesus Christ. In the Orthodox liturgy, we see all the history of Tradition embodied in the body and blood of Christ. St. Gregory Palamas writes the following in connection with the Holy Eucharist:

"We hold fast to all the Traditions of the Church, written and unwritten, and above all to the most mystical and sacred celebration and communion and assembly (synaxis), whereby all other rites are made perfect..." (Letter to Dionysius, 7).

This emphasis on the Eucharist shows that Tradition is a dynamic way of life unfolding continuously in the liturgical framework of the Church. By participating in the Eucharist, we proclaim our Tradition as living and active members of the Church.

Of course, to live according to the Traditions of the Orthodox Church, to participate, fully, in the life of Tradition is not an easy task. We need the imparting of the Holy Spirit, in order to live in a mystical and mysterious way the life of Christ. As St. Gregory Palamas wrote:

"All those dogmas which are now openly proclaimed in the Church and made known to all alike, were previously mysteries foreseen only by the prophets through the Spirit. In the same way the blessings promised to the saints in the age to come are at the present stage of the Gospel dispensation still mysteries, imparted to and foreseen by those whom the Spirit counts worthy, yet only in a partial way and in the form of a pledge" (Tomos of the Holy Mountain, Preface).

Thus, the Tradition of the Church is a living reality, which the Orthodox Christian must live daily in a mystical way. By adhering to the teaching of the Scriptures, the Ecumenical Councils, and the Patristic writings, by observing the canons of the Church, by frequently participating in the Eucharist, where Tradition becomes an empirical reality, we are members of the Body of Christ and are led to the "contemplation of God" to repeat a beautiful expression of St. Neilos (fifth century). St. Gregory Palamas, in summing up the Patristic doctrine of Christian life, suggests that the ultimate purpose of man's life is *theoptia*, that is, seeing God. (In Defense of the Hesychasts, 1, 3, 42) or to use St. Gregory of Nyssa's words, man's life is a strenuous and endless ascent towards God, that is, deification (*theosis*). (On the Life of Moses, ed. by W. Jaeger, 112ff.).

Orthodox Tradition, therefore, is not a dead letter, a collection of dogmas and practices of the past. It is the history of salvation. It is the life of the Holy Spirit, who constantly illuminates us in order for all Orthodox Christians to become sons and daughters of God, living in the Divine light of the All-blessed Trinity.

PARAKLESIS TO THE VIRGIN MARY

Throughout our Church history, no woman has been more loved, more lauded and more cherished than the Blessed Virgin Mary. She herself foretold it: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed." (Luke 1:48) In beautiful poetic-hymnography, which is characteristic of Byzantine Chant in the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Theotokos, the Mother of God is honored and esteemed for her unique role in the salvation of the human race. Through her, the Word of God became flesh and the Infinite became, as it were finite. Humanity took on divine presence and Divinity took on humanity. The Theotokos is the vehicle, par excellence of humility and obedience and thus a supreme example of redeemed mankind.

As the Mother of our Lord, she is our greatest ally and our most fervent intercessor, "for...the prayer of the righteous has great power in its effects." (James 5:16) During the Paraklesis Service, we ask the Most Holy Theotokos to save us just as those drowning reach out to those on dry land. Let us then seek with confidence the help and intercession of the

Mother of Light, Mary, the Mother of our Lord.

Let us also honor the Mother of our Lord, as many others before us have, by coming and participating in the Paraklesis Services, so that we can all praise the Mother of our Lord with Hymn and song.

**KOIMISIS — August 1-15
PRAYER FOR THE LIVING
LET US PRAY FOR GRACE, LIFE,
PEACE, HEALTH, SALVATION,
PROTECTION, FORGIVENESS
AND REMISSION OF THE SINS
OF THESE THY SERVANTS:**

The Stethoscope



When I worked as a nurse on the pediatric ward, before I listened to the little ones' chests, I would plug the stethoscope into their ears and let them listen to their own hearts. Their eyes would light up with awe.

