



ORTHODOX OBSERVER

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Archdiocese Offers Prayers for Brussels Terrorist Victims

NEW YORK – Following “the most horrific, deplorable, and senseless acts of violence and terror” in the March 22 terrorist attack at the Brussels airport in which more than 35 were killed, Archbishop Demetrios issued the following statement:

“The Archdiocese expresses its solidarity with the people of Belgium and extends heartfelt prayers to the families of our brothers and sisters who were killed or injured as a result of the attack. Our hearts and minds are prayerfully also with the emergency responders, law enforcement agents, and security officers.

“During this time of tragedy, as we experience pain, sorrow, and indignation, we must remain inseparably connected to our faith, especially to the salvific events of Cross and Resurrection, the ultimate source of comfort, solace and peace.

“The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America stands alongside all people of faith and good will, and supports the efforts of religious leaders – especially His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium – to forge mutual understanding, respect and reconciliation among all people.”

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Icon of the Crucifixion

Created in 1714 by John Moskos, iconographer of the late 17th and early 18th centuries from Rethymnon, Crete, who lived in Venice. His most important work is considered to be the icon of the Virgin Mary in 1680, located at the St. Katherine Monastery on Mount Sinai.

Clergy – Laity Congress Theme

‘You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World’

As the Father has sent me, so I send you
(John 20:21)
You are the light of the world
(Matthew 5:14)

Part II

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We continue our focus on the theme for our 43rd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress by studying the content of the voice of Christ. As we are sent by Him to be the light of the world, to be His voice, it is essential that we know His voice, and we are able to offer the Gospel in a changing world. In the first article we affirmed that we know the voice of Christ as we live in His presence and are connected to Him

in faith. We hear His voice offering truth, guidance, and assurance, and we respond by following His will. We hear His voice as our Lord sends us into the world to speak to others about what we see and experience in Christ.

With this understanding of how we know and share the voice of Christ, it is important to examine all that we offer as His voice in this changing world. First, the message we share as the voice of Christ is one of hope. In the Gospel we see hope in His ministry and words. Through the truth and healing Jesus offered, hope was renewed in the lives of many. His presence engenders hope in our lives; and

PASCHA ENCYCLICAL

Holy Pascha The Feast of Feasts

He is not here; for He is risen as He said!
Matthew 28:6

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

On this glorious and holy Feast of our Lord’s Resurrection, we shine in the brilliant light and exhilarating joy of His presence and grace. We sing hymns of praise to the One who gives us new life. We proclaim the defeat of death and triumph over the tomb, as Christ is risen, resplendent and victorious.

In our worship on this Feast of feasts and highest holy day of the year, we hear in our hymns the story of those who went to the tomb: “The myrrh-bearing women at deep dawn drew nigh to the tomb of the Giver of Life.” (Hymn of Matins)

In the Gospel of Luke we read how they found the stone rolled away but did not find a body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel; and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how He told you... that the Son of man must be crucified and on the third day rise.” (Luke 24:4-7)

One focal point in this passage and as it is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark is on remembering the voice of Christ. *He is risen as He said* (Matthew 28:6); *there you will see Him, as He told you* (Mark 16:7); and *remember how He told you* (Luke 24:6). The angels called the women and the disciples to remember His voice and His words; to reflect on all that had happened and to recognize that the promises of the Lord had been fulfilled, death and the tomb could not hold the Son of God, and just as He said, He is the resurrection and the life!

For the disciples the voice of Christ was a very real experience. They were present for all of the miraculous events and His teaching. Following His Resurrection and Ascension, they could not but speak of all the things they had seen and heard for those full years being with Him. (Acts 4:20)

In receiving the Gospel by faith, we affirm and proclaim the power and truth of His

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NEXT DEADLINE

Deadline for submitting information, articles and photos for consideration in the **May** issue: **Friday, April 15**

Photos should be sent as a large format .jpg attachment (300 dpi min.).

E-mail to: jim@goarch.org

Regular mail: Editor, Orthodox Observer, 8 E. 79th St., New York, NY 10075.

FAITH CONNECTION

Archbishop Demetrios' 10 Suggestions for Great Lent

1. Meditate on the History of Salvation

Think of the Lenten period as a time of meditating on the history of salvation. Think about the creation of the universe and of Adam and Eve as the beginning of human life on earth. Think about the fall of Adam and the entrance of sin in humanity. We see in the hymnology of the liturgical book of Lent, the Triodion, constant references to the tragedy of the fall of the first human beings. For example, in the Oikos of the Matins on yesterday's Cheesefare Sunday, we read: "Adam sat and cried in those days across from the delights of Paradise; beat his hands upon his face, and said: Merciful One, have mercy on me who have fallen."

The memory of what happened through the fall of Adam and Eve continues on in us to this day. Think of the current condition of the world with its chaotic situation, confusion, violence, poverty, injustices, oppression, sickness

and death, and remember it all started way back with Adam and Eve as a consequence of their sin and fall. But then contemplate the course of history and how the amazing, unimaginable, and unpredictable act of God Himself to become a human being radically changed everything.

2. Review the understanding of fasting

Take fasting seriously as a very important aspect of Lent. Think of fasting not simply as an item of diet, but as something related to the fall of humankind, and at the same time as a victory through Christ. We fast for 40 days in Lent before Holy Week not merely as an exercise, an asceticism, but also because there is an important Christological significance attached to fasting. We have 40-day fasting models from both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, Moses fasted for 40 days on Mount Sinai before

receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28, Deut. 9:9, 9:18) and Prophet Elijah fasted for 40 days on Mount Horeb (3 Kingdoms 19:8). Both of these instances are connected with an encounter with God at the end of their fasting.

In the New Testament, we have the 40-day fasting in the desert by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13).

At the end of the 40-day fasting by Christ in the desert, there are the well-known "Temptations" of Christ, the first of which is related to eating:

And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he (Christ) answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:3-4).

While Adam said "yes" to the temptation and ate (Genesis 3:1-6), Christ said "no" to the temptation and did not eat. This is why the 40-days fast during Lent is not simply a matter of abstinence or a diet issue, but is a major Christological and soteriological situation; the fall of humankind, and then the restoration through the victory of Christ.

3. Reconsider our life of prayer

Great Lent is a special time to pray. But what is the content of our prayer? What is our praying language? For several people, their prayer is still on the same level of that when they were 10 or 15 years old; it has stayed undeveloped. Why when speaking to God are we using a poor language? What efforts are we making to improve and enhance our prayer in terms of content and expression? Looking at the Triodion, we see many examples of different types of prayer language and content. Try to pray and study the prayers that the Church has given us which are superb examples of conversing with God and try especially to prayerfully read the Psalms, the standard and universal book of prayer.

During Lent we find an increased number of opportunities for community prayer and worship. The Church invites us each week to pray the services.

4. Be conscious of the gravity of sin

Sometimes we don't take sin seriously. Yet Scripture offers a very strong and unequivocal picture of the gravity of sin. The hymnology of the Triodion is replete with occurrences of the word "sin" or variations of it. Sin is a very seri-

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'I Don't Know How to Pray'

Editor's note: To help readers enhance their prayer life, not only during Great Lent but throughout the year, the Orthodox Observer will present selected prayers by Archbishop Demetrios from his recent book "Speaking to God."

My God, I don't know how to pray. Yet I so deeply feel in myself the need for prayer. I want to pray.

Hour by hour the intense longing to talk with You altogether comes over me. The longing to come into contact with You, the Ineffable and Unfathomable. But I lose the words. I cannot piece together what I mean.

My thoughts become confused. So often I don't know what to say, while I understand that I have so much to say. Something indefinite, confused, something without shape or form, is in movement within me. A whole world of ideas, feelings, thoughts, and experiences is in a constant tidal wave within me.

I do not want to hide from You, God. In the past years I have prayed but little. From the time I was a child, in my last few years of elementary school, until today, prayer seemed to be almost absent from my life.

Therefore even now that the thirst for contact with You burns me up like fire, I cannot—I do not know how to talk to You. I try to pray, and the same words I used to use when I was a child come to my mouth. But in the condition that I am in today, they seem so strange and foreign that I am embarrassed to use them in prayer.

I beg You, Almighty God: Teach me how to pray. Speak to me. Show me by what divine art I can commune with You. I am sitting at Your feet ready to listen to You. Right now my eyes are fixed only upon You.

The same old question burns my lips as that which Your Apostles asked, Lord, teach us to pray.

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GOA/D. Panagos

The Unmercenary

Iconographer Yannis Frazis of Cyprus has produced the only known icon depicting all 20 of the saints designated as "Anargyroi" (Unmercenary; literally without silver, so named because they would not accept payment from individuals). Archbishop Demetrios presented this large icon weighing about 60 pounds to the National Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy in Manhattan (see page 7). According to "The Holy Unmercenary Doctors: The Saints Anargyroi, Physicians and Healers of the Orthodox Church" by Georgia Hronas (available from Light and Life Publishing in Edna, Minn.) 18 of these were professional missionary physicians and two were priests. The saints lived in the early centuries of the Church and included three sets of brothers named Kosmas and Damianos, whose feast day is celebrated Nov. 1. The names of the others are: Kyros, John, Panteleimon, Hermolaos, Sampson, Diomedes, Mokios, Aniketos, Thalelaios, Tryphon, Julian, Leontios, Anthimos and Eutropios.



GOA-Dimitrios Panagos

Archbishop Demetrios, flanked by Vice President Joe Biden and President Barack Obama, addresses hundreds of Greek Americans attending the annual Greek Independence-related observance at the White House, April 4.

White House Hosts Greek Independence Celebration

by Stavros H. Papagermanos

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama hosted April 4 at the White House, the annual Greek Independence Day celebration and reception held for the 30th consecutive year, honoring the 195th Anniversary of the start of the Greek War for Independence of March 25th, 1821.

Archbishop Demetrios met in private with President Barack Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden in the Green Room, just prior to the public event, which started in the East Room of the White House at 5 p.m., and was attended by approximately 400 guests representing the Greek-American community.

Vice President Joe Biden in his remarks talked about his personal bonds with the Greek American Community and the Greek Orthodox Church making specific mention of his visit with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople and the Athenagoras Human Rights Award he received last year. The Vice President said he had talked on the phone with Alexis Tsipras, the Prime Minister of Greece earlier in the day and he reassured the audience that the United States will continue to stand by and with Greece as an ally and a friend. He then introduced President Obama and Archbishop Demetrios.

Archbishop Demetrios began his remarks thanking the President for his "gracious hospitality" and said: "despite the heavy demands of your schedule, and the multitude of cares you have for this nation and for the whole world, you offer to us so generously your time today at the White House to honor and celebrate March 25th, the Day of Greek Independence." The Archbishop's remarks centered on the fundamental and non-negotiable, God given value of freedom.

President Obama welcomed everyone to the White House "also known as the Lefkos Oikos," said the President in Greek and was applauded enthusiastically. Mr. Obama thanked the Archbishop for his gracious words, his friendship and the compassion of his ministry. The President after acknowledging some of the guests present made special mention to the late Fr. John Romas for his remarkable faith and his beloved Church of St. Nicholas at Ground Zero and said that the new Church of St. Nicholas will rise again better than ever. The President also said

that we celebrate our interdependence and we have common bonds of history and friendship that have linked our countries for centuries and this bond endures to this day. Mr Obama said that in recent years Greece has faced extraordinary challenges but its people are resilient and they persevere, they have gotten through tougher times before and they have shown excellence in character, especially as many in Greece have welcomed refugees. The President said that this spirit and commitment to our common humanity and democratic ideals is why Greece will emerge from these tough times stronger than ever.

President Obama underlined the importance of the extraordinary contributions and achievements of the Greek American Community, saying that your kinship, your commitments, your ties is the most important thing that binds us together as a people. This is not just a relationship between governments, said the President, it is a relationship between families and between friends and those bonds cannot be broken. Finally, Mr. Obama said that the United States will be Greece's unwavering friend and partner every step of the way and concluded with the well-known Greek declaration Zeto e Hellas.

Present among the many guests at the White House were the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia M. Burwell, who is Greek-American, the Greek Deputy Minister of Economy Alexis Charitsis, the Greek-American U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes, the Regional governor of central Greece Kostas Bakoyannis, the Ambassadors of Greece to the United States Christos Panagopoulos and of Cyprus George Chacalli, several members of Congress, US government officials and dignitaries.

REMARKS BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS

Mr. President,

In this ever-changing world, one of the things that has remained constant is your very gracious hospitality.

Once again, Mr. President, we find ourselves together in the immediate aftermath of frightful terrorist attacks: last year in Paris and San Bernardino, this year in Brussels. And yet, despite the

CLERGY UPDATE

Ordinations to the Diaconate

Christensen, Lucas – Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, St. Nicholas Church, Ann Arbor, Mich. 03/27/16

Henderson, David – Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver, St. John the Baptist Church, Craig, Colo. 03/27/16

Ordinations to the Priesthood

Dn. Gabriel Gadah – Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver, St. Barbara Church, Sarasota, Fla. 02/28/16

Dn. Iakovos (formerly Christodoulos) Roditis – Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey, Cathedral of St. John the Theologian, Tenafly, N.J. 03/06/16

Dn. George Kolios – Archbishop Deme-

trios, Church of the Holy Resurrection, Brookville, N.Y. 03/27/16

Offikia

Fr. Kyriakos (Gary) Kyriacou – Office of Economos, Bestowed by Archbishop Demetrios of America.

Fr. Irenaeus (Jeffrey) Cox – Office of Economos, bestowed by Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit.

Fr. Michael Varlamos – Office of Protos-priester, bestowed by Metropolitan Nicholas.

Returned to the status of Layman

Courbanou, Dn. Bill (at his request) 02/27/16

Orthodox Observer 2016 Deadline Schedule

Note: The following is the tentative deadline schedule for submitting articles and photos to the Orthodox Observer for consideration in 2016. In rare instances, it may be necessary to change a deadline. If that occurs, the new date will appear in red letters.

Month	Deadline	Highlights
May	Friday, April 15	post Pascha issue
June	Friday, May 20	pre-Clergy-Laity Congress
July – Aug.	Friday, June 24	Clergy-Laity Congress
September	Friday, Aug. 26	New Ecclesiastical Year
October	Friday, Sept. 30	Archdiocesan Council, Archons
November	Friday, Oct 28	Thanksgiving
December	Friday, Nov. 28	Christmas issue

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

† Bartholomew

*By the Mercy of God
Archbishop of Constantinople,
New-Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch
to the Plenitude of the Church,
Grace and Peace from God*

On the Convocation of the Holy and Great Council



Ecumenical Patriarchate photo

The Orthodox Academy of Crete at Kolymbari, Chania, site of the upcoming Holy and Great Council.

Our holy Orthodox Church, adorned in purple and fine linen by the blood of her martyrs, the tears of her Saints, and the struggles and sacrifices of her confessors of faith, celebrates today her name day. Following a century-long struggle, this day was appropriately identified as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, marking the day in which truth shone and triumphed over falsehood through the veneration of holy icons as the bearers of the personal presence and divine grace of the incarnate Son and Logos of God and of His saints. In this way, it was acknowledged and proclaimed for all time that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), honoring and sanctifying material creation and our body in order to render them partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter, 1:4), partakers in divine grace and life.

On the way to this great and salvific truth—which was attacked by those who refused to venerate holy icons—the triumph of truth over falsehood treaded along the same path followed by the Church from the beginning of her history, namely the truth of conciliarity. The distinction between truth and falsehood—orthodoxy and heresy—is not always easily discernible.

Even heretics believed, and continue to believe, that they possessed the truth; moreover, there will always be some who shall consider those who do not agree with their position as “heretics.” The Orthodox Church, in this case, recognizes only one authority: the Council of her canonical hierarchs. Beyond a conciliar decision, the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy is not possible. The Church’s dogmas and holy canons bear the seal of conciliarity.

Orthodoxy is the conciliar Church.

The Orthodox Church has always emphasized this ecclesiological authority, and implements it faithfully on the local level. For centuries, this has also occurred on an ecumenical or pan-orthodox level; however, for historical circumstances, it has been interrupted for quite some time. Today, we find ourselves in a position to officially announce from our ecumenical throne that, by the grace of God, and with the consent of all the Primates of the Holy Orthodox Churches, that we will realize a decision taken more than fifty years ago and convene the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church on the island of Crete on June 18-27, 2016. The Council shall begin its work with a pan-Orthodox celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Church of Saint Menas, Heraklion, Crete, on the great and auspicious Feast of Pentecost. Deliberations shall proceed at the Orthodox Academy in Kolymbari, Chania. Our Modesty shall preside over the Holy and Great Council, with the other Primates of Orthodox Churches at our side; other hierarchs shall participate as members of

the Council through the official delegation of these Churches.

The foremost and most important goal of this Pan-Orthodox Council shall be to teach that the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, united in the Sacraments—especially in the Holy Eucharist, in the Orthodox faith, but also in conciliarity. To this end, ongoing planning for the Council has occurred through a series of Preparatory Committees and Pre-Conciliar Conferences, ensuring the unanimous spirit of the Council’s decisions and that her message is conveyed in one voice and in one heart.

The issues—already delineated on a pan-orthodox level by the time the convocation of the Council was decided—that shall be reviewed by the Holy and Great Council primarily focus on matters relating to the internal operation and life of the Orthodox Church; for this reason, they must be immediately resolved. Moreover, there are issues pertaining to the relations of Orthodoxy with the rest of the Christian world, as well as the mission of the Church in our time.

We certainly recognize that the world

awaits to hear the voice of the Orthodox Church on many pressing problems that humanity faces today.

However, it was deemed necessary that the Orthodox Church should first settle internal matters before speaking to or addressing the world, which is still considered her obligation. The fact that Orthodoxy will express its conciliarity on a global level after the passing of so many centuries constitutes a first and most decisive step that, by the grace of God, is expected to lead to the convening of further Pan-Orthodox Councils, soon thereafter.

*Beloved brethren
and children in the Lord,*

Great historic events are guided by the grace of God, Who, ultimately, is the Lord of History. We might sow and labor; however, only God multiplies (1 Cor. 3:8). The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church indeed constitutes a historic event and we therefore place our hope in God for its realization. We call upon the Orthodox faithful in the world—clergy and laity—to pray to the Triune God that He may crown this event with His blessings, fortifying His Church to the glory of His name. We live in critical times and the unity of the Church must serve as the example of unity for a humanity torn apart by divisions and conflicts.

The success of the Holy and Great Council concerns every member of the Church, who are invited to share their interests thereon. The texts that have been agreed upon on a pan-orthodox level and which have been submitted to the Holy and Great Council have already been made publicly available to every faithful of good will. These texts are not only intended to inform and update the faithful, but to also elicit their opinions and expectations of the Holy and Great Council.

Having announced this to the plenitude of the Orthodox Church throughout the world on this auspicious day, we pray that the Lord God bestow upon His Church and all of you His abundant grace and blessing, and to the world peace at all times in all ways (2 Thes. 3:16).

20 March, in the year of our Lord, 2016

† Bartholomew,

*Archbishop of Constantinople
Your fervent supplicant to God*

Metropolitans John of Pergamon, Isaiah of Denver, Alexios of Atlanta, Iakovos of the Prince Islands, Joseph of Prikonis, Meliton of Philadelphia, Emmanuel of France, Nikitas of the Dardanelles, Nicholas of Detroit, Gerasimos of San Francisco, Maximos of Selymbria, and Amphilochios of Adrianopolis.

CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS THEME

‘You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World’

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in a world that is challenged by constant change, where many are struggling to find meaning and purpose, we offer hope as His voice.

Second, the voice of Christ is the voice of truth. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6) His words offer divine wisdom and reveal the will of God. His voice illuminates truth in a world where many are searching or are misguided by false ideologies. Our faithful witness of the Gospel of truth ensures that His voice is heard. Through our worship of God, through our ministry of compassion, and through our lives of holiness, we speak the truth as revealed to us by Christ, guiding others to find purpose and fulfillment in Him.

Third, the voice of Christ is filled with grace. Our calling to share the love of God as revealed by Christ is affirmed by the Apostle Paul as the highest calling we have: *But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.* (Acts 20:24) Christ came and revealed God’s great love for us. His teaching and healing were filled

with grace. His voice through us calls all to come and receive forgiveness and be saved by grace.