But I never got a response to equal four-year-old David's. I gently tucked the stethoscope into his ears and placed the disk over his heart. "Listen," I said, "What do you suppose that is?" He drew his eyebrows together in a puzzled line and looked up as if lost in the mystery of the strange tap-tap-tapping deep in his chest. Then his face broke out in a wondrous grin. "Is that Jesus knocking?" he asked. I smiled. Somewhere, maybe in Sunday School, David had obviously been told that lovely old illustration about Jesus standing at the door of our hearts, knocking. Dear little David. You were exactly right. Inside your heart and every heart, there is the faint, persistent sound of Jesus knocking. For Jesus comes to each of us every new day, wanting to share its moments with us. And maybe it is only those with the faith and wonder of a David who hears it beneath the clamor of a busy world... and open the door.



Who is teaching our children their moral and ethical values?

by Archpriest Joseph Purpura



As a parent of four children, three of whom are teenagers, I witness the multitude of moral and ethical values that they are constantly presented. I am also amazed just how much at odds those values often are with each other. There are the moral and ethical values imparted to them from television and the theater. There are the moral and ethical values that their peers expect of them, which depending on the group (i.e. sports, academic decathlon team, chess team, theater group, church youth group, etc.) often in and of themselves vary. There are, also, their music, the Internet their schoolteachers and the school environment as a whole, where one would expect high values to be imparted.

Recently, my tenth grader's class held what was called "Awareness Week" where the "Myth of Masculinity" and "Gay and Lesbians: Awareness and Acceptance" were two of the main topics. At this point I began wondering who is setting moral and ethical agenda for our

young people, and I asked where and what is the responsibility of the Church and parents in this process. I well remember one of my seminary professors saying that he and his wife got through the teen years of their children by "talking with their children, and talking and talking." Recent studies tell us that the average parent spends about two minutes each day in meaningful conversation with their teenagers. Telling your child to clean his room, empty the garbage, go to bed, get up, brush your teeth, go to school, don't count as meaningful conversation, according to the authors of the study. Two minutes a day, no matter how meaningful, may not be enough to compete with the multitude of other moral and ethical values being presented to our youth. We need to spend a meaningful amount of time with our children to really know what is going on in their lives, what they are thinking and what outside influences are forming their moral and ethical values.



What Does the Church Mean to YOU?



There are people who send their children to Catechism School and yet who themselves never darken the doors of the church with their presence, and who do not, apparently, have the slightest interest in the Church, or make any contribution to its support. How can they want us to teach their children about Christ and His Church and love for its sacraments in one hour a week and then promptly break it down by their example?

There are people who are willing to belong to organizations of the Church, who talk about church work and yet who seldom attend church services.

There are people who call on the Church to marry them, or baptize their children or even bury their loved ones, who for years prior to or even after the sacrament or service, have not so much as thought of the Church. Can the Church's ministry at that time be anything but empty form?

There are people who ask us to pray for and with them but who have made no effort to pray for themselves. When their prayers are answered and the clouds have passed these people are nowhere to be found to thank God, until the next time they need His blessings and help. Is it that they think only of God when in trouble? Do they not recall the Bible passage "where there not ten healed, where are the other nine?"

There are people who boast their membership in the church and how proud they are to be Orthodox Christians, but who only come to church on Easter. What does the Church mean to them?

There are people who never contribute their time, talent or money in support of the Church, who belong to other organizations and have time, talent and lots of money for other things and other causes. They protest and usually refuse when the Church seeks their time, talent or money, and are usually always the first and the loudest to complain, if they feel their needs are not being met by the Church. What does the Church mean to them?

It is quite apparent what the Church means to all those people described above. The question is: "what does the Church mean to you? If the church is not Holy Altar praising and glorifying God; if the Church is not your guide to salvation, then you have not learned the primary purpose of the existence of the Church, our spiritual home.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

In the Creed, we proclaim that Jesus Christ "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead..." and "to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him" (Hebrews 9:28).