Fourth, in truth and grace the voice of Christ through us reveals divine power. It is a voice that is bold and strong. We speak with assurance in the promises of God. As we see in the Holy Scriptures, His voice brings healing, removes spiritual blindness, and calls us back from the path of sin into abundant life. The voice of Christ through us speaks clearly and powerfully in the face of adversity, persecution, and even the threat of death, offering a witness of truth and faith.

Fifth, the voice of Christ is the voice of life. He said, *I am the resurrection and the life.* (John 11:25) He also said, *I came so that they (i.e. the people) may have life and have it more abundantly.* (John 10:10) In Christ we find abundant and eternal life. We are sent by Him to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) and to speak His voice, offering life to all.

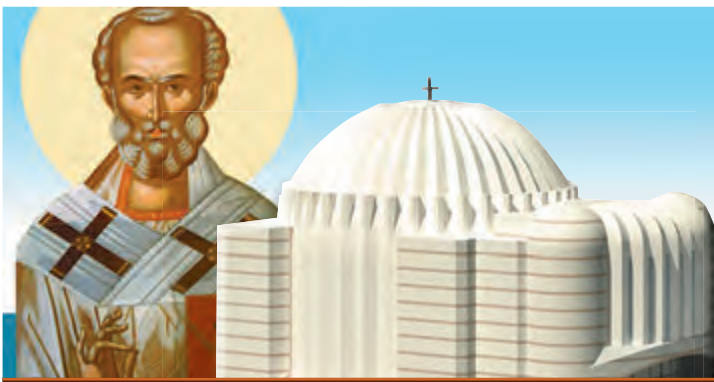
Sixth, the voice of Christ is an invitation. He says to us and through us as His voice, *Come, follow me.* (Matthew 19:21) As the Bridegroom preparing the banquet of eternal life and communion with God, He directs us to go out and extend this great invitation to all: *Go out into the highways*

and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:23) As His voice our words and our lives must be an invitation to come and see all the great and marvelous things our Lord has done and to experience grace and life in Him.

Finally, our voice becomes the voice of Christ. Through our faith in Him, from our experience of His presence and power, through lives that are being transformed by grace and truth, we offer the voice of Christ. It is His voice that becomes our voice because we live in Him. We speak for Him not only because of the message He gives us, but because of the real experience of our lives and the focus of our faith—because of our challenges, joys, struggles and victories as we make this journey of faith and follow the ways of the Lord. We speak from our spiritual knowledge and our life experiences. As we live each day in the presence of Christ, as we hear His voice guiding us in love, as we follow His will and see His power in and through us, we know that we are the voice of Christ.

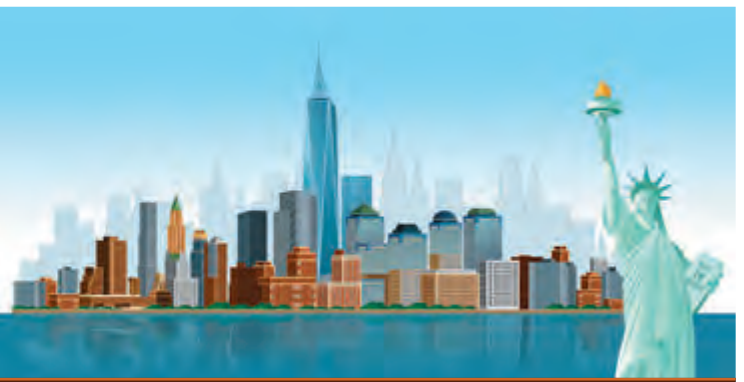
† Archbishop Demetrios

† DEMETRIOS, Archbishop of America



THE
**SAINT NICHOLAS
 GREEK ORTHODOX
 NATIONAL SHRINE**
 AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

StNicholasWTC.org



Wis. Parish Makes \$100,000 Donation

by John Ackerman

FOND DU LAC, Wis. – St. Nicholas Church in Appleton, Wis., recently held its last service. While this parish within the Metropolis of Chicago is merging with another, its parishioners have made sure the parish will be remembered forever thanks to a \$100,000 contribution toward the construction of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine in New York.

With the blessings of Metropolitan Iakovos and on the recommendation of Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, metropolis chancellor, the congregation donated a large portion of remaining assets from the sale of its property and prior savings in Appleton to the St. Nicholas National Shrine. Bishop Demetrios personally flew to New York to present the parish's \$100,000 contribution to Archbishop Demetrios.

Currently under construction, the new St. Nicholas National Shrine will not only serve as a Greek Orthodox parish, but will also be open to the public and welcome all individuals of faith. Located directly across the street from the Twin Towers 9/11 Memorial, this quiet place of reflection and prayer will be comforting for generations to come who visit the site. More information on the current construction status of St. Nicholas National Shrine can be found at www.StNicholasWTC.org.

In Wisconsin, the small congregation of St. Nicholas in Appleton struggled for years to keep its doors open. Wanting to preserve its memory, the congregation approached their hierarchy for direction.

At a March 6 meeting, Bishop Demetrios said, "His Eminence was very appreciative of such an amazing and generous contribution to the National Shrine." He continued, "With this contribution, the name of St. Nicholas Church of Appleton will forever be placed among the Shrine's benefactors. St. Nicholas in Wisconsin will live on as a part of St. Nicholas in New York."

As for the future of the parishioners in Appleton, many have found a new home in the neighboring Holy Trinity parish in Fond du Lac. The two parishes are undergoing an official merger. According to Dena Meyst, Parish Council President of Holy Trinity, "This is a momentous occasion for both of our communities. We are happily looking forward to welcoming the Orthodox faithful of St. Nicholas into our Holy Trinity community. As part of our mission we are committed to reach out to all Orthodox Christians in the Fox Valley and surrounding area and let them know that the doors of Holy Trinity are open and welcoming to all." Parish priest Fr. Theodore Trifon added, "Although the parish of St. Nicholas is closed, their members should know they are not without a church. Holy Trinity is waiting to embrace them with open arms and serve their spiritual and any other needs they may have."

For more information, contact: John Ackerman, director of Media Relations for the Metropolis of Chicago (309)6357624 John@JohnAckerman.com



Orthodox Observer photos



St. Nicholas meeting

Archbishop Demetrios, other Archdiocese officials and Project Management Team representatives meet with Architect Santiago Calatrava and the construction team to discuss the iconography inside the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox National Shrine at the World Trade Center. Pictured (above) with His Eminence are Santiago Calatrava, Bishop Andonios, chancellor; Frank Lorino, Mr. Calatrava's lead project architect; Jerry Dimitriou, executive director of the Archdiocese; Matt Nicoletti and Pete Karamitsanis from the Project Management Team. (Left) Santiago Calatrava and Archbishop Demetrios go over details of the church/shrine plans. The two will soon visit Mount Athos do discuss specifics of the iconography with the iconographer.

Atlanta Cathedral, Philoptochos Raise Over \$155,000

ATLANTA - Annunciation Cathedral, in partnership with its Philoptochos chapter, hosted the "On Sacred Ground" luncheon and auction Feb. 28 that raised more than \$155,000 for the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine.

The luncheon committee began planning in October to create a memorable and successful fundraiser made possible through a large number of sponsorships, both personal and organizational, luncheon attendees and successful auction. Over 360 parishioners attended the luncheon including Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta.

The Santiago Calatrava video about St. Nicholas Church was shown. It captured the essence of the rebuilt radiantly beautiful church.

The luncheon highlight was guest speaker Anthoula Katsimatides of New York, who serves as a board member of the National September 11th Memorial and Museum. Anthoula lost her brother, John, in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.



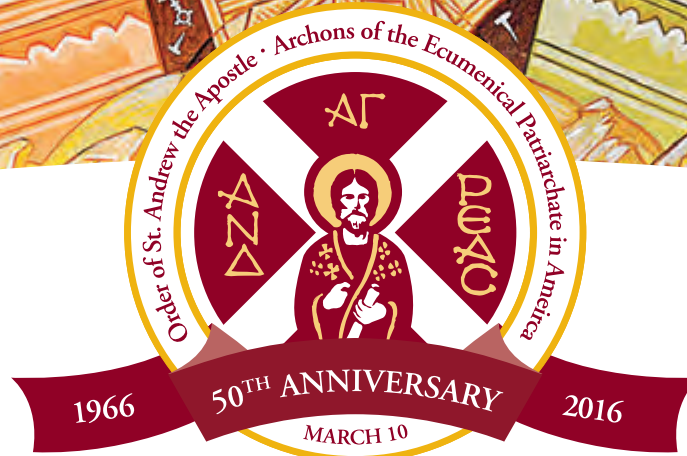
Members of the On Sacred Ground organizing committee.

With warmth, love, tears and humor, she shared her story. The packed ballroom was utterly silent as she spoke about the depth of this loss for her family and how their Orthodox faith guided them in those dark days. She urged support for the St. Nicholas rebuilding as a place of worship, peace and healing.

Events proceeded with a fast pace. At the live auction prizes were offered and the auctioneers made bidding spirited and successful.

The program ended with joy, inspiring the guests to want to visit the completed St. Nicholas Church. Lighting a candle of remembrance, they will know their luncheon participation helped make the rebuilding possible.

The OSG committee was guided by Frs. Paul Kaplanis and Christos Mars, co-chaired by Valine Georgeson and Stacie Nefos. Members were Janet Algers, Elaine Carlos, Helen A. Carlos, Voula Giannakopoulos, Vickie Klemis, Suzy Lamas & Joanna Snider.



On this day, the Resurrection of Our Lord, let us join His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to support, protect and defend the apostolic mission and legacy of the Apostolic See of Saint Andrew.

As we celebrate the Fiftieth year of our sacred service, The Order of Saint Andrew, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America and Defenders of the Faith, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America and the Holy Eparchial Synod, will continue to raise the resurrection banner of religious freedom for our Mother Church so that the unwaning light of the Phanar may forever enlighten God's oikoumene and the bells of Saint George Patriarchal Cathedral may ring joyously with the good news that the Great Church of Christ is free... finally free at last to proclaim to all...

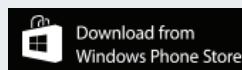
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ARCHDIOCESAN INSTITUTIONS - PHILOPTOCHOS

Donations Top \$1 Million for St. Nicholas Church, Shrine

by Ann Michals

On Tuesday, March 8, Archbishop Demetrios celebrated the agiasmo service at the Center of Philanthropy on East 37th Street, bestowing God's blessing on the Center and for those present and Philoptochos members nationwide.

His Eminence prayed for all those who through their philanthropic work provide care and healing for those in need.

Present at the Agiasmo service were, Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, National Philoptochos President Maria Logus, along with the National Philoptochos Past President Aphrodite Skeadas, National, Direct Archdiocesan District, Metropolis board members, and local chapter members.

Following the agiasmo, His Eminence briefed those who were present about the upcoming Pan-Orthodox Great and Holy Synod and asked for the prayers and support of Philoptochos. His Eminence also spoke about the ongoing efforts in aiding our brothers and sisters in Greece and Cyprus, still affected by the recent economic crisis.

In conclusion, His Eminence gave an update of the progress of the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine.

After his remarks he presented the National Philoptochos a rare, if not the only existing, hand-painted icon of all 20 Anargyroi (unmercenaries) saints. In response, National Philoptochos President Maria Logus thanked His Eminence for this great gift that will adorn the National Philoptochos Center and for his constant love, support and guidance.

Ms. Logus was then joined by the Tri-Chairs of the fundraising effort for St. Nicholas, Jennifer Constantin, Arlene Siavelis Kehl and Anne Michals, and presented a check in the amount of \$400,000.

Ms. Logus added that through the efforts of the tri-chairs, metropolis presidents, chapters and many others throughout the country, Philoptochos has collectively raised more than \$1 million towards the rebuilding of an



GOA/D. Panagos photos

(Above) Icon presentation – Archbishop Demetrios presents the unique icon of the Anargyroi saints by Yannis Frazis to the Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy at the agiasmo service. National Board members and Metropolis Philoptochos officers attended.

(Right) Check presentation – National President Maria Logus presents a \$400,000 donation for St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine to Archbishop Demetrios following the agiasmo service. National Board members present include: (from left) Anne Michals, spiritual advisor Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, Aphrodite Skeadas, Archbishop Demetrios, Jennifer Constantin, Maria Logus, Arlene Siavelis Kehl.



edifice that will be a beacon of hope and faith. The donation was the third offering in support of the rebuilding of St. Nicholas.

The unified and creative work of the women of Philoptochos to raise funds for this National Philoptochos initiative is a testament to their understanding that we are one Church, whether on the East Coast or West, and our inspiration is the Word of God.

As we faithfully watch St. Nicholas being built before our eyes, we hope that all Philoptochos chapters around

the country will respond to the call, if they have not done so already, and be a part of this once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of this historic endeavor that will proclaim the peace and love of God to all those who visit it.

For information and resources,

visit www.philoptochos.org/news/saint-nicholas. To be part of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center Philoptochos Fundraising Initiative, donate directly to your local Philoptochos chapter or Metropolis Philoptochos.

St. Barbara Philoptochos in Dallas – True Friends of the Poor

by Marilyn Martin

Nationwide, ladies of Philoptochos work behind the scenes, translating the “Friend” in Friend of the Poor literally. These women are the heart of every Orthodox parish and an example of true Orthodox Christian philanthropy to the people they encounter in their cities and towns. The ladies of St. Barbara Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity Church in Dallas have dedicated themselves to not only helping people in need, but also embracing them as good friends.

In 1994, under the leadership of then President, Venus Diamond, St. Barbara

Ladies Philoptochos Society proudly joined the North Dallas Shared Ministries (NDSM). Knowing that Holy Trinity and the Philoptochos Society often lacked the resources to help some families with significant needs, NDSM was an effective community outreach because it pooled the resources of many churches and religious organizations in the Dallas area. Today, NDSM has grown to 51 partner churches/organizations and currently resides in a 20,322 square foot building serving over 33,000 people.

For 15 years, St. Barbara Philoptochos most noticeable presence is on Fridays. The Friday Food Basket provides one bag of groceries, canned goods, milk and eggs

to registered and vetted seniors. Like all programs at NDSM, it started small and has since grown to over 400 people who begin to line up outside before 8 a.m., regardless of the weather. Over the years, the entire Holy Trinity parish has embraced North Dallas Shared Ministries and, for many consecutive years, has hosted the NDSM annual city-wide banquet fundraiser. Many members of the Holy Trinity family and Philoptochos also work in the food pantry, teach ESL, offer their skills as dental or medical assistants and manage the yearly food collection.

In 2012, the bi-annual St. Barbara Philoptochos spiritual retreat was called

“The Philoptochos Phamily Phield Trip.”

Held in partnership with GOYA, Philoptochos, GOYANS and their families traveled by bus to NDSM. The cost was one bag of groceries from each family. The teens worked in the food pantry while the adults toured and learned more about the amazing outreach and help offered to those in need.

For Philoptochos, the Friday Food Basket seniors have become friends, and the Philoptochos volunteers know and care about their families, happy events and disappointments. Both volunteers and clients understand Philoptochos and its true meaning. North Dallas Shared Ministries is a remarkable place serving remarkable people, and the Philoptochos Society and Holy Trinity Greek Church are honored to be a part of its success.



GOA/D. Panag03

Children's Fund honor

First lady of the Republic of Cyprus Andri Anastasiades presents Archbishop Demetrios with the Cyprus Children's Fund Humanitarian and Philanthropic Award for his leadership, dedication and "unprecedented support" to the people of Cyprus on March 5 at the Cyprus Children's Fund annual dinner at Flushing Meadows Park, N.Y. Mrs. Anastasiades serves as its honorary chairman. Also shown is the Fund's National Chairman and President Savas C. Tsivicos. Receiving special recognition was Constantia Pavlou.

Archons Launch Social Media Initiative

NEW YORK – The Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate have started a social media initiative to help promote religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and get the word out about the oppression the Church still suffers in Turkey.

The Archons and the Archdiocese believe the use of social media can help project this important message for religious freedom to a potential worldwide audience. The Archons are requesting

that all members of the parishes and communities who participate in social media to follow @OrderStAndrew on Twitter, and "Like" the Order of St. Andrew Facebook page.

With the help of faithful parishioners in "sharing", "liking" and "re-tweeting" Archon social media content, they hope to build a vibrant online community that can help bring to light the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarch to as many people as possible.

Leadership 100 Approves \$3.67 Million in Grants

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.– The Archbishop Iakovos Leadership Endowment Fund Executive Committee, at its Feb. 17 meeting during the 25th annual conference, approved 18 new and prior-committed grants totaling \$3,672,278 (\$2,263,330 for new grants and \$1,408,948 for prior commitments) recommended by the Grant Committee.

Grants distributed by Leadership 100 since its founding in 1984 now total \$46,014,441, according to George S. Tsandikos, chairman.

New grants were approved for the following recipients:

- Archdiocese Registry Department, \$575,000; the Digital Typikon and Liturgical Library (\$330,000 in 2016 and \$270,000 in 2017) for a total two-year grant of \$600,000.
- Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations for \$245,000 in 2016 & \$215,000 in 2017, for a total two-year grant of \$460,000, to include Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops (\$150,000/year in both 2016 and 2017), The Holy and Great Council (\$40,000/2016; \$10,000/2017), Orthodox-Catholic Theological Dialogue & Consultation (\$45,000/year in both 2016 and 2017), Ancient Eastern Oriental Orthodox Churches meetings (\$10,000/year in both 2016 and 2017);
- Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries "Camping Ministry" for \$270,000;
- Department of Education "Greek Textbooks" for \$145,400;
- Orthodox Christian Mission Cen-

ter (OCMC) "International Mission Teams" for \$36,000 in 2016 and \$36,000 in 2017, for a total two-year grant of \$72,000;

- Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries "Youth Protection Administration" for \$45,000;
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) "Summer Leadership Institute" for \$39,000;
- Department of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism "Pacific Northwest/National Conference" for \$35,000;
- Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries "Be the Bee" video series grant request for \$12,000;
- Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries "Y2AM Studio" for \$5,000;
- Department of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism "Home Mission Parish Program" for \$4,930.

Prior commitments included Hellenic College/Holy Cross for \$1 million; the second year of Department of Inter-Orthodox Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations "Faith Based Diplomacy and Advocacy Initiative" for \$150,000; the second year of IOCC "Serv-X-Treme" for \$38,548; the second installment of \$125,000 for the 2015 Orthodox Christian Network (OCN) "Enhancing the Multimedia Offerings and Marketing Effectiveness of Key Greek Orthodox Departments"; and the second installment of \$90,000 for the 2015 "Archdiocesan Advisory Committee of Science and Technology" three-year grant (\$300,000 total); and Retired Clergy for \$5,400.

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METROPOLIS NEWS

SF Clergy-Laity Assembly: Another Year of Progress

by Kristen Bruskas

DUNLAP, Calif. – The 2016 Clergy-Laity Assembly for the Metropolis of San Francisco was held Feb. 29 – March 1 at St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center.

This year's gathering followed the theme "Looking Inward – Looking Outward" and centered on the scripture, "As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart" (Proverbs 27:19).

During his keynote address, Metropolitan Gerasimos expanded on the theme by inviting the delegates to look inward and consider the quality of their spiritual lives, their health, their mind and their interior wellness. Looking outward is being demonstrated through the remarkable progress of the Metropolis Strategic Plan with nearly 20 program launches and the addition of two new Metropolis staff members focusing on Family Wellness led by Fr. Timothy Pavlatos, and Missions and Evangelism led by Thomaida Hudanish.

In addressing the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan Metropolitan Gerasimos stated, "Creating the Strategic Plan was not the purpose of the Strategic Plan. The purpose was to empower you to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and the life of His Church with the faithful and the world around us as effectively as we can. Our task is to build the Body of Christ, that is each of us, to be spiritually healthy and full of life."

Metropolitan Nikitas of the Dardanelles was also in attendance and offered a greeting to the Assembly on behalf of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Metropolitan Nikitas thanked the members of the Metropolis for their support of our Mother Church, and especially for their diligence in building up our communities of faithful believers in Christ and doers of His Word.

Two special guests also offered informative presentations to the Assembly. Fr. Vasileios Thermos, M.D., Ph.D. from Athens, Greece, gave a powerful presentation on "Addiction and the Person: A Psychological and Theological Approach." He emphasized that not all addictions are life-threatening, but they are all harmful to the



Kristen Bruskas photo

health and integrity of the person. Father Thermos emphasized the need for a strong prayer life, seeking joy through reality and not fantasy, and the importance of the Holy Sacraments to infuse life into the addict.

Also in attendance was George Caravakis from the GDC Financial Group which administers the Orthodox Health Plan (OHP) for the clergy. This presentation to the Assembly provided insightful information on how the benefits plan is structured, both in terms of the services available and the investment each community makes towards the wellness of their parish priest and his family. He also explained the various benefits offered by OHP and how Caravakis and his staff can provide personal support and assistance with benefits administration.

Metropolis Council Vice President Theofanis Economidis presided over the Assembly, and gave a summary report of the Metropolis Council meeting which immediately preceded the Clergy-Laity Assembly. The Metropolis Council has been working diligently to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan and provide financial oversight and management for the Metropolis budget of \$1.4 million.

Delegates to the Assembly each received detailed reports on the ministries of the Metropolis including Philoptochos, Christian Education, Family Wellness, Folk Dance and Choral Festival (FDF), Greek Village Immersion Camp, Hellenic Education and Culture, Missions and Evangelism, St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center, and Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Committee reports included Art and Architecture, Audit, Fundraising, National Ministries Commitment, and Real Estate and Insurance. Another highlight of the Assembly was a tour of the recently completed Alex and Faye Spanos Faith and Heritage Center. This facility was a priority for Metropolitan

Anthony of blessed memory and its completion marks a significant effort on behalf of the St. Nicholas Ranch Board and Metropolitan Council.

This new facility will house the Metropolitan Anthony Gallery, rooms dedicated to Philoptochos and the Elios Charitable Society, as well as exhibits and archives for FDF. The Saint Fotini Chapel, featuring iconography by Dr. George Kordis, provides an area for worship which can be used for various retreats and gatherings at St. Nicholas Ranch. A formal Thyranoxia will be scheduled in the coming months.

Elections for the Metropolis Council were held with the following results: **Laity:** Spiro Beckas (Long Beach, Calif.), John Buzas (San Marino, Calif.), Judge Steve Counelis (Riverside, Calif.), George Demos (Huntington Beach, Calif.), Gerry Kamilos (Sacramento, Calif.), Michael Syrengelas

(Long Beach, Calif.), Dr. Eve Tibbs (Irvine, Calif.), and Ted Vavoulis (Pasadena, Calif.).

Clergy: V. Rev. John Constantine (Downey, Calif.), Frs. Andrew Barakos (Scottsdale, Ariz.), Dean Kouldukis (Seattle), Constantine Pappademos (Elk Grove, Calif.), Peter Salmas (Belmont, Calif.), Andrew Scordalakis (San Diego), Peter Stratos (Pasadena, Calif.) and Tom Zaferes (Oakland, Calif.). Elected to serve on the Archdiocesan Council are: Frs. Aris Metrakos (San Francisco, Calif.), Isidoros Garifalakis (Vancouver, Wash.) and Photios "Rocky" Sisson (Scottsdale, Ariz.).

The Clergy retreat convened immediately after the Assembly and included additional presentations by Metropolitan Gerasimos, Fr. Vasileios Thermos, M.D., Ph.D., and George Caravakis.

The retreat theme was "Pastoring with Understanding."



Chicago Archons photo

Archon Symposium

Metropolis of Chicago Archons hosted an Ecumenical Patriarchate symposium at St. Demetrios parish in Elmhurst, Ill., on March 6. Archons from (left) Bob Bozonelos, George Gritsonis, Tom Angelos, Frank Lagouros, Regional Commander John Manos, Fr. Andrew Georganas, Regional Commander Gus Pablecas, Ted Sepsis, Lou Malevitis and George Danigelis.

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REFUGEE CRISIS

Metropolitan of Boston Reflects on the Refugee Issue

by Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Daily, those of us who have access to Greek television broadcasts are horrified by the unspeakable human tragedy occurring in Greece. It is reported that over 100,000 refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other Muslim countries – ravaged by war and internal strife - have been forced to leave their homelands in search for a better life in Europe. As many as 4,000 brethren—many children in the arms of their parents! - have died a horrific death, drowning in the cold waters of the Aegean Sea on their way to what they hoped would be a new life, a new beginning. Those who miraculously managed to survive are now trapped in Greece, forced to endure the winter months sleeping outdoors – in the mud! – because many countries in the European Union have closed their borders.

Greece, dealing with its own economic disaster, is left alone to deal with this monumental humanitarian tragedy. Let us recognize Christ Himself in the person of every suffering refugee who is a stranger in a foreign land – naked, hungry, and thirsty love and care. Let us seek out ways to offer our assistance. As we continue our Lenten Journey, let us remember the words of our Savior, treasured in the 25th chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew: “As you did it to one of these the least my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40).



EPA photo

Let us remember in our prayers the countless Christians crucified and beheaded because they refused to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. Let us pray for the repose of those Bishops, Priests, and devout laymen – victims of a modern day genocide – whose blood soaks the ground where Christianity flourished for thousands of years.

Let us clasp the hand of another, and another, and another, until all humanity stands united as brothers and sisters in the household of God, praising His almighty and majestic name.

CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS

BIENNIAL CONGRESS CONVENES JULY 3–8

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The 43rd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress of the Archdiocese will convene July 3–8, at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center.

Concurrently with the Clergy-Laity Congress, the Philoptochos Society will hold its Biennial National Convention in the same venue.

Congress theme, *You are the voice of Christ in a changing world, is based on the directive of the Lord from the Gospel of St. John, As the Father has sent me, so I send you (John 20:21)*

Archbishop Demetrios, reflecting on the Congress theme, writes in his article:

“You are the voice of Christ in a changing world. This theme affirms our vital mission in this world, as we have been sent by Christ to proclaim the Gospel, to share truth in love, to be His voice. As we prepare for our Clergy-Laity Congress and consider the implications of our Lord’s commission for our work throughout this Holy Archdiocese, it is important that we reflect prayerfully on this theme.

“Our focus is on the importance of knowing Christ in order to be the voice of Christ. If we are to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth, if we are to speak a message of hope into lives filled with despair, if we are to proclaim salvation and victory over sin and death in a constantly changing world, we must know Christ.”

The Clergy-Laity Congress is convened biennially and is concerned with all matters, other than doctrinal or canonical, affecting the life, growth and unity of the Church, the church institutions, finances, administration, educational and philanthropic concerns and her growing role in the religious life of the nation.

The Clergy-Laity Congress will be under the spiritual leadership of Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, and is co-chaired by George and Leann Anderson of Holy Trinity Church in Nashville.

In addition to the National Ladies Philoptochos Convention, other organizations will meet during the Congress. They

include: the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council, the National Sisterhood of Presbyteres, the Retired Greek Orthodox Clergy of America, the Order of St. Andrew-Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians.

On Sunday, July 3, the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at the Grand Ole Opry House, which is within walking distance of the hotel.

Later in the afternoon the blessing and opening of the exhibit area will take place. The National Philoptochos will hold a delegate orientation and their general assembly. Additionally, that evening, the Church Musicians and the Archons will host their respective receptions.

Monday, July 4, the official opening with the Archbishop’s Keynote Address will take place in the morning, followed by hierarchical sessions on the congress theme and Educational Ministry workshops. In the evening the delegates will participate in Nashville’s Independence Day festivities and will have the opportunity to watch the fireworks aboard the *General Jackson* showboat.

The work of the Congress will continue on Tuesday, July 5, and will include a meeting of clergy and hierarchs, educational and ministry forums, the Hellenic College Holy Cross reception and the Clergy and Presbyteres Family night.

Wednesday, July 6, there will be two additional Educational Ministry workshop sessions during the day. In the evening there will be a congress cultural and fellowship gathering at Nashville’s Parthenon and surrounding park.

Thursday, July 7, the Plenary Session of the Clergy Laity Congress will be held during the day and the Congress will conclude with the Grand Banquet.

A more detailed schedule will be made available at a later time and will be published in the Orthodox Observer, the Archdiocese web-site www.goarch.org and at www.clergylaity.org

Congress Registration Open and On-line

NEW YORK – The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America announces the opening of the on-line registration process for the 43rd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress, to be held July 3-8, at the at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center in Nashville, Tenn.

All registration must be completed on-line, through a professional registration management system run by CVENT.

Delegates, presbyteres, retired clergy, observers and workshop participants must register online and will receive information and updates electronically before, during and after the Congress.

The Archdiocese is also utilizing web-based and smartphone app technology in ensure that Congress participants will be able to electronically access all Congress information including up-dated schedules, and speaker information. Information will be updated in real time enabling delegates to have the most up-to-date information.

Additionally, this year delegates will have the option to have all documents electronically and will have access to documents in real time during the Congress Workshops and Forums.

Parish delegates, presbyteres, retired clergy, observers, and workshop participants can register on-line by visiting the Clergy-Laity Congress website at www.clergylaity.org and clicking on the registration link.



43rd Biennial CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS

Delegate registrations can be paid via credit card and will be processed immediately. Once registered, delegates will begin to receive regular updates and information electronically.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has also added a special category of participant for this year’s Congress. The “Workshop Only” category will allow individuals to attend ONLY the workshop and forum sessions to learn more about the Ministries of the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese is confident that using technology will enhance the Congress experience for all who attend. We invite you to log-on to register and we look forward to a successful and productive Congress.

If you have any questions or need further information please contact the Congress office at clergylaity@goarch.org or visit the website at www.clergylaity.org

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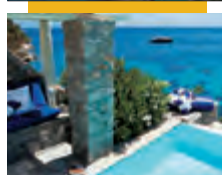
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FAITH TEACHINGS

Regarding Suicides and Cremation

by Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver

Over the past several years it appears that a number of persons who have been recognized as Orthodox Christians have taken their lives, as well as some who leave in their wills that they wish to be cremated. On the basis of these two realities, it is obvious that many of our people have no understanding of the sanctity of the human body and have not been educated on the seriousness of these matters relative to the fact that they consider themselves members of the Church.

In the matter of suicides, if a person is considered in his or her right mind and commits suicide, the only interpretation that the Church can give is that such a person rejects the life given to them by the Holy Spirit.

The result is that the Church does not offer a funeral service to that person. The reason for this is that the funeral service is reserved only for those who believe in the resurrection of the dead and eternal life after the resurrection. Therefore, the only time a funeral is conducted for a suicide is on the basis of a doctor's reputable statement that the person committing suicide was not in his or her right mind.

In the matter of cremations, the inference is that there is no resurrection of the body, contrary to what we read in the New Testament, and thus the cremation returns the body to its basic elements. It is also important to note that the Orthodox Christian funeral service is written on the premise that a body is present. Consequently, whether a body is cremated, lost at sea, or otherwise absent, the funeral service cannot be conducted. The reason for this is that the funeral service is deliberately written in such a way as if the deceased were singing the

dramatic hymns. Specific verses are taken from the Book of Psalms (118) which are in the first person, using the pronoun "I."

Aside from this fact, cremation goes contrary to Holy Scripture. One good example is found in St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians where we read, "...glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's (6:20)." In other words, our bodies and souls belong to God, and not to us. Therefore, we have no right to do with our bodies what we please.

In addition to all of this, there is even a greater reason why cremation is contrary to our Christian faith. Simply put, it desecrates the body. Moreover, the so-called ashes from a cremation are not ashes. They are the crushed and pulverized skull and bones of the body, the arms and legs. They are put through a grinding machine which actually turns the bones into dust.

Finally, for an Orthodox Christian to fulfill the wishes of a member of the family who wishes to be cremated after death actually defiles the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, Holy Unction, Holy Matrimony, and the Holy Eucharist by considering the wishes of the deceased more important than the divine blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the deceased body throughout the years that the body was the recipient of those holy blessings.

On the basis of these realities, it is the responsibility of not only the clergy, but of all our faithful Greek Orthodox Christians to do whatever they can do, in a positive way, to impress upon those who accept this pagan practice that it is wrong.

The fact that the deceased body of an Orthodox Christian receives multiple blessings from the Lord in preparation of the eternal Kingdom any violence upon a dead body is the desecration of God's temple.

FAITH CONNECTION II

Is Your Glass Clean?

by Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D.

If you want to see God and experience His presence you have to present to Him a clean soul.

How many times have you picked up a glass at a restaurant and looked at it carefully before you poured in your beverage to drink. You certainly do that because you want to make sure that the glass is clean! Right? And if you see a spot or something else on the glass, you lift up your napkin and wipe it clean, or even call the waiter (the server) and ask for the glass to be replaced. You do not want to drink from a dirty glass! The dirty glass has to go back to the dishwasher! If we look at this from the spiritual perspective, each one of us is a "glass" in the face of the Lord! We offer ourselves to Him in many ways wanting to honor and please Him. We offer ourselves to him so that He may pour His Grace in us. If we are clean, He will be able to fill us with His Grace; if we are spotted or filthy, He will have to reach for the napkin, or send us to the "dishwasher."

The first question one would ask is "how do we manage to get ourselves dirty?"

Well, think about it. There are so many ways we can do that; Remember when we were kids and played outside, how easy it was for our mother to know that we had gone too close to the lake, because our shoes were muddy, or too close to the barn

because we had hay in our hair? It is usually obvious as to where we have been by the effect that the place and environment has left on us. In the spiritual warfare, of course, the filth will not be just physical. For example, if we have been in the company of people who curse, we will have constant thoughts of all the filth we have heard. If we have been looking at pictures or movies of seductive scenes, our mind will be filled with thoughts and urges that lead us in that direction.

If we have exposed ourselves to actual sin by action, then our mind and heart will be held captive by the passion of that sin until we wash it clean and restore the mind and heart to its original settings.

The final question is "how can we wash clean our heart and mind and be restored to God's pleasing?" Repentance, humility and the desire to clean what is dirty and fix what is broken is the only way. God's "dishwasher" is the Sacrament of Confession. The process is relatively easy: Just call the "server" of the Holy Sacrament (the father confessor) and you are half way there. Then you will be able to present yourself "clean" to the Lord. Then He will be able to pour His Grace abundantly in you. Then He will be able to "drink" from your offering.

What a great gift God has given us in Confession! The ability to regenerate our souls and reset our hearts and minds!

Fr. Panayiotis is pastor of Holy Transfiguration Church in Marietta, Ga.



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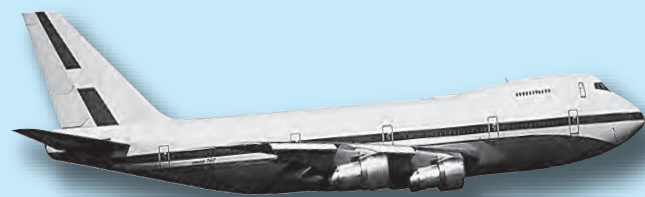
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SCHOLARSHIPS

FAITH Scholarships Now Available

“FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism” announced it will again sponsor a series of merit-based scholarships for high school seniors entering college in the fall through its prestigious “FAITH Scholarships for Academic Excellence” program. In the past, awards have ranged from \$1,000 to \$25,000 in value. The application, along with a list of applicant criteria, can be downloaded from the FAITH website: thefaithendowment.org/FSAE. The deadline is June 30.

In addition, young people majoring in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) receive support for all four years of their undergraduate studies through the “FAITH Scholarship for Excellence in STEM.”

To renew the award, students must maintain a 3.6 minimum GPA and participate in organizations related to the Greek and Hellenic Orthodox community throughout their college career.

FAITH Founder Dr. P. Roy Vagelos spoke on behalf of the FAITH Founders saying, “The Founders of FAITH are profoundly pleased to support this important initiative and also support the best and brightest young people who will be the future leaders of our community.”

He continued, “A background in STEM subjects will be critical for obtaining graduate training and jobs in science, technology and engineering in the future.”

Our nation needs, and will need, people well-trained in these fields in order to remain globally competitive. Successful students who excel in these fields will receive a premium along with their award.”

Each year since 2004, FAITH has funded merit-based scholarships to some of the brightest young members in the Greek and Hellenic American

community who rank within the top of their class.

FAITH Scholars represent all Metropolises across the nation and enroll in universities ranging from UCLA to Cornell University to pursue a diverse set of career paths from Neuroscience and Aerospace Engineering to Education. These exceptional young people have played, and continue to play, an integral role inside and outside the classroom as leaders in their churches, communities and schools and garner high recommendation and praise from their mentors and teachers for displaying the scholarly intellect lauded by their Hellenic ancestors and a strong spirit of community service and good citizenship in line with their Greek Orthodox Christian values.

“FAITH is an incredible support in my education at Cornell University. I feel blessed to be a part of the Greek Orthodox Community and promise to use the knowledge I acquire to be a part of something greater than myself,” said Alex Bilzerian, a freshman Chemistry major at Cornell University who received the FAITH Scholarship for Academic Excellence in 2015.

For more information and to download the application, visit: thefaithendowment.org/FSAE.

Applicants are encouraged to follow www.facebook.com/faithendowment for FAITH updates.

FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism supports the development of innovative educational, cultural, and scholarship programs for young people that promote an understanding of the Orthodox faith, Hellenism, and the relationship of the two to America’s history and multicultural landscape. For more information, please call: 212-644-6960 or visit www.thefaithendowment.org.

FAITH Endowment Awards 44 Travel Grants to Ionian Village

FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism recently awarded 44 full and partial financial aid travel grants to young people registering to participate in the 2016 Ionian Village Summer Camp program.

Grant recipients represent all metropolises across the nation and include some of the most promising young people in the Greek and Hellenic-American community who may not otherwise have the opportunity to travel to Greece. The grants were awarded on a primarily need-based financial aid basis; however, each applicant’s academic performance was weighed into the evaluation review process.

“The FAITH Travel Grant to Ionian Village is much more than just a grant; it’s a way to get in touch with my spiritual side and experience my heritage. I thank FAITH for this opportunity, and I will not let it go to waste,” said Zoe G., a 2016 grant recipient from Minnesota.

Over the last eight years, FAITH has sponsored over 370 grants for young people to attend Ionian Village Summer Camp.

Nikolas K. from New York, who received the grant to Ionian Village in 2015, said, “FAITH gave me the most memorable three weeks of my life. In Greece, I grew spiritually, explored my family’s culture and made relationships that will last a lifetime.” He continued, “No words justify the gratitude I have to FAITH for awarding me this incredible blessing. I will never forget the first time I visited Greece, thanks to FAITH’s

generous grant.”

“There absolutely aren’t enough words to express my sincere gratitude towards the FAITH Endowment for the amazing summer and experiences that Ionian Village has given me,” said Evangelia T., a 2015 grant recipient from South Carolina.

Elaine Jaharis, a founder of the FAITH Endowment, Ionian Village Alumna and committee chairman, speaking on behalf of the other founders of FAITH, said, “We are sincerely pleased to offer this transformative and spiritually enriching experience to young people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to connect to their Hellenic roots and Orthodox faith through Ionian Village.”

FAITH supports the development of innovative educational, cultural, and scholarship programs for young people that promote an understanding of the Orthodox faith, Hellenism, and the relationship of the two to America’s history and multicultural landscape. For more information on this and other scholarship programs, please call: 212-644-6960 or visit www.thefaithendowment.org.

Each summer, Ionian Village participants travel across Greece visiting significant sites of Greek history. At the end of each program, the campers return home with strengthened faith, lifelong friendships and an expanded appreciation for the Orthodox Church and Greek culture.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS



Shown with Nicholas Anton, representing the Archdiocese Ecumenical Office at the UN, are: (from left) Sr. Aine O’Connor, RSM (Sisters of Mercy: Mercy International Association: Global Action), Christiana Peppard (Fordham University), Meera Karunanathan (The Blue Planet Project), Ambassador Dr. Caleb Otto (Permanent Mission of Palau), Mark Gruin (IOCC), Emem Okon (WoMin), and Rev. Thomas Brennan, SDB (Salesian Missions).

Archdiocese Sponsors UN Event on ISIL and Human Trafficking

NEW YORK – During the 60th UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Archdiocese, together with the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, on March 21 co-sponsored an event titled, “Forced Migration, Human Trafficking, and Child Soldiers: How ISIL is Exploiting the Conflict in the Middle East.”

A robust dialogue among policy, legal, and academic specialists explored ISIL’s exploitation of the current political and humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, with careful attention given to ISIL’s (Islamic State in the Levant, also known as ISIS) impact on the spread of forced migration, human trafficking, and child soldiers.

Panelists included: Ms. Li Fung, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; Edward J. Flynn, senior human rights officer for the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate; Shafferan Sonneveld, global advocacy director, Muslims for Progressive Values; and Rev. Dr. Emeka Xris Obiezu, main representative of Augustinians International to the UN and vice chairman of the UN NGO Committee on Migration.