At His Second Coming, the good and the evil alike will be **raised from the dead and judged by Christ**: "...those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement" (John 5:29).

HEAVEN AND HELL

While we believe in the existence of **heaven and hell**, we do not look upon them as *physical places*. The Holy Fathers teach us that

- **for those who love God**, heaven is **eternal existence in His loving presence**. God is their *ultimate desire* and, consequently, their *reward* as well.
- **for those who hate God**, hell is **also eternal existence in His loving presence** but, according to Saint Isaac of Syria, they "will be chastized with the source of love. How cruel and bitter this torment of love will be. The sorrow which takes hold of the heart which has sinned against love is more piercing than any other pain." For the evil, "eternity in hell" is *not* the deprivation of the love or presence of God but rather, **the torment of eternal existence in the presence of a Love which is unwanted, rejected and despised**.

THE CRITERION UPON WHICH CHRIST WILL JUDGE US IS LOVE!

Our capacity to **love others** is based on **our acceptance of God's love**, for He is **Love Itself**. Christ commanded us to love God *above all else* and to *share God's love with others*. **Upon this we will be judged**.

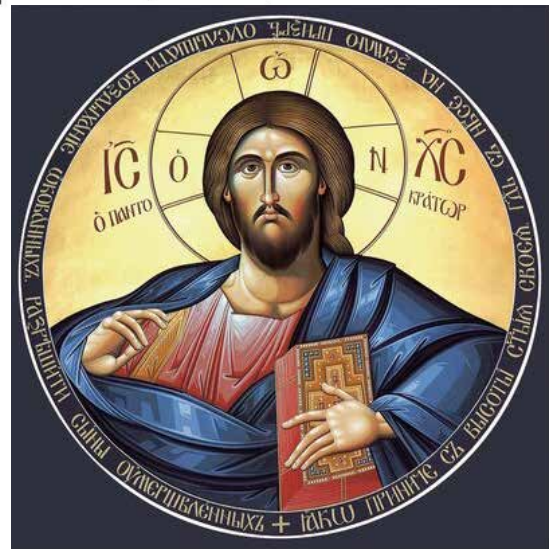
God's all consuming love, then, acts in two ways. It is

- the **eternal fulfillment and joy** of the blessed as well as
- the **eternal suffering and condemnation** of the wicked.

THE SECOND COMING

Oh, what a day that will be when the Lord presents us with the reward of faith and devotion! What will be that glory, and how great will be the joy of being admitted to the sight of God! To be so honored as to receive the joy of eternal light and salvation in the presence of Christ the Lord, your God; To greet Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs, apostles, prophets and martyrs...in the delight of the immortality that will be given! To receive there what eye has not seen nor ear heard, what has not entered into the heart of man!

—Saint Cyprian of Carthage



CHRIST'S ASCENSION

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus Christ "was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19), thereby

- **glorifying human nature**;
- **restoring the likeness of God** to humanity; and
- **preparing an eternal place** for His People.

WHEN WILL CHRIST COME AGAIN?

Jesus never revealed the *time* of His Second Coming to us. He taught us, rather, to be **vigilant** and in a constant state of **readiness**. By faith we know that Christ's Second Coming—and *our own resurrection*—are **certainties**.

CONFESSION

The sacrament and the practice of penance are very ancient in the Church. Tradition speaks very clearly about the Church's power, received from Christ, to forgive sins committed after baptism. Whatever else can be said of the changes involving this sacrament (and it has evolved greatly in history), what remains clear and without question is the consciousness of the Church to forgive in an authoritative way all and every sin of the faithful.

We may define the sacrament of penance as the application, to "this" sinner at "this" historical moment, of the redemptive passion and resurrection of Christ in and by the Church. Sin is an offense against God since by sin we reject God's call to love in Christ. Since God's love is visibly and historically present in the Church as the sacrament of Christ in the world, sin is an offense against the Church as well. It follows that the sacrament of penance is an authoritative reconciliation by the church.