Emphasizing the need to empower

all members of society to combat the ISIL threat, Edward Flynn reminded the audience that, “Member States have been called upon to empower civil society groups, community leaders, religious leaders, women, youth, families, to bring them into the struggle against such organizations. Engagement and empowerment is a critical element to confronting the ISIL threat.”

Following the event, Archimandrite Fr. Nathanael Symeonides, director of the Archdiocese Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relations, noted the need to supplement with prayer efforts to combat the exploitation of human beings: “While nations, civil society organizations, and individuals labor to end the exploitation of human beings, we must remember that prayer is a necessary tool in our search for reconciliation, peace, and the reconstitution of human dignity in the lives of those who have been exploited and harmed.”

The Archdiocese is accredited through the UN Department of Public Information (UN DPI) and has General Consultative Status under the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC).

The Archdiocese has been actively working at the UN for 30 years.

Eastern, Oriental Orthodox Churches to Hold Common Prayer Service

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches in America (SCOOC) have announced that a “Common Prayer Service” will be held Thursday evening, April 21, at St. Gabriel Syriac Orthodox Church (750 Sunset Ave.) in Haworth, N.J. The service will begin at 7 p.m. and the public is invited.

This service is meant to bring people together as they pray for the safety of two Syrian hierarchs held in captivity—Syriac Orthodox Archbishop John Ibrahim, and Antiochian (Greek) Orthodox Metropolitan Paul Yazigi—and for all suffering calamities in the Middle East. This gesture of solidarity between the Assembly of Bishops and SCOOC also marks the commencement

of the organizations’ shared work.

The distinguished speakers during the service will include His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Chairman of the Assembly of Bishops and Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Eastern Armenian Church of America and Chairman of SCOOC; His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph, Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese; and Archbishop Mor Dionysius Jean Kawak, Patriarchal Delegate of the Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese of the Eastern U.S.A.

The Assembly of Bishops and SCOOC invite all residents and visitors of the Tri-State Area to join communities in prayer on April 21.

METROPOLIS NEWS



Clifford T. Argue photo

Sunday of Orthodoxy

March 20 marked the Sunday of Orthodoxy in the parishes of the Archdiocese, commemorating the restoration of icons to the churches by the Seventh Ecumenical Council. (above) Priests of the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Clergy celebrated the event at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Phoenix. (below) At Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York, students of the Cathedral school carry icons around the church.



GOA/D. Panagos

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10 Suggestions for Great Lent

► from page 2

ous issue. In the Hebrew Old Testament, there are 14 different words to describe sin, but chiefly four: sin as a matter of human weakness, sin as a distortion or perversion, sin as a rebellion (borrowed from the political realm), and sin as an error or mistake related to ignorance.

If we believe in God becoming a human being and willingly being crucified on the Cross for the sins of the world, then we must understand the seriousness of sin. Let's reflect on how sin has control in our lives, and how it has distorted the divine image within each of us. Let us deal seriously with our sins with an understanding that they are part of the huge amount of sins and evil that led Christ to the Cross. But then remember that God has given forgiveness as the perfect antidote through the very same Cross. Forgiveness, however, is inseparably connected to repentance.

5. Make Lent a season for repentance

Along with sin, we are called to reflect upon repentance. Repentance is a very important aspect in our lives and is a dominant theme throughout the Triodion. We should not forget that Jesus Christ our Lord began His public ministry with the words, "Repent [change your mind], for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

The whole Sermon on the Mount is a commentary on this fundamental declaration on repentance.

The writings of St. Paul and the other New Testament writings are permeated by calls to repentance. Repentance is not merely a shallow or superficial act, but a radical change of mind, soul, will and mentality. It is a central issue and an essential component of the Lenten period. God is always ready to forgive, but first we must repent.

6. Reflect on our reading the Bible

Lent is a time to reflect on our relationship with the Holy Scriptures, because the Bible is central in the texts of the Triodion. We must always keep the biblical element at the forefront in our worship and in our life. How close are we to the Bible?

Most people think about the Bible only at the Sunday Epistle and Gospel readings during the Divine Liturgy. It is unthinkable that we as Christians do not have the Word of God as a central guide in everything we do. The Lenten period assists us to come closer and more frequently to the Bible and encourages us to reflect upon the Scripture. Make reading the Holy Bible a daily practice during Lent and beyond.

7. Be aware of the Christocentric focus

The greatest focus of Lent should be on Jesus Christ Himself. Sometimes we can get caught up in fasting, in saying prayers, in going to Church, on our sins, or in all the rituals of this holy season; yet in the midst of all we do, we forget about Jesus Christ Himself. Lent is above all else a time to draw closer to Christ! Christ is the center of this Lenten period and should be the center of our lives. As we go through Lent and arrive at Holy Week with the Crucifixion and Resurrection, Christ must be at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of all things. This Lenten period is a tremendous opportunity to come closer to Christ, and to be Christocentric in all that we think, say, or do.

We remember that the fall of Adam and Eve occurred through eating in disobedience to the commandment of

God (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-24), and that the restoration and victory in Christ was realized through His overcoming the temptation of eating (Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13). But what does our incarnate God offer to us as the ultimate possibility of union with Him? He gave us His Body and His Blood to be eaten. He said to us, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Here is the ultimate paradox: During Lent, abstinence from food, i.e. fasting, is accompanied by partaking of the imperishable food, i.e. the Body and Blood of Christ. Adam and Eve fell away from paradise and from their connection to God through eating, and we are restored and united to God in the highest way through the Holy Communion by eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ. This is much more than being Christocentric. This is having Christ dwelling in us in a palpable way.

8. Cultivate human relationships

The season of Lent is also an opportunity to cultivate our human relationships in more authentic ways. Looking again at the hymnology of the Triodion, we clearly ascertain that there is an emphasis on loving and caring for each other, on moving away from evil and wrong things, on forgiving one another, and on being reconnected with our fellow human beings. The Book of Isaiah, read in its entirety during Lent, begins with a condemnation of the people of Israel because they had abandoned God, and then continues with an admonition to the Israelites to return to God and to be fair and to establish proper relationships with their fellow human beings. So we are called to think of any relationships that are not in the proper condition and make every effort to remedy them. This is a very integral part of living our lives during Lent.

9. Practice almsgiving

Almsgiving is a vital aspect of the Lenten period. On one of the multiple occasions speaking about the need to be a person who takes care of others, St. John Chrysostom said that we are all called to give alms. He continued to say that even those who claim to be poor are not free from offering alms. Poverty is a poor excuse not to give. Indeed there are poor people who give the half of what they have (see Mark 12:41-44). It could be said that almsgiving is a requirement for living our life as Christians. Christ said, "when you give alms" (Matt. 6:3), not if you give alms. Almsgiving is especially emphasized during this Lenten period.

10. Make this Lent a time for transformation

Ultimately, our Lenten season is a time of having a transformative experience. We are challenged to resolve that at the end of the Lenten period, when we celebrate Pascha, we are different from what we are today. The transformative aspect of Lent is an absolute necessity for spiritually enjoying this season. We are in the process of transformation if we steadily become Christocentric in all things, through the grace and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Lenten season provides us with a tremendous possibility to prepare spiritually, to be constantly transformed, and to be with Christ in His Passion and Resurrection.

Archbishop Demetrios offered these 10 suggestions for Orthodox Christians to strive for during the Lenten season, during his homily at the annual Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology Clean Monday Retreat, March 14.

ΛΕΥΚΟΣ ΟΙΚΟΣ

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του **Σταύρου Η. Παπαγερμανού**

ΟΥΑΣΙΝΓΚΤΟΝ – Στις 4 Απριλίου ο Πρόεδρος Μπαράκ Ομπάμα υποδεχόμενος την Ελληνοαμερικανική Ομογένεια στο Λευκό Οίκο, παρέθεσε επίσημη δεξίωση για τον εορτασμό της Ημέρας της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας τιμώντας την 195^η επέτειο από την έναρξη της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης του 1821. Η εφετινή εκδήλωση πραγματοποιήθηκε στο Λευκό Οίκο για 30^η συνεχή χρονιά.

Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αμερικής κ. Δημήτριος συναντήθηκε κατ' ιδίαν με τον Πρόεδρο Ομπάμα και τον Αντιπρόεδρο Τζο Μπάιντεν και είχε την ευκαιρία να ανταλλάξει μαζί τους απόψεις για τα θέματα που αφορούν στον Ελληνισμό, την Ορθοδοξία και την προάσπιση της ελευθερίας του ανθρώπου, απανταχού της γης.

Η επίσημη τελετή ξεκίνησε γύρω στις 5 μ.μ. στο μεγάλο σαλόνι του Λευκού Οίκου, στο East Room, παρουσία 400 περίπου προσκεκλημένων. Ο αντιπρόεδρος των Η.Π.Α. καλωσορίζοντας όλους τους παρευρισκόμενους, αναφέρθηκε στους προσωπικούς του δεσμούς με την Ελληνοαμερικανική κοινότητα και την Ελληνορθόδοξη Εκκλησία ιδιαίτερα δε στην αλησμόνητη και μοναδική, όπως είπε, επίσκεψή του στο Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο Κωνσταντινούπολης και στη συνάντησή του με τον Οικουμενικό Πατριάρχη κ. Βαρθολομαίο. Ο κ. Μπάιντεν είπε επίσης πως απετέλεσε γι' αυτόν ιδιαίτερη τιμή η απονομή του Αθηνάγρειου Βραβείου Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων, το οποίο έλαβε πριν από λίγους μήνες. Ο κ. Μπάιντεν σημείωσε ότι ωριότερα την ίδια ημέρα είχε τηλεφωνική συνομιλία με τον Πρωθυπουργό της Ελλάδος κ. Αλέξη Τσίπρα και διαβεβαίωσε τους παρευρισκόμενους ότι οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες θα παραμείνουν στο πλευρό της Ελλάδος ως σύμμαχος και φίλος. Τέλος, παρουσίασε τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο Δημήτριο και τον Πρόεδρο Ομπάμα.

Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος ευχαρίστησε κατ' αρχήν τον πρόεδρο για την εγκάρδια υποδοχή και φιλοξενία και μίλησε για την έννοια και σημασία της θεμελιώδους και αδιαπραγμάτευτης αξίας της ελευθερίας του ατόμου ως δώρο Θεού. Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος τόνισε ότι αυτή η αδιάλλακτη πνευματική αξία της ελευθερίας οδήγησε το 1821 το λαό της Ελλάδος να ξεσηκωθεί και να αποτινάξει το ζυγό του κατακτητή υπό τον οποίο υπέφερε για τετρακόσια χρόνια. Ήταν μια πράξη αληθινής πίστεως την οποία τροφοδοτούσε η αγάπη και το πάθος για την ελευθερία, κατέληξε ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος.

Ο Πρόεδρος Ομπάμα καλωσόρισε τους παριστάμενους 'στο Λευκό Οίκο' στα Ελληνικά καταχειροκροτούμενος με ενθουσιασμό. Ευχαρίστησε τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο

► Σελίδα 18

Επίσκεψη Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχου, Πάπα και Αρχιεπισκόπου Ελλάδος στη Λέσβο

NEA ΥΟΡΚΗ – Η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Αμερικής έλαβε το κάτωθι ανακοινωθέν από το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο Κωνσταντινούπολης και το προωθεί στο πλήρωμα της Αρχιεπισκοπής και τα Μ.Μ.Ε.

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ

Ανακοινούται ότι κατά τό τελευταίον διάστημα, τό Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχείον και προσωπικώς ή Α. Θ. Παναγιότης, ό Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης κ. κ. Βαρθολομαίος, παρακολουθούν άγρύπνως τās εξέλιξεις και τās πολεμικές συγκρούσεις εις τήν εύρύτεραν περιοχήν τής Μέσης Ανατολής και τās εκεί διώξεις τών Χριστιανών. Ούτως, ή Α. Θ. Παναγιότης ό Πατριάρχης έχει έκφράσει παντοστρόπως μέχρι σήμερον τήν άγωνίαν Αυτού διά τό μέγα θέμα τού κύματος προσφύγων. Έν τώ πνεύματι τούτῳ, έπεκoinώνησε δι' έκπροσώπου Αυτού μετά τής Αυτού Αγιότητος τού Πάπα Φραγκίσκου κατά μήνα Φεβρουάριον, τήν δέ 30ήν Μαρτίου άπηύθυνε προς Αυτόν σχετικόν Γράμμα.

Έν τώ πλαίσίῳ τού έγνωσμένου τούτου ενδιαφέροντος και τής από κοινού άγωνίας

τών Θρησκευτικών Ήγετών και τής έπιτακτικής ανάγκης άναλήψεως κοινής πρωτοβουλίας και δράσεων αυτών προς ευαισθητοποίησην τής διεθνούς κοινής γνώμης και τών άρμοδίων Όργάνων και φορέων, ή Α. Αγιότης ό Πάπας Ρώμης Φραγκίσκος, ή Α. Θ. Παναγιότης, ό Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης κ. κ. Βαρθολομαίος και ή Α. Μακαριότης, ό Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αθηνών και πάσης Ελλάδος κ.κ. Ιερώνυμος θά έπισκεφθούν λίαν προσεχώς τήν Νήσον τής Λέσβου, προς έπικοινωνίαν και έπιστήριξιν τών εκείσε εύρισκομένων προσφύγων.

Η κίνησις και πρωτοβουλία αύτη τών Θρησκευτικών Ήγετών θά έπιστήριξη και ένισχύση τās χιλιάδας τών δοκιμαζόμενων προσφύγων και θά έμπνεύση τήν άνάληψιν καταλλήλων πρωτοβουλιών διά τήν προστασίαν τών έμπεριστάτων Χριστιανικών Κοινοτήτων και τήν όρθήν άντιμετώπισιν τού μειζονος προσφυγικού θέματος.

Έν τοίς Πατριαρχείοις,

τῆ 5^η Απριλίου 2016

Έκ τής Αρχιγραμματείας τής Αγίας και Ιερās Συνόδου



Στη φωτογραφία τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο Δημήτριο περιστοιχίζουν (από αριστερά) Σοφία Στρονιμπάκη (εκτελεστική γραμματέας), Δημήτρης Φιλιππίδης (γεν. γραμματέας), Δημήτρης Χατζής (ύπατος πρόεδρος), Στέλιος Κυρμιλής (ύπατος αντιπρόεδρος) και Φώτης Γερασόπουλος (πρώην πρόεδρος).

Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Δημήτριος καλεί την Ομογένεια να υποστηρίξει το υπόμνημα της Παμμακεδονικής για το όνομα

του **Σταύρου Η. Παπαγερμανού**

NEA ΥΟΡΚΗ – Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αμερικής κ. Δημήτριος δέχθηκε την επίσκεψη των μελών της διοικήσεως της Παμμακεδονικής Ενώσεως Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών με τα οποία συνεζήτησε θέματα σχετικά με το εθνικό ζήτημα της ονομασίας της FYROM (πρώην Γιουγκοσλαβική Δημοκρατία της Μακεδονίας).

Οι εκπρόσωποι της Παμμακεδονικής ενημέρωσαν τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο περί της προόδου των προετοιμασιών για την 70^η επέτειο από την ίδρυση της οργανώσεως και το Συνέδριο της Παμμακεδονικής που θα διεξαχθεί 23-25 Ιουνίου 2016 στη Νέα Υόρκη. Στη συνάντηση συζητήθηκε ιδιαίτερα η σκληρή προσπάθεια που διεξάγει η Παμμακεδονική για την αποκα-

τάσταση της ιστορικής αλήθειας σε σχέση με τη χρήση του ονόματος της Μακεδονίας από το κράτος της FYROM.

Στο πλαίσιο της 70^{ης} Επετείου η Παμμακεδονική αρχίζει εκστρατεία συλλογής υπογραφών (petition) με σκοπό την ανάκληση της λανθασμένης αποφάσεως της Αμερικανικής κυβερνήσεως το 2004 για προσωρινή αναγνώριση της FYROM με το όνομα Μακεδονία, παρά την καθιερωμένη πράξη του Ο.Η.Ε. που χρησιμοποιεί το όνομα FYROM.

«Στηρίζουμε διαχρονικά την προσπάθεια της Παμμακεδονικής και ιδιαίτερα την νέα πρωτοβουλία για την συλλογή υπογραφών για την υποβολή υπομνήματος με το οποίο θα ζητείται η ανάκληση της αναγνωρίσεως της FYROM με το όνομα Μακεδονία», δήλωσε ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Δημήτριος.

Εγκύκλιος

Άγιον Πάσχα Έορτή τών Έορτών

Οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἠγέρθη γάρ καθὼς εἶπεν!
Ματθ. 28:6

Πρός τούς Σεβασμιωτάτους και Θεοφιλεστάτους Αρχιερείς, τούς Έδλαβεστάτους Ιερείς και Διακόνους, τούς Μοναχούς και Μοναχές, τούς Πρόέδρους και Μέλη τών Κοινοτικών Συμβουλίων, τά Ημερήσια και Άπογευματινά Σχολεία, τίς Φιλοπτώχους Άδελφότητες, τήν Νεολαία, τίς Έλληνορθόδοξες Όργανώσεις και δόλοκληρο τό Χριστεπώνυμον πλήρωμα τής Ιερās Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής.

Χριστός Άνέστη!
Άληθώς Άνέστη!

Καθώς γιορτάζουμε τήν ένδοξη και άγια Έορτή τής Άναστάσεως τού Κυρίου μας, άκτινοβολούμε μέσα στό λαμπρό φώς και τήν αγαλλίαση τής παρουσίας και χάριτός Του.

Ψάλλουμε ύμνους δόξης σ' Έκεϊνον ό Όποιος μάς χαρίζει νέα ζωή. Διακηρύσσουμε τήν ήττα τού θανάτου και τόν θρίαμβο τής ζωής, καθώς ό Χριστός άνέστη εκ τού τάφου, άκτινοβόλος και θριαμβευτής.

Στήν θεία λατρεία μας, σ' αύτή τήν Έορτή τών Έορτών και τής άγιωτάτης ήμέρας τού έτους, άκούμε στούς ύμνους μας τήν ιστορία έκεινων οι όποιοι μετέβησαν στόν τάφο τού Ήσου: Αί Μυρο-

► Σελίδα 17

Η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Αμερικής εκφράζει τη συμπαραστάση της προς το Βελγικό λαό

NEA ΥΟΡΚΗ – Η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Αμερικής, μετά τις τελευταίες αποτρόπαιες πράξεις βίας και τρομοκρατίας στις Βρυξέλλες, εκφράζει τη συμπαραστάση και αλληλεγγύη της προς το λαό του Βελγίου, διαβεβαιώνοντάς ότι οι προσεχές των ελληνορθόδοξων της Αμερικής συνοδευούν τις οικογένειες όσων έχασαν τη ζωή τους ή τραυματίστηκαν ως αποτέλεσμα των βαρβάρων αυτών επιθέσεων.

Στο άκουσμα των τρομοκρατικών πληγμάτων στις Βρυξέλλες, ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αμερικής κ. Δημήτριος δήλωσε: «Την ώρα αυτή της απρόσμενης και φρικαλέας τραγωδίας, καθώς βιώνουμε τον πόνο, τη θλίψη, και την αγανάκτηση, μπορούμε όλοι να βρούμε στήριγμα και ελπίδα στη Πίστη μας, ιδιαίτερα δε στα σωτηριώδη γεγονότα του Σταυρού και της Αναστάσεως, που αποτελούν την καλύτερη πηγή ανακουφίσεως, παρηγορίας και ειρήνης».

Η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή Αμερικής συμπαρίσταται σε όλους τους ανθρώπους πίστεως και καλής θελήσεως και υποστηρίζει τις προσπάθειες των θρησκευτικών ηγετών – ειδικά δε του Σεβασμιωτάτου Μητροπολίτου Βελγίου κ. Αθηνάγορα – στην προσπάθεια σφρηλατήσεως αμοιβαίας κατανοήσεως, σεβασμού και συμφιλίωσης μεταξύ όλων των ανθρώπων.

Με τιμές στους εκπαιδευτικούς η 40^η Επέτειος του «Προμηθέα»

Ιδιαίτερη Ανταπόκριση

ΝΕΑ ΥΟΡΚΗ.- Ο Σύλλογος Ελλήνων Εκπαιδευτικών «Προμηθεύς» γιόρτασε την 40^η Επέτειο από την ίδρυση του Συλλόγου στις 28 Φεβρουαρίου με λαμπρή εκδήλωση στο Terrace on the Park.