We know that the Church is the fundamental sacrament of Christ, the visible presence of God's saving and loving grace in the world in every age. She is the community of those who believe in the Lord Jesus, called to the forgiveness of sins and life and reconciliation with God. In baptism, the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the body of Christ. So too in the sacrament of penance. The reconciliation of the sinner with the Church (represented in private confession by the duly authorized minister) is a visible sign of his reconciliation with God as well, for it is within the Church that the baptized sinner meet the forgiving word of God's mercy in history. It is for that reason that we can call penance a true sacrament.

The Scriptures give this power of "binding" and "loosing" to the Church, (Mt. 18:17; Jn. 20, 19; I cor. 5:3; etc.), where Jesus confers on the Apostles his own authority of "loosing" sinners from the realm of the darkness of sin and death. The teaching is rather clear; the

Church has been given the victorious and saving power of Jesus over sin and death. Anyone who is reconciled with the Church on earth is by that very fact also within the domain of God's saving power and has therefore attained the true forgiveness of sins on earth in the name of God. This binding and loosing from the power of Satan to the forgiving grace of God, is truly a real juridical power of the Church on earth.

The reception of a sinner once again into the Church is the sign of both his forgiveness of his sins (negative aspect) and his reconciliation with God (grace, the positive aspect). Reconciliation comes about when the repentant sinner, in the presence of a duly authorized priest of the Church, asks pardon of God and of the Church and receives the reconciliation of the Church and God. It is this divine reality which we call the sacrament of penance in the Church.



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THE TRINITY

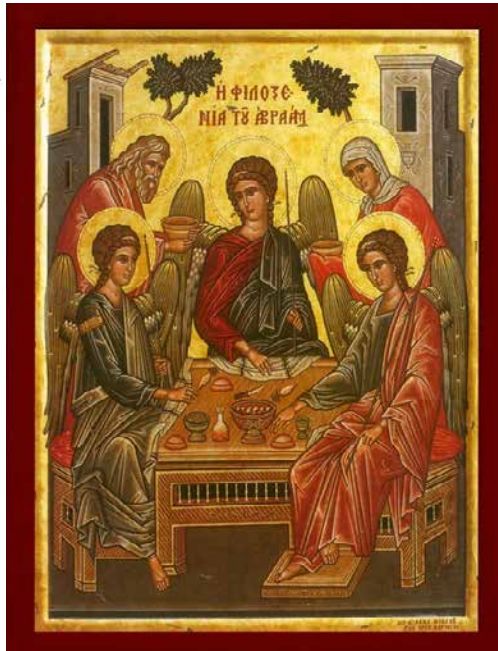
JESUS CHRIST REVEALED GOD AS A TRINITY OF PERSONS.

There are three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—in one God. While separate and distinct personally, each

- shares fully in the *divine nature* and will;
- is equally infinite, perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-existing and eternally the same; and
- is united together in *perfect Love*.

In the Old Testament, the Trinity was only partially revealed.

- The book of *Genesis* notes the presence of the Trinity. The creation account reveals God speaking in the plural: "Let us make man in *our* image and likeness." The Father creates all *by means of* His Divine Word—"for He spoke and it came to be"—and *by* His Holy Spirit, who "moved upon the face of the waters" (*Genesis* 1:2).
- The presence of the Holy Trinity in the act of creation is also described in *Psalms* 33:6-9: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath (spirit) of His mouth."
- God also revealed Himself as a Trinity to the Patriarch Abraham and his wife Sarah by appearing to them in the form of three angels.



COMING TO TERMS

TRINITY is actually made up of two separate words:

TRI = three
NITY = unity

GOD THE FATHER

is the source of all things. Because of His great love for mankind, He sent

GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

into the world. Jesus Christ is the **only-begotten Son of God** and the fullest revelation of the Father. He became man—while remaining God—in order to save us. Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all, sent

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

to sustain us. The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier, inspirer and comforter. He proceeds from the Father and enables us to maintain our relationship with God.

THE TRINITY IN OUR LIVES

You are like stones for a temple of the Father, prepared for the edifice of God the Father, hoisted to the heights by the crane of Jesus Christ, which is the cross, using for a rope the Holy Spirit. Your faith is what pulls you up, and love is the road which leads you to God. You are, then, wayfarers all, bearing God, bearing a temple, bearing Christ, bearing holy things, and in every respect adorned commandments of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

—Saint Ignatius of Antioch

JESUS CHRIST REVEALS THE FULLNESS OF THE TRINITY

The prologue to the Gospel of Saint John states: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made Him known" (*John* 1:18). Jesus Christ makes the Trinity known in various ways.

- Prior to the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus was baptised in the Jordan by his cousin John. As Jesus descended into the water, the voice of God the Father thundered, "This is my beloved Son," while the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove.
- At the mystical supper, Jesus prayed for His followers, asking the Father to make them "one even as we are one." Jesus frequently spoke of God as His Father while promising to send the Holy Spirit to enable us to become God's adopted sons and daughters.

Jesus Christ, then, fulfills the revelation of the Trinity. He enables us to enter into a living union with "The Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit" (*Ephesians* 2:18-22).

HOW DO WE PICK GODPARENTS?

Why Godparents Are Crucial in Orthodoxy

In his book, Your Baby's Baptism in the Orthodox Church (pp.43-44), Fr. Anthony Coniaris shares his thoughts on the subject in the section entitled, "Sponsors."

"At baptism we have sponsors or godparents who must be of the Orthodox faith since they undertake to assist in the religious nurture of the child. The sponsor should be an active, zealous Orthodox who realizes that he must keep in touch with his godchild and help him grow in the faith, especially by his own good example. Although godparents share in the responsibility of helping the newly baptized continue his life in Christ, it is ultimately the person's own choice as to whether he will choose to remain united with Christ. In every liturgy, for example, each person is afforded the opportunity to accept or reject the creed, which is in effect, the acceptance or rejection of one's baptism, since it is the same confession of faith that is made at baptism.

"There are a great many baptized people who have never formally rejected their baptism, but who are entirely indifferent to it and are not living in accordance with its awesome privileges and responsibilities. Indifference is the same as rejection. 'He who is not with Me, is against Me,' said Jesus. Others who have been baptized in Christ have put off Christ deliberately through the disobedience of sin. They need to repent and return to Christ. We need to

accept personally the great gifts God has bestowed upon us in baptism, to claim them, and to begin a daily walk with Jesus.

"Fr. William S. Chiganos writes concerning the faith of the godparents: 'The faith of the godparent is significant. The person who confesses Jesus Christ as his Lord cannot ignore and violated in word and deed this faith. How can he promise God that he will make certain that the child will grow to be a true follower of Christ, when he himself lives a life of unbelief and disobedience!'

"It goes without saying that the godparent cannot be a non-Orthodox person. How could someone who is not Orthodox provide the proper religious education, example and inspiration to his godchild? It should be noted that an Orthodox who has not had his marriage blessed in the Orthodox Church is also excluded from exercising the privileges of serving as a sponsor (i.e. if an Orthodox Christian before marriage). The Church also cautions us to select a person who has reached the age of reason and moral responsibility (at least 14 years of age)."

Whether you are doing the asking or being asked, expectations need to be discussed. Will you be inviting the godparents to birthdays, holidays? Do you want the godparents to be involved closely? If so, then tell them. If asked to be a godparent, ask what the parents expect of you and share that you would like to be part of your godchild's life.

Just a Nice Story for a Dreary Day...

A little boy walked to and from school daily. On one particular morning, the weather was questionable as clouds were forming and the sky was gray, but the little boy made his daily trek to the elementary school anyway. As the afternoon progressed, the winds whipped up and the thunder and lightning began to roll. The mother of the little boy was concerned that her son would be frightened as he walked home from school and feared that the electrical storm might harm her child. Following a roar of thunder, lightning would cut through the sky like a flaming sword! Worried, the mother got into her car and drove along the route to her child's school. Upon finding her son, she noticed her little boy was walking along just fine, but at each flash of lightning, the child would stop, look up and smile. More lightning followed and with each one the little boy would look at the streak of light and smile.