Την εορταστική εκδήλωση τίμησαν με την παρουσία τους ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Γέρων Αμερικής κ.κ. Δημήτριος, ο Υφυπουργός Παιδείας, Έρευνας και Θρησκευμάτων της Ελλάδας κ. Θεοδόσης Πελεγρίνης και Γενικός Πρόεδρος της Κύπρου Πρέσβης κ. Βασίλειος Φιλίππου. Στη διάρκεια της τιμήθηκε η κυρία Μαρία Μακεδών, διευθύντρια του Γραφείου Παιδείας της Αμέσου Αρχιεπισκοπικής Περιφέρειας της Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής και όλοι οι πρώην πρόεδροι του «Προμηθέα», Κωνσταντίνος Παρθένης Ηλιάς Διακολιός, Ιωάννης Μαρκόπουλος, Δρ. Ιωάννης Σιάλας, Τιμοθέων Κόκκινος, Αθηνά Κρομμύδα, Γεώργιος Κανελλόπουλος, Ελένη Γαλιδή, Ειρήνη Δήμα, Απόστολος Φούντας, Βασιλική Φιλώτη και Δημοσθένης Τριανταφύλλου.

Η καταξιωμένη διευθύντρια του Ημερησίου Σχολείου «Βασίλειος Σπυρόπουλος» του Αγίου Νικολάου Φλάσινγκ, κ. Αθηνά Κρομμύδα, παρουσίασε την τιμώμενη Μαρία Μακεδών, τονίζοντας -μεταξύ άλλων- ότι «αγωνίζεται για τα σχολεία μας και για την ελληνοχριστιανική Παιδεία των νέων της Ομογένειας.

«Αγωνίζεται και φροντίζει να είναι δίπλα μας στον αγώνα τον καλό της γνώσης και της πίστης. Φροντίζει για την καταξίωση και καθιέρωση των σχολείων μας ανάμεσα στα θρησκευτικά και τα ιδιωτικά σχολεία της Νέας Υόρκης».

«Η κ. Μακεδών γνωρίζει να μάχεται για την προκοπή των σχολείων μας», επισήμανε η κ. Κρομμύδα, προσθέτοντας ότι «το έργο της απόλυτα δικαιολογημένα χαίρει του σεβασμού όλων μας».



Αποδεχόμενη την τιμή, η κ. Μακεδών τόνισε ότι «στην πραγματικότητα η τιμή αυτή ανήκει στους δασκάλους της ομογενειακής μας παιδείας, που με αφοσίωση διδάσκουν στα αμερικανογεννημένα παιδιά την Ελληνική μας γλώσσα, την ιστορία, το πολιτισμό και την ορθόδοξη πίστη μας» και ευχαρίστησε τον πρόεδρο και τα μέλη του «Προμηθέα» και για την πρωτοβουλία τους να τιμήσουν τους διατελέσαντες προέδρους στη διάρκεια των 40 χρόνων του Συλλόγου.

«Η ζωή μου όλη είναι συνυφασμένη με την Εκκλησία της Αμερικής, με την Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή», συνέχισε η κ. Μακεδών, η οποία αποφοίτησε από την Παιδαγωγική Ακαδημία

του Αγίου Βασιλείου. «Ήμουν πρώτη μαθήτρια και οι καθηγητές μου πρότειναν στον Αρχιεπίσκοπο να με προσλάβει στο Γραφείο Παιδείας. Και εκείνος δέχτηκε.

«Εκεί μαθήτευσα κοντά στους καθηγητές μου, ιδιαίτερα τους αείμνηστους Εμμανουήλ και Αθηνά Χατζημμανουήλ και τον Αρχιμανδρίτη Νίκωνα Πατρινάκο. Κοντά τους έμαθα πώς να γράφω γράμματα, εκθέσεις, και να αγαπήσω τον εκπαιδευτικό μας κόσμο.

«Αργότερα συνεργάστηκα με τον Δρα Νικόλαο Κλαδόπουλο, που τον γνώριζα από τα φοιτητικά μου χρόνια. Όλα τα οφείλω λοιπόν στην Αρχιεπισκοπή Αμερικής και στους Αρχιερείς της», σημείωσε η κ. Μακεδών και εξέφρασε βαθιά ευγνωμοσύνη προς τον αείμνηστο Αρχιεπίσκοπο Ιάκωβο και τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο Δημήτριο.

Με την σειρά του ο υφυπουργός Παιδείας, Δρ. Θεοδόσης Πελεγρίνης, συνεχάρη τους εκπαιδευτικούς για το έργο τους και εξέφρασε την ευγνωμοσύνη της Ελληνικής πολιτείας για τον εξόχως σημαντικό ρόλο που διαδραματίζει η Εκκλησία στο θέμα της Ελληνικής Παιδείας στις ΗΠΑ.

Ο πρόεδρος του «Προμηθέα» κ. Δημοσθένης Τριανταφύλλου παρουσίασε το όραμα και σχέδιο του Συλλόγου για την ελληνική παιδεία και τους δασκάλους. «Προτείνουμε την εφαρμογή του τρίπτυχου σχεδίου που θα περιλαμβάνει μαθήματα μέσω διαδικτύου από την Ελλάδα, παιδαγωγικά μαθήματα σε ένα πανεπιστήμιο ή κολλέγιο της Νέας Υόρκης και θερινά εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα στην Ελλάδα. Ένα νέο τρίπτυχο όραμα που παρουσιάζουμε στον Αρχιεπίσκοπο και στον Υφυπουργό Παιδείας της Ελλάδας, για ένα καλύτερο μέλλον για τους Ομογενείς δασκάλους της Αμερικής», κατέληξε.

Ο Σεβασμιώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Γέρων Αμερικής κ. Δημήτριος επισήμανε ότι «Ο χώρος της Παιδείας δεν είναι απλώς σημαντικός, είναι ιερός», τονίζοντας πως ο τίτλος του δασκάλου, από την ώρα που ήταν κύριος τίτλος του Θεού που έγινε άνθρωπος, εγκαθίδρυσε το δάσκαλο ως κάτι το μοναδικό.

Ο Σεβασμιώτατος εξέφρασε θερμότερες ευχαριστίες προς τον Υφυπουργό Παιδείας, και συνεχάρη τον κ. Τριανταφύλλου για την ένταση με την οποία εργάζεται. Τέλος συνεχάρη την κ. Μακεδών, η οποία «δε σταματά να δουλεύει και να προσπαθεί να προωθήσει τα θέματα της Παιδείας».

Συνεχάρη επίσης και όλους τους εκπαιδευτικούς που διετέλεσαν πρόεδροι του Συλλόγου Προμηθεύς. Στη διάρκεια της εκδήλωσης προβλήθηκε βίντεο με συνεντεύξεις των προέδρων του Συλλόγου. Στο Γεύμα παρακάθησαν επίσης 270 διακεκριμένοι ομογενείς, μεταξύ των οποίων

201 ήταν εκπαιδευτικοί των ημερησίων και απογευματινών σχολείων.

Επίσης παρακάθησαν ο ιερατικός προϊστάμενος του Καθεδρικού Ναού Αγίου Δημητρίου Αστορίας, Αρχιμανδρίτης Νεκτάριος Παπαζαφειρόπουλος, ο ιερατικός προϊστάμενος του Τιμίου Σταυρού στο Μπρούκλιν Αρχιμανδρίτης Γεράσιμος Μακρής ο π. Ιωάννης Αντωνόπουλος, ο καθηγούμενος της Μονής Οσίας Ειρήνης Χρυσοβαλάντου, Αρχιμανδρίτης Ιερόθεος Ζαχαρίας και ο Άρχων του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου και φιλόanthropos, κ. Στέφανος Τσερπέλης.

Επίσης 201 εκπαιδευτικοί από τα ημερησία και απογευματινά σχολεία μεταξύ των οποίων η Φραντζέσκα Μανίνο, διευθύντρια του Ημερησίου Σχολείου Δ.&Γ. Καλοειδή του Τιμίου Σταυρού στο Μπρούκλιν, Άννα Πρόκοπ, διευθύντρια του Ελληνοαμερικανικού Ινστιτούτου στο Μπρόνξ, η Φρειδερίκη Σαγγιάννη, διευθύντρια του Σχολείου Τιμιού Σταυρού στο Γουάιτσον, ο Δρ. Γεώργιος Μελιόκης της Ομοσπονδίας Ελληνοαμερικανών Εκπαιδευτικών, η Βασιλική Φιλώτη, πρόεδρος του Συλλόγου Ελληνική Παιδεία.

Παρακάθησαν επίσης η συντονίστρια εκπαίδευσης του Υπουργείου Παιδείας Θάλας Χατζηγιάννου, η καθηγήτρια Ελληνικών στο Πανεπιστήμιο Yale, Μαρία Καλιάμπου, ο Δρ. Αριστοτέλης Μιχόπουλος, καθηγητής της Θεολογικής Σχολής στο Μπρούκλιν, ο Δρ. Ιωάννης Σπυριδάκης, καθηγητής στο Πανεπιστήμιο Σεντ Τζων, ο Δρ. Νίκος Αλεξίου, καθηγητής στο Κολλέγιο Κούινς, ο Δρ. Παπαδημητράκοπουλος από την ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ του Κοννέκτικατ, ο Δρ. Σ. Παναγιωτόπουλος από το Καρπαθιακό Ίδρυμα, ο πρόεδρος του Πανγκρεκόριαν Νέας Ιερσής Γεώργιος Σιαμπούλης, ο πρόεδρος της Δωδεκανησιακής Ομοσπονδίας Γιώργος Ανδριώτης, ο πρόεδρος του Συλλόγου Νιουσίον Ιωάννης Κωνσταντινίδης, ο πρόεδρος της Καρπαθιακής Ομοσπονδίας Ιωάννης Σακκελάρης, ο πρόεδρος Αμοργού και Νήσων κ. Νίκος Γαβαλάς, ο πρόεδρος των Ιδιοκτητών Αστορίας Γεώργιος Κίτσιος, ο πρόεδρος Ελλήνων Λογοτεχνών Π. Μουζάκης, ο Δρ. Νίκος Τριανταφύλλου του Ινστιτούτου Δωδεκανησιακών Μελετών Αμερικής, ο πρόεδρος του Γέρον του Μωριά Χρήστος Βουρνάς, ο Δρ. Ιωάννης Νάθενας, πρόεδρος του Εκπαιδευτικού Προγράμματος ΔΙΑ, ο πρόεδρος της Κοινότητας Αναλήψεως στο Φερβίου Δημήτριος Κοντολιός, ο πρόεδρος της Σχολικής Επιτροπής του Σωτήρος Χριστού στο Ράϊ Αντώνης Νερούλιας, η Μερσέδη Κυριάκου του Πανκυπρίου και ο Δημήτρης Φίλιος, του ραδιοφωνικού σταθμού ΚΟΣΜΟΣ, ΦΜ.

Ο Γρηγόρης Μανινάκης και η ορχήστρα Μικρόκοσμος επιμελήθηκαν το καλλιτεχνικό πρόγραμμα με τη συμμετοχή της σοπράνο Όλγα Ξανθοπούλου.

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Our Roasters are on display at our location at all times.
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Standard with all shown roasters:
8rpm motor, 7/8" square aluminum skewer,
drip pan, antiscratch leg pads &
two movable stainless steel forks.

Optional for all of our roasters:
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crank & chicken forks.

Our kokoretsi-kontosouvlí option consist of:
Full size motor, 1/2" round stainless steel
skewer 5 Ft. long (drilled every 12" and 6"
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posts. Round skewer can hold 15 pounds of
any meat equally distributed to its length

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3" diameter x 1 1/4" wide wheels with brakes.
(Load capacity 175 lbs each caster.)

The Motor With 7 Height Adjustments

Top view of the inside of our roasters
55" long x 24" wide x 5 1/2" deep

Our unique patented design collects dripping
liquids to a pitched channel and directs them
away from the cooking area into the drain
pan where they belong and not on your floor.
(The drain pan is located under the roaster)
(US PATENT NO. 8,770,182)

"The Flipper" Cooking Grill
(You Don't Flip The Food, You Flip The Grill)

9-1/2" wide x 55" long (height adjustable)

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«Εἴσθε ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σὲ ἓναν Μεταβαλλόμενο Κόσμο»

**Καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ Πατήρ,
καγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς**
(Ιωάν. 20:21)
Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου
(Ματθ. 5:14)

Δεύτερο Μέρος

*Προφιλεῖς Ἀδελφοί
καὶ Ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῶ,*

Συνεχίζουμε νὰ ἐστιάζουμε τὴν προσοχή μας στὸ θέμα τῆς 43ης Κληρικο-Λαϊκῆς Συνελεύσεώς μας ἐξετάζοντας τὸ περιεχόμενο τῶν λόγων τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐπειδὴ μᾶς ζητεῖ Ἐκεῖνος νὰ γίνουμε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου, νὰ γίνουμε ἡ φωνὴ Του, εἶναι σημαντικό νὰ γνωρίζουμε τὸν λόγο Του καὶ νὰ εἴμεθα σὲ θέση νὰ προσφέρουμε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο σ' ἓναν μεταβαλλόμενο κόσμο.

Στὸ πρῶτο ἄρθρο τονίσαμε ὅτι γνωρίζουμε τὸν λόγο τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφόσον ζοῦμε μὲ τὴν παρουσία Του καὶ εἴμεθα ἐνωμένοι μαζί Του διὰ τῆς πίστεως. Ἀκοῦμε τὴ φωνὴ Του ἢ ὅποια μεταδίδει ἀλήθεια, καθοδήγηση καὶ διαβεβαίωση καὶ ἀπαντοῦμε ἀκολουθώντας τὸ θέλημά Του.

Ἀκοῦμε τὴν φωνὴ Του καθὼς ὁ Κύριός μας μᾶς στέλνει στὸν κόσμο νὰ μεταδώσουμε στοὺς ἄλλους αὐτὰ πού βλέπουμε καὶ βιώνουμε ἐν Χριστῶ.

Κατανοώντας τὸν τρόπο αὐτὸν τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως καὶ μεταδόσεως τῶν λόγων τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἶναι πολὺ σημαντικό νὰ ἐξετάζουμε ὅλα ὅσα μεταδίδουμε ὡς ἡ φωνὴ Του σ' αὐτὸν τὸν μεταβαλλόμενο κόσμο.

Πρῶτον, τὸ μήνυμα πού μεταφέρουμε ὡς φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι μήνυμα ἐλπίδος.

Στὸ Εὐαγγέλιο, συναντοῦμε τὴν ἐλπίδα στὴν διακονία καὶ τοὺς λόγους Του. Μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν ἀλήθεια καὶ τὴν ἰαση πού προσέφερε ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἀνανεώθηκε ἡ ἐλπίδα στὴ ζωὴ πολλῶν. Ἡ παρουσία Του γεννᾷ ἐλπίδα στὴ ζωὴ μας, καὶ σ' ἓναν κόσμο γεμάτο προκλήσεις λόγφ συνεχῶν ἀλλαγῶν, ὅπου πολλοὶ προσπαθοῦν νὰ ἀνακαλύψουν νόημα καὶ σκοπὸ στὴ ζωὴ, προσφέρουμε ἐλπίδα ὄντας ἡ φωνὴ Του.

Δεύτερον, ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι ἡ φωνὴ τῆς ἀληθείας. Ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν: ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδός, ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (Ιωάν. 14:6).

Ὁ λόγος Του μεταδίδει θεϊκὴ σοφία καὶ ἀποκαλύπτει τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὁ λόγος Του φωτίζει τὴν ἀλήθεια σ' ἓναν κόσμο ὅπου πολλοὶ ἀναζητοῦν ἢ παραπλανῶνται ἀπὸ λανθασμένες ἰδεολογίες. Ἡ πιστὴ μαρτυρία μας τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου διασφαλίζει τὴν μετάδοση τῶν λόγων Του.

Μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν λατρεία μας στὸν Θεό, μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν διακονία τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας, καὶ μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν ἀγιότητα τῆς ζωῆς μας, μεταδίδουμε τὴν ἀλήθεια ὅπως αὐτὴ ἀποκαλύφθηκε σ' ἐμᾶς διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ καθοδηγοῦμε ἄλλους συνανθρώπους μας νὰ ἀνακαλύψουν τὸ σκοπὸ τῆς ζωῆς των καὶ τὴν ἐκπλήρωση αὐτῆς ἐν Χριστῶ μὲ βάση τὴν ἀλήθεια.

Τρίτον, ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι γεμάτος μὲ χάρη. Ἡ κλῆση μας νὰ μεταδώσουμε τὴν χάρη καὶ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅπως αὐτὴ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἀπὸ τὸν Χριστό ἐπιβεβαιώνεται ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀπόστολο Παῦλο ὅταν λέγει, ἀλλ' οὐδενός λόγου ποιοῦμαι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμίαν ἐμαυτῶ ὡς τελειῶσαι τὸν δρόμον μου καὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἣν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, διαμαρτύρασθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ (Πράξ. 20:24).

Ὁ Χριστός ἦλθε καὶ ἀπεκάλυψε τὴν

μεγάλῃ ἀγάπῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ γιὰ μᾶς. Ἡ διδασκαλία καὶ ἡ θεραπευτικὴ ἐνέργεια Του ἦταν γεμάτες μὲ χάρη. Ὁ λόγος Του μεταδίδόμενος διὰ τῆς φωνῆς μας καλεῖ ὄλους νὰ ἔλθουν καὶ νὰ λάβουν συγχώρηση καὶ σωτηρία διὰ τῆς χάριτος.

Τέταρτον, ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ μέσφ ἡμῶν ἀποκαλύπτει τὴ θεϊκὴ δύναμη ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ χάριτι. Εἶναι λόγος θαρραλέος καὶ δυνατός.

Ὅμιλοῦμε ὡς φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὄντας βέβαιοι γιὰ τὶς ὑποσχέσεις τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὅπως βλέπουμε στὴν Ἁγία Γραφή, ὁ λόγος Του ἐπιφέρει θεραπεία, ἀπομακρύνει τὴν πνευματικὴ τυφλότητα καὶ μᾶς προσκαλεῖ νὰ ἀφήσουμε πίσω τὴν ὁδὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ νὰ ἀκολουθήσουμε τὴν ὁδὸ τῆς ἀφθονῆς ζωῆς. Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ μέσφ ἡμῶν προσφέρει ἡχηρὸ καὶ δυναμικὸ ἀντίβαρο στὴν κάθε ἐχθρότητα, στὸν διωγμὸ καὶ ἀκόμη στὸν ἴδιο τὸν θάνατο, προσφέροντας μαρτυρία ἀληθείας καὶ πίστεως.

Πέμπτον, ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι ἡ φωνὴ τῆς ζωῆς. Ὁ Χριστός εἶπεν, ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (Ιωάν. 11:25). Εἶπεν ἐπίσης, ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν (οἱ ἄνθρωποι) καὶ περισσόσν ἔχωσιν (Ιωάν. 10:10). Ἐν Χριστῶ ἀπολαμβάνουμε ἀφθονὴ καὶ αἰώνια ζωὴ.

Μᾶς στέλνει Ἐκεῖνος γιὰ νὰ γίνουμε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου (Ματθ. 5:14), καὶ ἡ φωνὴ Του, προσφέροντας ζωὴ σὲ ὄλους.

Ἐκτον, ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι πρόσκληση. Ὁ Χριστός λέγει καὶ τὸ ἐπαναλαμβάνουμε ὡς φωνὴ Του, δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι (Ματθ. 19:21).

Ὡς Νυμφίος ὁ ὁποῖος προετοιμάζει τὸ δεῖπνον τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς καὶ κοινωνίας μὲ τὸν Θεό, μᾶς καθοδηγεῖ νὰ βγοῦμε στὸν κόσμο καὶ νὰ ἀπευθύνουμε πρόσκληση σὲ ὄλους, ἐξέλθε εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς

καὶ ἀνάγκασον εἰσελθεῖν, ἵνα γεμισθῇ ὁ οἶκος μου (Λουκ. 14:23).

ὄντας ἡ φωνὴ Του, οἱ λόγοι καὶ τὰ ἔργα μας ὀφείλουν νὰ ἀποτελοῦν πρόσκληση στοὺς ἄλλους νὰ ἔλθουν καὶ νὰ δοῦν ὅλα τὰ ὑπέροχα πράγματα τὰ ὅποια ὁ Κύριός μας ἔχει δημιουργήσει καὶ νὰ βιώσουν τὴν χάρη καὶ τὴ ζωὴ ἐν Αὐτῶ.

Ὁ λόγος μας γίνεται ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Διὰ τῆς πίστεώς μας σ' Ἐκεῖνον, διὰ τῆς ἐμπειρίας μας τῆς παρουσίας καὶ δυνάμεώς Του, διὰ τῆς ζωῆς μας πού μεταμορφώνεται ἀπὸ τὴν χάρη καὶ τὴν ἀλήθεια, προσφέρουμε τὸν λόγο τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ὁ λόγος Του γίνεται λόγος μας διότι πιστεύουμε σ' Αὐτόν. Ὅμιλοῦμε ἐξ ὀνόματος Του ὄχι μόνον λόγφ τοῦ μηνύματος τὸ ὅποιο Ἐκεῖνος μᾶς δίδει, ἀλλὰ λόγφ τῆς ἀληθινῆς ἐμπειρίας τῆς ζωῆς μας καὶ τοῦ κέντρου τῆς πίστεώς μας – λόγφ τῶν προκλήσεων, τῆς χαρᾶς, τῶν ἀγώνων καὶ τῶν νικῶν πού βιώνουμε ἐνῶ ἀκολουθοῦμε τὴν διαδρομὴ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ Κυρίου μας. Ὅμιλοῦμε βασιζόμενοι στὴν πνευματικὴ γνώση μας καὶ στὴν ἐμπειρία τῆς ζωῆς μας.

Καθὼς ζοῦμε κάθε ἡμέρα μὲ τὴν παρουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀκούοντες τὸν λόγο Του πού μᾶς ὀδηγεῖ στὴν ἀγάπη. Ἀκολουθώντας τὸ θέλημά Του καὶ κατανοώντας τὴ δύναμή Του μέσα μας, γνωρίζουμε ὅτι εἴμεθα ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

fr. Ambrasio Δημήτριος

† Ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Ἀμερικῆς Δημήτριος

Εγκύκλιος

► Σελίδα 15

φόροι γυναῖκες, ὄρθρον βαθέος, ἦλθον πρὸς τὸ Μνήμα τοῦ Ζωοδότου. Στὸ Εὐαγγέλιο τοῦ Λουκᾶ διαβάζουμε πῶς οἱ μυροφόρες γυναῖκες εἶδαν ὅτι ἡ πέτρα πού σφράγιζε τὸν τάφο εἶχε μετατοπισθεῖ, καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἔλειπε. *Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαί αὐτάς περὶ τούτου καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπούση. Ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς. Τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν; Οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη. Μνήσθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν ἔτι ὢν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ λέγων τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅτι δεῖ παραδοθῆναι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων ἀμαρτωλῶν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστῆναι* (Λουκ. 24: 4-7).

Ἐνα κεντρικὸ σημεῖο αὐτοῦ τοῦ εδαφίου, ὅπως καταγράφηκε στὰ Εὐαγγέλια τοῦ Ματθαίου καὶ τοῦ Μάρκου εἶναι ἡ ἀναφορά στοὺς λόγους τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν* (Ματθ. 28:6), *ἐκεῖ Αὐτόν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν* (Μάρ. 16:7), *μνήσθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν* (Λουκ. 24:6).

Οἱ ἄγγελοι προέτρεψαν τὶς γυναῖκες καὶ τοὺς μαθητὲς νὰ θυμηθοῦν τὴ φωνὴ καὶ τοὺς λόγους τοῦ Χριστοῦ, νὰ ἀναλογισθοῦν ὅσα εἶχαν συμβεῖ καὶ νὰ ἀναγνωρίσουν ὅτι οἱ ὑποσχέσεις τοῦ Κυρίου εἶχαν ἐκπληρωθεῖ. Ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ τάφος δὲν ἦταν ἱκανοὶ νὰ κρατήσουν τὸν Υἱὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Ὅποιος, ὅπως εἶχε πεί, θὰ ἀνίστατο μετὰ τὴν ταφή Του διότι ἦτο ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ!

Γιὰ τοὺς μαθητὲς, ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἦτο ἀληθινὴ ἐμπειρία. Οἱ ἴδιοι ἦσαν παρόντες σὲ ὅλα τὰ θαυματουργὰ γεγονότα καὶ τὶς διδασκαλίες Του. Μετὰ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀνάστασι καὶ τὴν Ἀνάληψή Του *οὐ δύναντο ἄ εἶδον*

καὶ ἤκουσον μὴ λαλεῖν (Πράξεις 4:20).

Δεχόμενοι τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο μὲ πίστη, ἐπιβεβαιώνουμε κι' ἐμεῖς καὶ διακηρύσσουμε τὴν δύναμη καὶ τὴν ἀλήθεια τοῦ Πάθους καὶ τῆς Ἀναστάσεώς Του. Διὰ τῆς λατρείας μας καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ παρουσίας Του ἀνάμεσά μας, ἀκοῦμε τὴ φωνὴ Του, ἐπιβεβαιώνουμε τὴν ἐκπλήρωση τῶν ὑποσχέσεών Του, καὶ διακηρύσσουμε στὸν κόσμο τὴν σωτηρία καὶ τὴν ἀφθονὴ ζωὴ τὴν ὅποια ἔχουμε μέσφ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ ἀναστάντος Κυρίου μας. Βλέπουμε καὶ ἀκοῦμε, καὶ γινόμεθα ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ!

Σήμερα, στὴν πανήγυρη τῆς χαρᾶς, τοῦ φωτός καὶ τῆς ζωῆς, διακηρύσσουμε στὸν κόσμο τὸ ἅγιο Πάσχα. Ψάλλουμε γιὰ ἓνα νέο καὶ ἅγιο Πάσχα, ἓνα Πάσχα πού ἀνοίξε γιὰ μᾶς τὶς πύλες τοῦ Παραδείσου.

Ἀτενίζουμε μία καινούργια ἀνατολή καθὼς ὁ νυμφίος ἐξέρχεται τοῦ τάφου, καταργώντας τὴ δύναμη τοῦ θανάτου, σώζοντάς μας ἀπὸ τὴ φθορὰ, ἐξαγοράζοντάς μας ἀπὸ τὴ λύπη, ἔτσι ὥστε νὰ ψάλλουμε χαρούμενα τοὺς ὕμνους τῆς σωτηρίας καὶ τῆς αἰώνιας ζωῆς.

Ἀτενίζουμε τὴν ἐνδοξὴ Ἀνάστασις τοῦ Κυρίου μας. Καὶ ὅπως οἱ ἄγγελοι εἶπαν στὶς γυναῖκες οἱ ὅποιοις ἔκειναν ἐκθαμβες κοιτώντας τὸν ἄδειο τάφο, τὸν ἀκοῦμε νὰ λέει, Δράμετε καὶ τῷ κόσμῳ κηρύξατε ὡς Ἄνεστη ὁ Κύριος καταργήσας τὸν θάνατον.

Μὲ πατρικὴ ἐν Χριστῶ Ἀναστάντι ἀγάπη,

fr. Ambrasio Δημήτριος

† Ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Ἀμερικῆς Δημήτριος



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† ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ

ΕΛΕΘ ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ
ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ,
ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ
ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ ΠΑΝΤΙ ΤΩ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΙ
ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ
ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ ΠΑΡΑ ΘΕΟΥ

Ἡ ἁγία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία μας «ὡς πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον στολισαμένη» τὰ αἵματα τῶν μαρτύρων της, τὰ δάκρυα τῶν ὁσίων της καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὰς θυσίας τῶν ὁμολογητῶν τῆς πίστεώς της, ἐορτάζει σήμερον τὴν ἡμέραν τῶν ὀνομαστηρίων της. Ὁρθῶς καὶ δικαίως ἐκλήθη καὶ καθιερώθη ὡς «Κυριακὴ τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας» ἡ ἡμέρα, κατὰ τὴν ὁποίαν μετὰ ἀπὸ περίοδον ἐνὸς αἰῶνος σκληρῶν ἀγῶνων ἡ ἀλήθεια ἔλαμψε καὶ κατίσχυσε τοῦ ψεύδους διὰ τῆς προσκυνήσεως ὡς φορέων προσωπικῆς παρουσίας καὶ θείας χάριτος τῶν ἱερῶν εἰκόνων τοῦ σαρκωθέντος Υἱοῦ καὶ Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων Του.

Δι' αὐτοῦ τοῦ τρόπου ἀνεγνωρίσθη καὶ διεκηρύχθη ἅπασι ἔτι ὅτι «ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν» (Ἰωάν. α' 14) τιμήσας οὕτω καὶ ἁγιάσας τὴν ὄλικὴν κτίσιν καὶ τὸ σῶμα μας, διὰ τὰ καταστήσῃ «κοινωνοὺς θείας φύσεως» (πρβλ. Β' Πέτρ. α' 4), μετόχους τῆς θείας χάριτος καὶ ζωῆς.

Εἰς τὴν μεγάλην αὐτὴν καὶ σωτήριον ἀλήθειαν, τὴν ὁποίαν ἐπολέμησαν οἱ ἀρνηταὶ τῆς προσκυνήσεως τῶν ἱερῶν εἰκόνων, ἡ ὁδὸς πρὸς κατίσχυσιν τῆς ἀληθείας ἔναντι τοῦ ψεύδους, ὑπῆρξε καὶ εἰς τὴν περίπτωσιν αὐτὴν ἐκείνη, τὴν ὁποίαν ἠκολούθησεν ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καθ' ὅλην τὴν διαδρομὴν τῆς ἱστορίας της, καὶ αὐτὴ δὲν ἦτο ἄλλη ἀπὸ ἐκείνην τῆς συνοδικότητος.

Ἡ διάκρισις μεταξὺ ἀληθείας καὶ ψεύδους, ὀρθοδοξίας καὶ αἱρέσεως, δὲν εἶναι πάντοτε εὐχερῆς. Καὶ οἱ αἱρετικοὶ ἐπίστευον καὶ πιστεύουν ὅτι κατέχουν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ θὰ ὑπάρχουν πάντοτε ἐκείνοι, οἱ ὁποῖοι θὰ χαρακτηρίζουν ὡς «αἱρετικούς» τοὺς μὴ συμφωνοῦντας πρὸς τὰς ἀπόψεις των. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία εἰς τὴν περίπτωσιν αὐτὴν μίαν καὶ μόνον αὐθεντιαν ἀναγνωρίζει: τὴν Σύνοδον τῶν κανονικῶν ἐπισκόπων της. Ἄνευ συνοδικῆς ἀποφάσεως ἡ διάκρισις μεταξὺ ὀρθοδοξίας καὶ αἱρέσεως δὲν εἶναι δυνατὴ. Ὅλα τὰ δόγματα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ οἱ ἱεροὶ κανόνες της φέρουν τὴν σφραγίδα τῆς συνοδικότητος. Ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία εἶναι ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς συνοδικότητος.

Τὴν ἐκκλησιολογικὴν ταύτην ἀρχὴν ἀνεκαθεν ἐτόνισεν ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, καὶ τὴν ἐφαρμόζει πιστῶς εἰς τοπικὸν ἐπίπεδον. Τοῦτο ἴσχυεν ἐπὶ πολλοὺς αἰῶνας καὶ ἐπὶ ἐπίπεδον οἰκουμενικῆς ἢ πανορθοδόξου, διεκότητος ὁμῶς λόγῳ ἱστορικῶν συγκυριῶν ἐπὶ μακρόν. Σήμερον εὐρισκόμεθα εἰς τὴν εὐχάριστον θέσιν νὰ ἀναγγεῖλωμεν καὶ ἐπισημῶς ἀπὸ τῆς ἱεράς ταύτης οἰκουμενικῆς καθέδρας ὅτι, χάριτι Θεοῦ, συμφωνία πάντων τῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν Ἀγιωτάτων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, θέλει πραγματοποιηθῆ ἡ ἀπὸ πεντήκοντα καὶ πλέον ἐτῶν ἀποφασισθεῖσα Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλῃ Σύνοδος συνόλου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ νήσῳ Κρήτῃ ἀπὸ 18ης ἕως 27ης Ἰουνίου ἐ. ἔ., τῆς ὁποίας αἱ ἐργασίαι θὰ ἀρχίσουν διὰ πανορθοδόξου Θείας Λειτουργίας ἐν τῷ ἐν Ἡρακλεῖῳ Ἱερῷ Ναῷ τοῦ Ἁγίου Μηνᾶ κατὰ τὴν μεγάλην καὶ εὐσημον ἡμέραν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, θὰ συνεχισθοῦν δὲ ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἀκαδημίᾳ παρὰ τὸ Κολυμβάριον Χανίων. Τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλῃς ταύτης Συνόδου θέλει προεδρεύσει ἡ ἡμετέρα Μετριότης περιστοιχι-

ζόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, θὰ μετάσχουν δὲ ὡς μέλη αὐτῆς ἀντιπροσωπεῖα ἐξ ἀρχιερέων ὅλων τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν τούτων.

Πρώτιστος σκοπὸς καὶ σπουδαιότερος τῆς Πανορθοδόξου ταύτης Συνόδου εἶναι νὰ καταδειχθῇ ὅτι ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία εἶναι ἡ Μία, Ἁγία, Καθολικὴ καὶ Ἀποστολικὴ Ἐκκλησία, ἡνωμένη ἐν τοῖς Μυστηρίοις, καὶ μάλιστα τῇ Θεῖᾳ Εὐχαριστίᾳ, καὶ τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ πίστει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ συνοδικότητι. Διὸ καὶ προητοιμάσθη αὐτῇ ἐπὶ μακρόν χρονικὸν διάστημα διὰ σειρᾶς Προπαρασκευαστικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν καὶ Προσυνοδικῶν Διασκέψεων, ὡστε τὰ Κείμενα τῶν ἀποφάσεών της νὰ διαπνέωνται ὑπὸ ὁμοφωνίας, καὶ ὁ λόγος της νὰ ἐκφέρεται «ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι καὶ μῶ καρδίᾳ».

Τὰ θέματα, τὰ ὁποῖα θὰ ἀπασχολήσουν τὴν Ἁγίαν καὶ Μεγάλῃν Σύνοδον, καθορισθέντα πανορθοδόξως ἤδη κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἀποφάσεως τῆς συγκλήσεώς της, ἄπτονται κυρίως προβλημάτων ἐσωτερικῆς δομῆς καὶ ζωῆς τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, τὰ ὁποῖα χρήζουν ἀμέσου διευθετήσεως, ὡς καὶ ζητημάτων ἀφορώντων εἰς τὰς σχέσεις τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας πρὸς τὸν λοιπὸν χριστιανικὸν κόσμον καὶ τὴν ἀποστολὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὴν ἐποχὴν μας. Γνωρίζομεν, βεβαίως, ὅτι ὁ κόσμος ἀναμένει νὰ ἀκούσῃ τὴν φωνὴν τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἐκ τῶν φλεγόντων προβλημάτων, τὰ ὁποῖα ἀπασχολοῦν τὸν σύγχρονον ἄνθρωπον. Ἀλλὰ ἐκρίθη ἀναγκαῖον ὅπως ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία διευθετήσῃ πρῶτον τὰ τοῦ οἴκου της πρὶν ἢ ἐκφέρῃ λόγον πρὸς τὸν κόσμον, πρᾶγμα τὸ ὁποῖον δὲν ἔχει παῦσει νὰ θεωρῆ χρέος της. Τὸ ὅτι μετὰ τὴν πάροδον τῶσαν αἰῶνων ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία ἐκφράζει τὴν συνοδικότητά της ἐπὶ παγκοσμίου ἐπίπεδου ἀποτελεῖ τὸ πρῶτον καὶ ἀποφασιστικὸν βῆμα, τὸ ὁποῖον ἀναμένεται ὅτι διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ μετ' οὐ πολὺ θὰ ἀκολουθήσουν καὶ ἄλλα διὰ τῆς συγκλήσεως, σὺν Θεῷ, καὶ ἄλλων Πανορθοδόξων Συνόδων.

Ἀδελφοὶ ἀγαπητοὶ
καὶ τέκνα προσφιλεῖ ἐν Κυρίῳ,

Τὰ μεγάλα ἱστορικὰ γεγονότα κατευθύνονται ἀπὸ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ Ὁποῖος καί, τελικῶς, εἶναι ὁ Κύριος τῆς Ἰστορίας. Ἡμεῖς σπείρομεν καὶ κοπιῶμεν, ἀλλ' ὁ αὐξάνων εἶναι ὁ Θεός (πρβλ. Α' Κορ. γ' 8). Ἡ Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλῃ Σύνοδος τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἀποτελεῖ,

ὄντως, γεγονὸς ἱστορικὸν καὶ εἰς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ μόνον ἐναποθέτομεν τὴν ἐκβάσιν του. Καλοῦμεν, ὅθεν, πάντας τοὺς Ὁρθοδόξους ἀνὰ τὸν κόσμον πιστοὺς, κληρὸν καὶ λαόν, εἰς προσευχὴν πρὸς τὸν ἐν Τριάδι Θεὸν ὅπως στέψῃ διὰ τῶν εὐλογιῶν Του τὸ γεγονὸς τοῦτο, διὰ νὰ οἰκοδομηθῇ δι' αὐτοῦ ἡ Ἐκκλησία Του καὶ δοξασθῇ τὸ πανάγιον Ὄνομα Του. Οἱ καιροὶ εἶναι κρίσιμοι καὶ ἡ ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δέον νὰ ἀποτελέσῃ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα τῆς ἐνότητος τῆς σπαρασσομένης ἀπὸ διαιρέσεις καὶ συγκρούσεις ἀνθρωπότητος. Ἡ ἐπιτυχία τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλῃς Συνόδου εἶναι ὑπόθεσις ὅλων τῶν μελῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τὰ ὁποῖα καὶ καλοῦνται νὰ ἐπιδείξουν τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον των δι' αὐτὴν. Ἦδη, τὰ συμφωνηθέντα πανορθοδόξως καὶ ὑποβαλλόμενα εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν καὶ Μεγάλῃν Σύνοδον κείμενα δημοσιοποιοῦνται καὶ τίθενται εἰς τὴν διάθεσιν παντός κατοποραίετου πιστοῦ πρὸς πληροφορίαν καὶ ἐνημέρωσιν του, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἔκφρασιν τῆς γνώμης του καὶ τῶν προσδοκιῶν του ἀπὸ τὴν Ἁγίαν καὶ Μεγάλῃν Σύνοδον.

Ταῦτα ἀγγέλλοντες παντὶ τῷ πληρώματι τῆς ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὴν εὐσημον ταύτην ἡμέραν εὐχόμεθα ὅπως Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς δωρήται τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ Αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν πλουσίαν τὴν χάριν καὶ εὐλογίαν Του, δῶν δὲ καὶ τῷ κόσμῳ παντὶ «τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντός ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ» (Β' Θεοσ. γ', 16).