The mother approached him in her car, lowered the window and asked him,
"what are you doing?"

The child answered, "I am trying to look nice, God keeps taking my picture."

May God bless you today as you face the storms that come your way.



Show Me!

A pagan king once told a rabbi that unless he could produce his God in court, his head would roll in the streets.

The rabbi said, "Sure, O great King — but first come out into the sunshine. I want to show you something."

The king went along. "Take a look at the sun," said the rabbi. The king tried to look but could not. "I can't look at the sun," he said. "It hurts my eyes."

"Well, how in heaven's name do you expect to see God face to face," the rabbi asked, "If you can't even look at the sun, which is only one of the many things God has made?"

God is our sun in more ways than one. He sheds light on the mysteries of life. He is the source of energy for us. He makes life and growth possible. But as in the story of the rabbi, God is much too bright for man to look at face to face. Even the angels cover their eyes with their wings in His presence. In His infinite love God did something about his dazzling brightness: He became man in Jesus thereby toning down His great splendor so that we might be able to see Him face to face and behold "his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (John 1:14). "I am the light of the world," said Jesus, "he who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." He who follows Jesus today has the light of life. He does not wander in the darkness of confusion. He knows what life is all about. He knows what to expect beyond the grave. He has an inner flame that transfigures his face and his life, for he has living within him the God who is "Light of Light."

Here's a good story for you. A frustrated husband confided in his doctor that he was worried his wife was going deaf. The doctor told him to carry out a simple test. Upon reaching the front door of his home, the husband called out, loud and clear, "Honey, I'm home. Is dinner ready?" Not hearing a response, the man walked into the living room and repeated the line. With still no reply, he walked into the kitchen, directly behind his wife and tried his line at the back of her head. He finally heard his wife respond, "For the third time, YES, it's ready!"

In a similar fashion, throughout my life I'm often left with the impression that God is deaf to my prayers and pleas when problems or difficulties arise. The prophet Isaiah was sent to the Israelites to warn them about God's impending judgment, but his message fell on deaf ears. Instead of acting and living their lives as God's chosen people, who were to bring the light to those in darkness and to help them be released from the confines of their sins, they refused to hear the prophet. "They would not walk in His ways, nor heed His law" (Isa 42:24).

Isaiah related why their prayers and pleas seemed to fall on deaf ears... "Is the Lord's hand unable to save? Is His ear heavy so as not to hear? But your sins stand between you and your God" (Isa 49:1-2).

So in reality, the problem is really with me! I'm the one whose heart and soul is hard of hearing. I'm the one who has difficulty hearing what God says to me every day. I'm the one who tunes out His blessings but listens carefully to the mundane problems and difficulties that arise. I'm the one who needs to get his "hearing" checked. I hope I can unclog these ears of mine sooner than later.



In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Lord Almighty creator of mankind and author of peace, as we are mindful of the cost paid for the liberty we possess. Today we honor our Veterans worthy men and women who gave their best when they were called upon to serve and protect their country. We should be proud that we are Americans and that we live in the true land of liberty. We should also acknowledge our pride in our nation and in the men and women who serve the United States of America in good times and bad. Today we pause for all who have served our nation. We would not have the many opportunities and freedom that we enjoy today without their selfless service and sacrifice.

We also humbly ask Lord for the healing for all Veterans who have been wounded in both body and soul. We also pray for the young men and women who are coming home with injured bodies and traumatized spirits. We also pray for them when they cannot pray. We ask humbly for you to end all wars and bring peace to the whole world. Bless our soldiers who served and are serving in their combative posts.

May those who lost their life, may they have rest in peace and may their memory be eternal.



America the Beautiful Hymn Lyrics

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassion'd stress
A thorough fare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness.