Ἐν ἔτει σωτηριῶ βίς, κατὰ μῆνα Μάρτιον (κ')
Ἐπινεμήσεως Θ'

† Ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος, διάπυρος πρὸς Θεὸν εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Περγάμου Ἰωάννης, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Ντένβερ Ἡσαΐας, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Ἀτλάντας Ἀλέξιος, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Πριγκηποννήσων Ἰάκωβος, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Προικοννήσου Ἰωσήφ, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Φιλαδελφείας Μελίτων, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Γαλλίας Ἐμμανουήλ, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Δαρδανελλίων Νικήτας, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Ντητρούτ Νικόλαος, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Ἁγίου Φραγκίσκου Γεράσιμος, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Σηλυβρίας Μάξιμος, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης
† Ὁ Ἀδριανουπόλεως Ἀμφιλόχιος, ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχέτης



GOA/Δ. Πανάγος

Δεξίωση για την 25^η Μαρτίου 1821

► Σελίδα 15

Δημήτριο για τα ευγενή και σοφά του λόγια, τὴν προσωπικὴ φιλία του, τὴν ευαισθησία καὶ φιλευσπλαχνία με τὴν ὁποία υπηρετεῖ τὴν Ἐκκλησία καὶ τὸ λαὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ὁ κ. Ομπάμα εἶπε ἐπίσης ὅτι γιορτάζουμε τὴν ἀπὸ κοινού καὶ παράλληλη πορεία Η.Π.Α. καὶ Ἑλλάδος καὶ τόνισε τὸν ισχυρὸς δεσμοὺς φιλίας στὴν ἱστορία των δύο χωρῶν, δεσμοὶ αἰῶνων που, ὅπως εἶπε, παραμένουν ἰσχυροὶ μέχρι σήμερα. Ὁ Πρόεδρος Ομπάμα ἀναφέρθηκε ἰδιαίτερα στὴν κρίση καὶ στὶς προκλήσεις που ἀντιμετωπίζει ὁ ἐλληνικὸς λαός, στὴν ἀντοχή, στὴν ἐπιμονὴ καὶ υπομονή που οἱ Ἕλληνες ἔχουν ὑποδείξει καθ' ὅλην τὴν πορεία τῆς ἱστορίας καὶ ἰδιαίτερα στο ὑψηλὸ ἦθος που ἐπιδεικνύουν στὴν ὑποδοχὴ καὶ φροντίδα των προσφύγων ἀπὸ τὴ Συρία. Εἶπε ἀκόμη ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ προσήλωση στο «κοινὸ μας ἰδανικὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπιάς καὶ στα δημοκρατικὰ ἰδεώδη» εἶναι ὁ λόγος που ἡ Ἑλλάδα θὰ βγεῖ ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς τοὺς δύσκολους καιροὺς ἰσχυρότερη ἀπὸ ποτέ.

Ὁ πρόεδρος υπογράμμισε τὴ σημασία τῆς τεραστίας προσφοράς καὶ των ἐπιτευγμάτων τῆς Ἑλληνοαμερικανικῆς Κοινότητος καὶ τοὺς στενοὺς δεσμοὺς της με τὴν Ἑλλάδα. Δεν εἶναι ἀπλῶς μια σχέση μεταξύ των κυβερνήσεων, εἶπε ὁ Πρόεδρος, εἶναι μια σχέση μεταξύ οἰκογενειῶν καὶ φίλων καὶ εἶναι δεσμοὶ ἀρρηκτοί.

Τέλος, ὁ κ. Ομπάμα δήλωσε ὅτι οἱ Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες θὰ σταθοῦν στὴν Ἑλλάδα ὡς ἀκλόνητος φίλος καὶ εταῖρος σε κάθε βῆμα, καὶ ἐκλείσει με τὸ ἐπιφώνημα «Ζήτω ἡ Ἑλλάς!»

Μεταξὺ των προσκεκλημένων παρευρέθησαν ἡ Ἑλληνοαμερικανίδα Ὑπουργὸς Υγείας τῆς κυβερνήσεως Ομπάμα, κυρία Sylvia Matthews Burwell, ὁ Ὑφυπουργὸς Οικονομίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, Ἀλέξης Χαρίσιος, ὁ Ἑλληνοαμερικανὸς Βουλευτὴς τῆς Βουλῆς των Ἀντιπροσώπων, John Sarbanes, ὁ περιφερειάρχης Κεντρικῆς Ἑλλάδος, Κώστας Μπακογιάννης, οἱ πρέσβεις τῆς Ἑλλάδος, Χρῖστος Παναγιώπουλος καὶ τῆς Κύπρου, Γιῶργος Σιακαλλῆς, φιλέλληνες μέλη του Κογκρέσου καὶ ἀξιωματοῦχοι τῆς Ομοσπονδιακῆς κυβερνήσεως.



Φωτογραφία: Ηλίας Νεοφυτίδης

Εορτασμός της Ημέρας της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας στο Χιούστον

Ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ανεξαρτησίας εορτάστηκε καὶ φέτος στο ἀπογευματινὸ σχολεῖο τῆς Ἑλληνορθοδόξου κοινότητος τοῦ Ἁγίου Βασιλείου στο Χιούστον, Τέξας. Στο στιγμιότυπο ἀνάμεσα στους μαθητὲς ὁ π. Λουκ Παλούμπης, οἱ διδασκάλισσες Ροσαλία Γιαννάκη, Χαρά Τσῶνη, Ἀγγελικὴ Χασοῦρη, Λίνα Παπαϊωάννου καὶ ἡ διευθύντρια Ἑλενα Νικολάου. Συντονιστὴς τῆς ἐκδήλωσις, Πέτρος Σκουμπουρδῆς.

CHURCH HISTORY

Parishes, Priests, and Immigration: Charting the Growth of the Church in America

by William H. Samonides, Ph.D.

More than 600 Greek Orthodox parishes were established in North America since the formation in 1864 of the first parish, Holy Trinity, in New Orleans.

Although the Church sustained growth over the last century and a half, the greatest period of expansion was between 1910 and 1930, when more than 200 parishes were created. The peak was between 1916 and 1918, when a new parish was established every three weeks.

The timing of this growth spurt did not coincide with the time when the greatest number of Greek Orthodox faithful were coming to America.

During the two Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, men returned to Greece to fight against the Ottoman Turks and Bulgarians. Many of those who fought would return to America, but their absence postponed the formation of parishes by several years.

Beginning in 1916, the number of parishes being established in America increased dramatically. Much of the Western world was occupied by World War I, which raged from July 28, 1914 to Nov. 11, 1918. As ships came under attack by submarines and warships, transatlantic passenger traffic declined sharply. There were fewer immigrant arrivals and fewer departures for Greece. Most of the steamships were owned by citizens and companies of countries involved in the conflict, and they converted the ships for wartime use as troop transports, cargo ships, and floating hospitals.

Many of the early Greek immigrants who had intended to work temporarily in this country began to reconsider those plans. As war industries expanded, the economy was booming.

The National Defense Act of June 3, 1916 and the Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917 also siphoned off a significant part of the labor force. As American men joined the United States armed forces, employment opportunities for non-citizens increased.

Although many Greeks volunteered to fight in the American armed forces, many did not, remaining behind to work in the war industries. Many chose to settle here permanently.

A final factor contributing to the spike in parish formation in America at this time was the political fervor that led some to support Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, who championed the entrance of Greece into the War on the side of the

Allies, and others to support King Constantine I, who espoused Greek neutrality. Partisan wrangling split parishes throughout America, resulting in the creation of many new short-term parishes.

There was also a brief but dramatic increase in the number of priests immigrating to America. In 1916, 33 Greek Orthodox priests arrived in America, the most ever to come to this country in one year. In 1917, the number dropped to six priests. It was not until 1920, that the immigration of large numbers of priests to this country would resume.

Among the many eminent priests who came to serve in America in 1916 was Mark E. Petrakis (1885-1951). A native of Crete, Father Petrakis was assigned by the Holy Synod of Greece to be the founding priest at the Assumption parish in Price, Utah. He arrived shortly before the church was dedicated on August 15, 1916. After stints in Savannah and St. Louis, he moved in 1923 to Chicago, where he served Sts. Constantine and Helen on the South Side of Chicago.

The second oldest continuously-operating parish in Chicago, Sts. Constantine and Helen was established in 1909, but it matured as a parish under his guidance. He instituted the choir, Sunday school, Greek school, ladies society, and other parish organizations.

He is perhaps best remembered for his response to the disastrous fire that destroyed the church on April 26, 1926 after Palm Sunday services.

According to the parish history, "at great personal risk, Fr. Petrakis raced into the burning church and rescued the holy relics from the sanctuary.

This heroic act provided a sense of pride for the parishioners and their unwavering support for the future success of the parish." Under Fr. Petrakis, the church was rebuilt the following year. He would remain as their priest until his death in 1951.

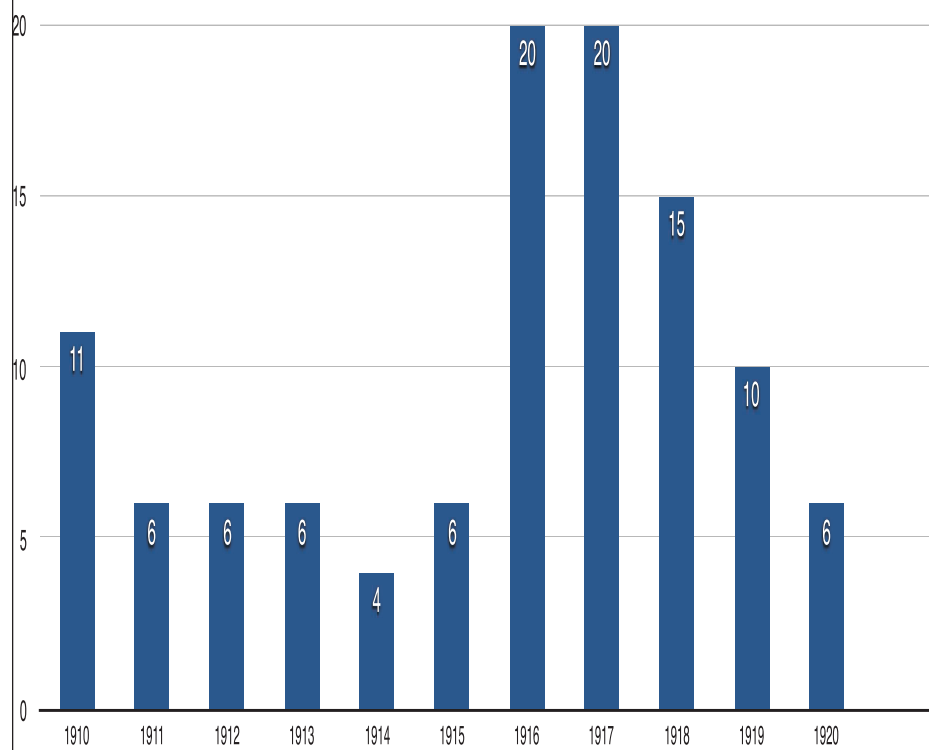
A precise and comprehensive chronology of the establishment of the parishes is an important measure of the growth of our Church in America.

There were, for example, six parishes established in 1915:

Location Parish Date and occasion

1. Schenectady N.Y., St. George, April 19, 1915; state charter
2. Toledo Ohio, Holy Trinity, June 9, 1915; state charter
3. Pocatello Idaho, Assumption, Aug. 15, 1915; church consecration

■ CHART 1: Greek Orthodox Parishes Established in America 1910-1920



4. Newport R.I., St Spyridon, Sept. 14, 1915; state charter
5. East Pittsburgh Pa., Ypapanti, Nov. 21, 1915; 1st Divine Liturgy
6. Dallas, Holy Trinity, Nov. 21, 1915; 1st Divine Liturgy

Many parishes have generously provided information about the establishment of their church. To include the information about the "birthday" of your parish in this chronology, contact the writer at htgochistorian@aol.com or 330-452-5162.

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PASCHA ENCYCLICAL

▷ from page 1

Passion and Resurrection as well. Through our worship and His power and presence in our midst, we hear His voice, we affirm the fulfillment of His promises, and we proclaim to the world the salvation and abundant life found in Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. We see and hear, and we become the voice of Christ!

Today, in our festival of joy, light and life, we proclaim to the world a sacred Pascha. We sing of a new and holy Pascha, a Pascha that has opened unto us the gates of Paradise. We see a new dawn as the bridegroom comes forth from the tomb, abolishing the power of death, lifting us up from

corruption, ransoming us from sorrow, so that we chant joyously the hymns of salvation and life everlasting.

We see the glorious Resurrection of our Lord. And as the angels said to the women who marveled at the empty tomb, we hear Him say, "Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen!" Christ is risen indeed!

With paternal love in the Risen Lord,

Archbishop Demetrios

† DEMETRIOS, Archbishop of America

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COMMENTARY

Praying for a President

by Timothy Patitsas, Ph.D.

How should we as Orthodox Christians think about the political process which secures our liberties and is therefore in some sense sacred?

First, we must remind ourselves to give thanks that we have the right to choose our own leaders, the right to speak our minds openly, the right to organize and coordinate with others who share our political principles.

Second, we ought of course to realize just how serious the business of self-government is.

The choices we make on Election Day, even if it be the choice not to vote at all, may implicate us in the policies and decisions made by our elected leaders.

These leaders act in our name, doing what they think will win our approval, and in order to protect and advance what we tell them are our interests. In a real sense, they are our agents and we are their principals.

Since we may someday have to repent as a people because of the actions these leaders will undertake, we must consider carefully before we endow them with the authority to make life and death decisions for our nation and for the world.

This brings us to a third point. Among men and women of high political principle, there are sharp differences of opinion about what constitutes the moral course of civic action. We disagree about the morality of domestic and foreign policy alike.

One man thinks it immoral to initiate a war; another thinks it a crime that we do not send the military to correct injustice.

One woman is confident that a moral nation would do more for the poor, while another woman protests that some government anti-poverty programs do more to harm than to help the vulnerable.

When we look to the Church for guidance, we are told that Her business is not politics. Yet can this be true, when politics really comes down to the discussion and establishment of public moral life?

The Orthodox Church was born in a different era when political life was understood differently. To understand the wisdom and maturity of the Church's approach to politics, we must consider the sophisticated civilizational milieu in which she first faced the responsibility of advising political leaders.

Until 500 years ago there was an ancient and simple political philosophy that was common almost to the entire human race. In pictures and rituals, this political philosophy was so elemental that later generations viewed it as a kind of fairy tale.

In brief, the king was thought to be the husband of the people. The priests, meanwhile, were considered to be the necessary celebrants of this civic wedding.

As I said, to our dull, modern ears, this narrative seems laughable. But we should beware of mocking the ancients, lest we become like children who reject their elders'

wisdom, only to regret it later.

Besides, it just so happens that our entire Orthodox faith and our entire liturgical year are centered on the wedding of a King and His City. I am talking of course, about Holy Week.

So what did the ancients know that we have forgotten? What secret to political life is hidden right before our eyes even within the Great and Holy Week? The secret is this: Civilization requires the marriage of two conflicting sets of ethical values. Moreover, because these valuations of morality are in conflict, their marriage always takes a miracle. One approach to social ethics regards consent as the ultimate touchstone of morality. This view emphasizes the rights of the individual. A second approach regards mutual support as the hallmark of genuine moral order. This view emphasizes the rights of the community itself.

The first view is appropriate to business; it relies on contract.

The second view is appropriate to government; it relies on law and regulation.

Because these views are both needed, yet are also in conflict, ancient societies turned to religion to make the civic union possible. In the medieval period, the two main syndromes were known as "those who work" and "those who fight." The priests were "those who pray," and they had a mediating function between the other two orders.

Today, in almost every area of life, our two main political parties disagree as to what blend of private enterprise and government action will produce a just and harmonious social order. Nevertheless, with very few exceptions, supporters of both parties do respect the need for these two conflicting approaches to social justice, one of them based in innovation and consent, and the other calling upon the force of law and regulation. Whether we are Republicans or Democrats, Libertarians or Socialists, as Orthodox Christians let us, however, hold one force highest of all in our hearts: Love. If with both hands we are involved in the political process, let us in the inner chambers of our hearts appeal to the God of mercy for the miracle our nation so desperately needs.

That miracle would be that our challenging election process should not only bring us a President who will be equal to the myriad challenges we face, but that along the way we should each learn to respect and love the representatives of opposing political views even more than we do now.

"So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. ... Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Hebrews 13:12-16

Dr. Patitsas is professor of ethics at HCHC.

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PARISH PROFILE

A Dynamic Orthodox Presence in an Atlanta Suburb

PARISH profile

Name: Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church

Location: Marietta, Ga.

Metropolis of Atlanta

Founded: 1988

Clergy: Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, M. Div., Holy Cross '84; Ph.D., Catholic University of America '95; Fr. Paul Lundberg, assistant, M. Div., Holy Cross 2012; Fr. George Pallas (retired), assists with services, attended Patras seminary, native of Messinia, Greece.

Size: About 400 families

Web: www.holytrans.org

E-mail: holytrans@comcast.net

Noteworthy: Community hopes to establish a full-time Christian day school.



Holy Transfiguration Church photo

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARIETTA, Ga. – One of the newest parishes of the Metropolis of Atlanta, Holy Transfiguration Church took root in the late 1980s in this northwestern suburb of Atlanta through the efforts of parishioners of Atlanta's Annunciation Cathedral.

The church has a major presence in this city of more than 60,000 population.

"This is a dynamic parish; a lot of good people looking for God," said Fr. Papageorgiou, who has served the community for 10 years.

Education is a major emphasis, not only for the youth, but for adults as well.

Sunday school, adult catechetical classes and Bible study, Greek school and adult Greek school classes are the ongoing programs that transmit the faith and culture to the faithful.

Fr. Papageorgiou also holds retreats during the year, not only at the parish, but at other churches as well.

A major conference is planned at the parish for the fall that will take place over two weekends and will serve as an outreach to the greater Marietta community. In addition to Fr. Panayiotis as the featured speaker, the conference will include presentations by two Protestant clergymen holding Ph.Ds who are sympathetic to Orthodoxy.

Fr. Panayiotis is a noted Orthodox scholar. Though he started out pursuing degrees in chemical engineering (He studied chemical engineering at the City College of New York, earning a Bachelor's degree in engineering cum laude, then continued his studies on a Graduate Research Scholarship at the University of Notre Dame where he completed his Master's degree in chemical engineering).

But he felt called to the priesthood and enrolled at Holy Cross School of Theology, then completed his Ph.D., at the Catholic University of America in Washington, specializing in the history and theology of the Early Christian Church.

A member of the International Association for Patristic Studies, the Orthodox Theological Society of America and the North American Patristic Society, he travels to various conferences to present academic papers, including Oxford University and other patristic conferences.

At Transfiguration Church, his goal is to establish an Orthodox school in the future that would be open to everyone. He said it would provide "a classical education with an Orthodox Christian foundation.

The parish is undertaking a renovation program on its existing buildings and adding an extension that will contain classrooms.

About 70 percent of the church's operating budget is supported through stewardship, with the rest coming from donations, candles and fund-raisers.

Revenue from the annual Greek festival is not used for the operation of the church, Fr. Panayiotis explained, but instead goes toward supporting charitable organizations and causes in the greater Marietta community, with some used for the building fund.

Transfiguration Church has an extensive youth ministry, including a large Greek dance program, with several age groups taking part in the annual Hellenic Dance Festival of the Metropolis of Atlanta.

A Brief History

According to a parish history, on Sept. 18, 1988, 16 people attended a meeting at Eftichia and Allen Macris' home to discuss their need for establishing a local Greek Orthodox Church in the northwestern suburbs of Atlanta.

As the city grew and more Orthodox parishioners moved to the suburbs, more and more people found it difficult to travel to the Atlanta Cathedral for their spiritual and social needs. It became clear to these Orthodox Christians that a new parish was necessary to enable them to continue to be involved deeply with their families in the Orthodox Church.

Following this gathering, the first organizational meeting took place on Nov. 28, 1988 at a bank building where the Northwest Metro Atlanta Hellenic Association was established and the first officers were elected. The Association organized the first church services during Holy Week (April 23-29, 1989) at the St. James Episcopal Church in Marietta.

The process of organizing a parish commenced; 50 families pledged their support to the project and on Sunday, August 6, 1989, the group celebrated their first Divine Liturgy as "The Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church of Marietta" at the Ray Thomas Memorial Presbyterian Church on Sandy Plains Road. A month later, the new parish moved into a renovated storefront in the Sprayberry Crossings Shopping Center where it worshiped until Christmas of 1993. Cost of new building was \$6.5 million

Within the first year the membership

grew to 184 households and individuals.

New Growth and Future Plans

During the ensuing years, the growth of the parish was steady. The group attracted many new young families that were moving into the area. Most members are Greek Americans with many converts and very few immigrants. Both young and old, the people were generous in their support of the operations of the Parish and of the

new plans for permanent buildings and facilities.

In 1991, through the generosity of Tony and Dora Manolius (in honor of Dora's parents, Kimon and Despina Kutelis) the 7.5 acre tract of land on Trickum Road was purchased, which would eventually become the permanent home of the parish.

Under the leadership of their parish priest, then Fr. Sebastian Skordallos (now Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese), the community built its new church. On Christmas Eve 1993, they moved to the new location on Trickum Road and into their new multipurpose facility, which they were able to build. Fr. Sebastian was the parish's longest-serving priest, 11 ½ years.

The efforts for growth continued and were finally crowned with the construction of a beautiful Byzantine church. The opening of the doors took place in early January 2004.

This new leap ahead propelled the parish even further with the addition of over 100 new families.