America! America!
God mend thine ev'ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.

O beautiful for heroes prov'd
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life.

America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness,

God bless America, Land that I love, Stand beside her and guide her through the
night with the light from above. From the Mountains, to the Prairies, to the
Oceans white with foam! God bless America, my home sweet home, God bless
America my home sweet home.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

O say can you see by the dawns early light. What so proudly we hailed at the
twilights last gleaming. Whose broad strips and bright stars, through the
perilous fight, O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly steaming. And
the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there. O say, does that star spangled banner yet wave.

O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.



A BREAK IN YOUR DAY

An optimist stays up to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

My parents made New Year's resolutions like volunteering and donating more money to charities.

I've decided to make my own coffee once a week.

A census taker knocked in a woman's door. She answered all his questions but refused to state her age.

"Did my neighbours say their ages?" she asked.

"Certainly," the census taker replied.

"Well, I'm the same age they are," she snapped.

"As old as the Hills," he wrote on his form.

I didn't realize how bad a driver I am until my navigation app said, "In 400 feet, make a slight right, stop and let me out."

Two friends were driving home at night when one asked the other to check if the car's indicators were working. He promptly stuck his head out the window and yelled, "Yes, no, yes, no, Yes, no, yes, no."

An office worker decided it was time to lose some weight. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favourite bakery.

One morning, however, he arrived at work carrying a gigantic coffee cake. "I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning," he said, "and there in the window were a bunch of goodies. I prayed, 'Lord if you want me to have one of those coffee cakes, let me find a parking place right in front of the bakery.'"

A boy in a toy store selected a miniature car, took it to the register, and gave the cashier paper money from the board game. The cashier commented, "The money isn't real, kid."

"That's ok," the boy replied, "Neither is the car."

A company owner was asked how she motivated her employees to be on time.

She smiled and replied, "It's simple. I have 30 employees and 29 free parking spaces. One is paid parking."

A friend of mine went bald years ago but still carries an old comb. He can't part with it.

A man swallowed his glass eye and rushed to a stomach specialist. "I've looked into a lot of stomachs in my days," the doctors said, "but this is the first one that ever looked back."

We've all heard that a million monkeys banging on a million typewriters will eventually reproduce the entire works of Shakespeare. That's to the internet, we know this isn't true.

Two guys are out drinking when one of them falls off his bar stool onto the floor.

"One thing about Fred," his buddy says to the bartender. "He knows when to stop."

Did you hear the one about the roof? Never mind. It's over your head.



THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

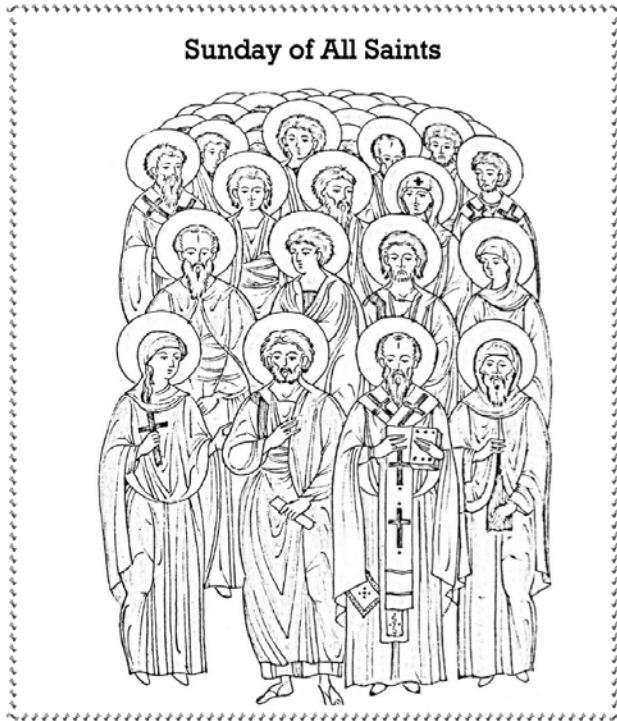
For the Orthodox, the lighted candle embodies the victory of Jesus Christ over the forces of death, sin, evil and darkness. Thus we read about Christ in the Bible that "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not..." Each candle is a symbol of Christ's victory over forces of darkness, sin, evil, and death.

The basic idea of "Light" as opposed to "darkness" is at the root of candles used in worship. Symeon the Prophet spoke of the coming of Christ as a "light for revelation to the Gentiles". Symeon was reflecting the prophecy of Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness."

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, June 30, 2024

Volume 12, Issue 26

A Ministry of the
Orthodox Christian Network



The last shall be first

Have you ever had to stand in line?

Maybe you were waiting for something really great, like an ice cream sundae. Can you imagine if, when you got to the front of the line, you let somebody else go first? Maybe you'd let somebody go ahead of you.

In the Gospel today, we read about how we should put other people in front of us. That's not just when we're standing in line, but at lots of other times too. Jesus said, "Many that are first will be last, and the last first." Sometimes we might do things for other people, even when it might make things harder for ourselves.

Jesus tells us that we have to make sacrifices in our lives. Often, we might try to make things easier for ourselves, or more fun, or more comfortable. But we should always be thinking about other people, because when we think about other people, we think about our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Can you think of something you can do for somebody else, even if it makes it a little bit harder for you? Can you spend some time helping somebody this summer? Can you make something or do something that will put somebody else first?



The saints put others first!

WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

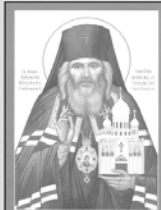
- All Saints
- Apostles
- Children
- Faithful
- First
- Gospel
- Helping
- Humility
- Last
- Sacrifice
- Saint John
- San Francisco
- Wonderworker

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

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

Do you see what Saint John is holding in his hands? It is the church where he served in San Francisco.

And here is a picture of that church!



SAINT JOHN OF SAN FRANCISCO

THE WONDERWORKER

Do you have any idea how many Saint Johns we have?

Hundreds and hundreds! Last week, we remembered the birthday of Saint John the Baptist. Then we have Saint John the Russian. Saint John the Theologian. Saint John Chrysostom. Saint John the Hairy. Saint John the Dwarf. And many, many more!



But this week, we will celebrate a special Saint John who lived and died in our own country. Even though he was an important bishop with tons to do, Saint John really loved children. When he was a bishop in China, Saint John started an orphanage for the children. And everywhere, he looked out for the children. He helped them with food and clothing, but he also helped teach them about the love of our Lord, too! Even today, there are grown men who, when they were boys, served as altar boys with this great saint. Even today, they still talk about what a loving man Saint John was, and how he especially loved children.

Now, Saint John is still with us because he prays for us from heaven. Many, many miracles have happened because of his prayers. If you ever visit San Francisco, California, ask your parents to take you to his church. The people there will give you some holy oil. By God's power, this holy oil has healed people who are very sick. Your family can keep it in your house if you especially need Saint John's prayers.

We celebrate Saint John on Tuesday, July 2nd (OC: July 15th).

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What Love means to a 4–8 year old...

Slow down for three minutes to read this. It is so worth it. 'What does love mean?'

'When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore...
So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love...'

Rebecca - Age 8

'When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.'

Billy - Age 4

'Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs.'

Chrissy - Age 6

'Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.'

Danny - Age 7



'Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.'

Bobby - Age 7 (Wow!)

'If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.'

Nikka - Age 6 (We need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

'Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day.'

Noelle - Age 7

'Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.'

Tommy - Age 6

'During my piano recital, I was on a stage, and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling.
He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.'

Cindy - Age 8

'My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night.'

Clare - Age 6

'Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.'

Mary Ann - Age 4

'When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.' (What an image)

Karen - Age 7

'You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.'

Jessica - Age 8



And the final one

The winner was a four-year-old child whose next-door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife.

Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said,

'Nothing, I just helped him cry'