Today, the parish continues its ambitious growth under the leadership of Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D. Future building plans include a gymnasium-athletic center, new classrooms, offices and other pertinent parish spaces.

The parish celebrated the consecration of its sanctuary on April 27, 2013.

– Compiled by Jim Golding



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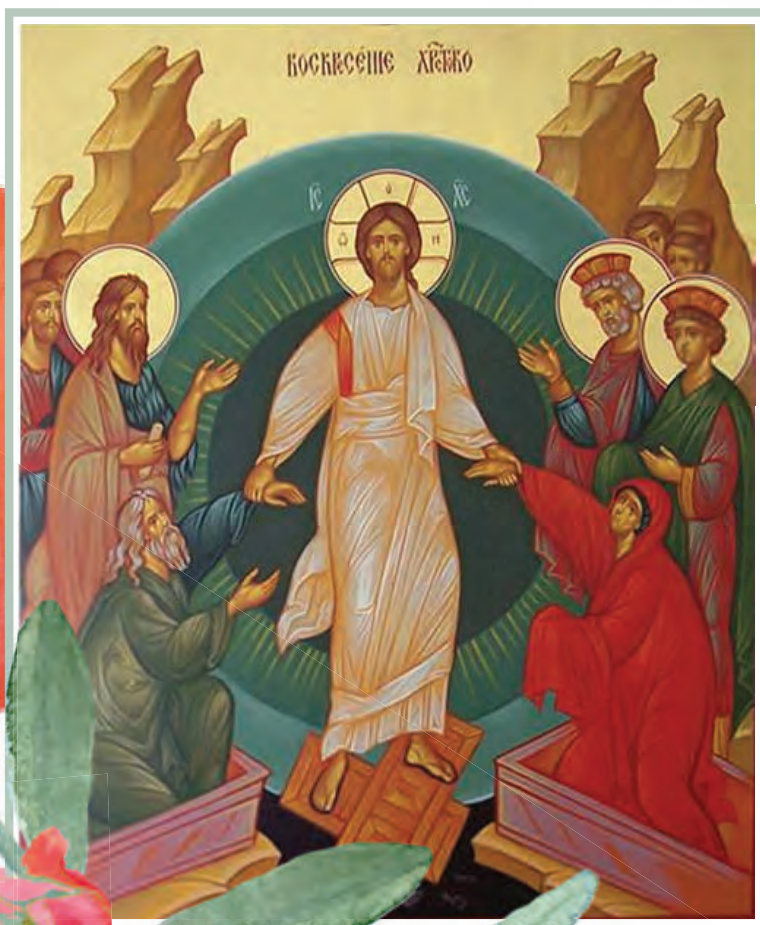
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Orthodox Christian Volunteers Serve Their St. Louis Neighbors

BALTIMORE – With support from International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), parishes from suburban St. Louis responded to the needs of their neighbors by helping to clean out homes that were damaged following record-setting flooding this winter. During January and February, members of the young adult group of Assumption Church in Town and Country, Mo, as well as parishioners of Sts. Constantine and Helen in Swansea, Ill., and St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in St. Louis, helped clean out some of the more than 4,000 homes affected by the Christmastime flooding.

“The damage in the neighborhood where we were working was catastrophic,” recounted Fr. Anastasios Theodoropoulos of Assumption Church, whose young adult group held an IOCC Saturday of Service in January. “The particular home that we were working in had been completely submerged by the rising river water, resulting in an almost total loss for the family.

“The family was grateful for our assistance, as it took us, along with another dozen or so volunteers from another Christian group, an entire day to pull out their destroyed belongings, carpets, drywall, and even the ceiling.”

Floods in December 2015 severely damaged homes, businesses, and farms that line the Mississippi River and its tributaries in Missouri and Illinois.

“It was very emotional both for us to enter a family home and leave behind only a frame of two-by-fours,”



R. Tumm/IOCC photo.
Fr. Achilles Karathanos, pastor of Sts. Constantine and Helen in Swansea, Ill., and Theophan Thompson assist in cleaning out a flood-damaged home in the St. Louis area. IOCC offers support to the community-based efforts of Orthodox Christian parishes throughout the United States to serve their local areas.

said Fr. Anastasios.

“The work gave us an opportunity to support our local community here in St. Louis and provided our parishioners an outlet to help our neighbors in what is certainly one of their lowest moments.”

High school sophomore Kara Tsikalas, along with her parents, was one of the parishioners who participated.

“I think that it’s really important to help our neighbor, especially in the wake of natural disasters, and being able to be here, and meet those whose homes were destroyed, makes me realize that real lives are affected, and we

need to help.”

Support for community-based

outreach by Orthodox Christians like the Saturday of Service in St. Louis is one part of IOCC’s national Orthodox Community Action Network (Orthodox CAN!), which promotes volunteerism across all age groups.

“We are excited to support community-based efforts by Orthodox Christian parishes like this—not just in times of acute need but also in serving the ongoing needs of the communities where Orthodox Christians are present,” said country representative Dan Christophoulos.

“Through acts of service to our neighbors, we not only grow in our own faith but also have the opportunity to share the love of Christ in a tangible way.”

IOCC is now equipped with an emergency vehicle carrying clean-up supplies and gear to support swift response to large-scale disasters in the United States.

“We are grateful for the continued support provided by Bill and Anastasia Hoeft to acquire and equip this vehicle to assist in disaster response efforts in the United States,” said Christophoulos. Its deployment after the flooding in the St. Louis area marked the first time the vehicle was used.

Fiji Families Receive Reconstruction Assistance

BALTIMORE – International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) has responded to the devastation caused in the South Pacific island nation of Fiji by Tropical Cyclone Winston on Feb. 20 with reconstruction assistance to families who have lost their homes. Houses, especially along the coast, were battered by both Category 5 cyclonic wind and tsunami-like storm surge. An estimated 40 percent of the population was affected by the cyclone and are now in need

of assistance. “We pray for all of the families in Fiji who have lost their loved ones, homes and crops as a result of the recent cyclone,” said IOCC Executive Director Constantine M. Triantafyllou. IOCC, working in cooperation with Metropolitan Amphilochios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Zealand, released funds from its International Emergency Response Fund to support

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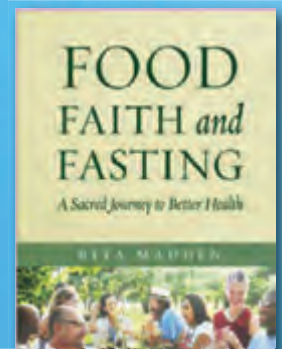
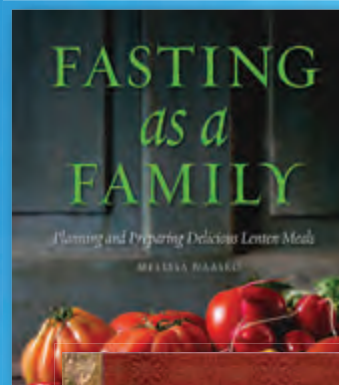
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White House Hosts Greek Independence Celebration

from page 3

heavy demands of your schedule, and the multitude of cares you have for this nation and for the whole world, you offer to us so generously your time today at the White House to honor and celebrate March 25th the Day of Greek Independence.

In our constantly changing world, we remember the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, who said; "Nothing is permanent but change." What was a truism in the ancient world is exponentially more evident in our day.

Every year, technology moves forward, and the objects we use daily need updating or replacement. Think "cell phones"!

Every year, socio-economic conditions are transformed at a breathtaking speed.

Every year across our globe, political, geographical and ethnic boundaries shift and shift again.

President Kennedy rightly said, "Change is the law of life.

But change is not the only law of life, and there are other laws that stand outside the flux and flow of change.

Chief among them is the necessity of freedom as a fundamental and non-negotiable element of the human being. Freedom is a value that is grounded, not in laws or constitutions, or social conventions. Human freedom is grounded in an eternal reality, the very being and nature of God our Creator.

It is a core belief of our faith that every human being as created in the image and likeness of God is endowed with a full

existential freedom. In an ever-changing world, human freedom is an unchanging and universal fact directly derived from the absolutely free and unchanging God.

It was this uncompromising spiritual value of freedom that led the people of Greece in the year 1821 to rise up and throw off the yoke of bondage which heavily oppressed them for four hundred years. Their campaign for independence, for self-determination, for human dignity, was not merely an act of political will, but a deed of true faith and of a passionate desire for freedom. For it surely must be the divine will that all God's children should have life, liberty, and happiness in this world.

Mr. President,

I stand before you today as the representative of the descendants of these brave Greek believers. It is our prayer that the commitment to freedom of our forebears, sealed with their own blood, should be embraced and become palpable reality in the lives of all people.

The finest celebration of March 25th as Greek Independence Day occurs whenever people of goodwill work together for religious, political, economic, and social freedom for every man, woman, and child who bears the image of the free and unchanging God.

And on this auspicious day, we the Greek Orthodox faithful pray for God's blessing and safekeeping for the First Family, for the suffering people who are the descendants of the noble Greek heroes of 1821, for the entire world, and for our beloved United States of America.

Mr. President, thank you.

HCHC

Trustees Attend Lenten Retreat on Discipleship and Leadership

by Christine Karavites

CONTOOCOOK, N.H. – The St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Retreat Center provided the ideal setting for the HCHC Trustee Retreat on March 10-11.

Trustees joined Archbishop Demetrios, HCHC President Fr. Christopher Metropulos and Vice Chairman Dr. Tom Lelon for two days of reflection, prayer and fellowship.

The retreat began with a Vesper Service followed by dinner and fellowship. Metropolitan Methodios offered a warm welcome from the entire Metropolis of Boston and introduced Archbishop Demetrios for his pastoral reflection on discipleship and leadership. Archbishop Demetrios referred to the retreat as a Summit of Leaders, people with exceptional skill and initiative as well as exceptional faith who serve in leadership positions.

His Eminence stated that to fulfill our duties as leaders, we must be students of the faith as the 12 disciples are Apostles and students. Discipleship has a core calling as chosen to serve, "Come after me...follow me." Just as famous teachers selected their students we are called and appointed to go and bear fruit. We must increase in us the consciousness of being invited to be disciples which requires knowledge of Christ and His Teaching and offering Diakonia by serving and remembering that Diakonia presupposes a constant transformation. As a student we must continue to increase our knowledge. St. Ignatius at the age of 80 noted, "Now I begin to be a disciple." We must know Christ and His Gospel and demonstrate action as a servant.

Discipleship is connected with leadership that must be connected organically to discipleship. A leader must be a perfection of faith leading to salvation. In leadership if one wants to be first one must first learn to serve and demonstrate charisma from God to be a good disciple. We must be transformational leaders and put into action all our wisdom and all our discretion.

Fr. Christopher offered a vision for Hellenic College Holy Cross noting that the time is now to educate the next generation. We must be proactive to form the future generation that will help our Church by filling our school with dedicated individuals and creating a new generation of soldiers.

Archbishop Demetrios stated that we must communicate one of the best brands of Orthodoxy which is Hellenic College Holy Cross. Fr. Christopher offered an informative presentation on the ensuing Student Center Project. He expressed gratitude to the donors who have initiated this major project.

Deacon Gary Alexander, acting director of institutional advancement, Kevin Derrivan, chief financial officer and Fr. Nicholas Belcher, director of student services provided summaries of the financial, admissions and student affairs summits convened to establish a strategic direction for each component.

Friday included Interactive sessions featuring Trustee Dr. Peter Kanelos, dean of arts and Sciences at Valparaiso University who highlighted major points of governance, the importance of clearly delineated relationships and the position where the trustees are a 'Thought Partner'. The goal is to develop the best possible operational relationship where collaboration is key.

Trustees Helen A. Carlos and George Alex discussed numerous philanthropic commitments but emphasized the importance of HCHC as a top philanthropic priority for all trustees. Building a growing commitment of leadership for HCHC is a goal for all trustees to pursue.

Kosta Alexis, director of development at Tufts University, focused on Board Best Practices, Service and Commitment and a better understanding trustee roles and responsibilities. He noted that higher education governing board membership is one of the most serious and consequential exercises of voluntary leadership in our society and trustees must offer strong leadership and collaboration to ensure success. Faith above all is essential for us as trustees.

The Committee on Trusteeship organized the retreat with the guidance of Archbishop Demetrios, Vice Chairman Dr. Tom Lelon and Fr. Metropulos. The trustees agreed that an annual retreat is important for their continuing development.

Special gratitude is extended to Metropolitan Methodios and Michael Sintros, camp and retreat director, for the outstanding hospitality and fellowship.

Trustee Christine Karavites serves as chairman of the Committee on Trusteeship.



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METROPOLIS NEWS



Historic marker

Assumption Church photo

Frs. Serge Veselinovich, Constantine Mathews and Stelios Sitaras with members of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church and Galveston County Historical Commission members during the Texas Historical Marker Dedication for the Greek Orthodox Cemetery in Galveston, Texas, held March 19.

NATIONAL MINISTRIES - CENTER FOR FAMILY CARE

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Rewarding the Effort

by Elissa Bjeletich

In God's eyes, the effort is equal to the achievement. Our bishop said that last week, and it's been on my mind ever since.

Our Lord rewards our efforts regardless of whether they are effective. Whether or not we achieve our worthy goals, God sees and rewards the effort. It's a good message for Lent, as we begin to see whether we're accomplishing the goals we set out for ourselves. We probably began the fast thinking we'd curb our passions, become better people and grow closer to God. After weeks of fasting and prayer and spiritual effort, we may or may not see fruit – it's surely possible that some of us have done all the work, and yet we don't feel different. We may not seem much holier.

As we get to know the saints of the Church, we find that many of them finish out their lives declaring their own sinfulness and wishing for time to repent more thoroughly. They are saintly, of course, and their sins and weaknesses much slighter than ours – and yet, having seen some amount of God's glory, they are more aware of all the ways in which they fall short of it. It makes me think of Isaiah:

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. The house was full of His glory. Around Him stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." The lintel was lifted up by the voice of those who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said, "Woe is me, because I am pierced to the heart, for being a man

and having unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips; for I saw the King, the Lord of hosts, with my eyes!" (Isaiah 6:1-5)

Being a man and having unclean lips, and dwelling in the midst of a people with unclean lips, Isaiah knew that he was not worthy to see the Lord of Hosts. Human beings don't measure up; we are not worthy of God's glory, even under the best of circumstances.

When we approach the holy chalice, we know that we are unworthy. We pray that our Lord, "make me worthy without condemnation to partake of Your pure Mysteries". We ask, "How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the splendor of Your saints?"

We know that we are not worthy and that we cannot really ever become worthy, and yet we have hope that Our Lord Jesus Christ will "let not these holy Gifts be to my condemnation because of my unworthiness, but for the cleansing and sanctification of soul and body and the pledge of the future life and kingdom." Why? Because "it is good for me to cling to God and to place in Him the hope of my salvation."

Because the effort is equal to the achievement. We cannot hope to actually become worthy of His gifts, but we trust that He sees our efforts to become worthy and that He'll make up the difference. He'll count us worthy, somehow, though we'll never deserve it.

If you make the effort, God will reward you as if you had achieved your goal, even if you don't. As I have lived through this week, considering my bishop's message, I've begun to understand why God would be so generous: achievement in



It's a liberating idea. In this world, we are so focused on whether our efforts are effective. We don't want to waste our efforts – we want to keep trying if we're effective, and to change course if we're not. But with God, nothing is ever wasted. We may feel discouraged when we work selflessly toward a goal and cannot achieve it, but God knows. He knows better than we do that we are powerless, that we can make the best effort and still fall short.

This is just part of the nature of human existence in this fallen world.

It's not just that here in the world, success is about money and God doesn't care about money. He tells us not to worry about success because it really doesn't matter. We cannot succeed by our own efforts, period. We don't have that kind of power. We can only make the effort and hope for the best. We must content our-

selves to know that He sees the struggle and He rewards it. Regardless. Keep fighting the good fight. God sees you and He loves you.

As parents, we struggle to raise children with hearts for God. We hope to be good parents, giving them what they need to function well in this world. Their lives may or may not be what we hope for them – but know that the effort is equal to the achievement. You and I cannot guarantee anything for our children's lives, but we can do our best and we can make the effort. God will see the effort, and He will make up the difference. He may grant us the gift of that achievement or He may not; but He will reward the effort as if we had achieved our ends.

This article is adapted from Raising Saints a blog of Ancient Faith Radio (www.ancientfaith.com) and is used with their permission.

Elissa Bjeletich is a wife and mother and Sunday School director at Holy Transfiguration Church in Austin, Texas. She has a podcast and blog through Ancient Faith Radio entitled Raising Saints and is the author of the book "In God's Hands."

Preparing for Pascha

On Holy Tuesday (at the service held Monday evening), we commemorate the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). In the parable, all of the women took lamps with them to meet the bridegroom but only five brought extra oil with them so that their lamps wouldn't extinguish as they waited for his arrival late at night. These women took the time to properly

prepare themselves to enter into the Feast. Let us look to the example of the wise virgins to properly prepare ourselves for the Feast of Pascha by making sure we have enough "oil" to make it through Holy Week.

– *Except from the parent companion to the Journey through Holy Week 'Zine.*

LAZARUS AND THE SPIRITUAL HEALING

We are created in God's image and there is this divine beautiful breath of God in our soul that unites us with our head and heart. In the Garden of Eden there was a disconnect between the head and the heart. This disconnects us from God. There were five things that happen in the garden when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.

- 1) They were overcome with fear
- 2) They became ashamed
- 3) They hid themselves from God
- 4) They lied
- 5) They cast blame

What does this mean to us and how does this connect to the Raising of Lazarus?

Visit www.myocn.net and click on the *Family and Faith* podcast to listen to Fr. Tom Tsagalakis expand on his comments above about how we are all called to allow Christ to resurrect us.

Additional resources for Holy Week

• **WEBINARS ON HOLY WEEK AND YOUR FAMILY** – Two online workshops have been offered by the Center for Family Care Preparing Your Family for Holy Week and Observing Holy Week as a Family. These workshops can be found at www.family.goarch.org in the "Events" section under "Webinars".

• **GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE LENT, HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA WEBSITE** – Full of resources for the entire Lenten journey <http://lent.goarch.org/>.

• **JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK ZINES** – This resources explores Holy Week easy-to-read bites of information and accompanying images, with many interactive elements, such as questions for reflecting or things to look up in the Bible. The Holy Week version comes with a parent companion and can be ordered at www.religioused.goarch.org.

• **BE THE BEE** – This brief weekly video podcast will focus on the various ways in which God has infused all of creation with goodness and beauty. These episodes can be watched at <http://bethebee.goarch.org/>.

• **ICON ORNAMENT KITS** – Offered for the Sunday's of Lent and the Days of Holy Week. Each kit offers pre-printed shrink paper. Color the full sized sheets and then bake them in the oven to shrink them to ornament size www.paideaclassics.org.

OBITUARIES

Fr. George N. Economou

JAMAICA PLAINS, Mass. – Fr. George Nicholas Economou, 94, a retired priest, died Feb. 25 at his home in Boston. Since 1949, he had served parishes in New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona, Massachusetts, Illinois and New Jersey.

He was born March 16, 1922 in Defiance, Ohio, to Nicholas George Economou (Papaeconomou) and Margarita (Kostopoulos). He completed public schools and Defiance College. He attended Holy Cross Seminary in Pomfret, Conn., and when it moved to Brookline, Mass., earning a diploma in theology.

He also pursued graduate studies at Michigan State University and the University of Arizona.

From 1947 to 1948 Fr. Economou served as Greek school teacher at Holy Trinity Church in Danielson, Conn.

He was ordained a deacon in March 1949 at Annunciation Church in Scranton, Pa., and a priest in June 1949 in Chicago.

He was married to Theodora Stamatos of Boston, with Bishop Athenagoras Cavadas and Fr. Demetrios Coucouzis (later Archbishop Iakovos) presiding. Fr. Economou served the following parishes: Holy Trinity Cathedral, New York (1949); Holy Trinity, Binghamton, N.Y. (July 1949-July 1951); Holy Trinity, Harrisburg (Camp Hill), Pa. (July 1951-July 1956); Holy Trinity, Lansing, Mich. (November 1956-November 1957); St. Demetrios, Tucson, Ariz. (November 1957-June 1959); Assumption church, Caracas, Venezuela (1959); St. Vasilios, Peabody, Mass. (1959); St. Spyridon, Chicago (Palos Heights), Ill. (November 1960-January 1965); St. Demetrios, Jersey City, N.J. (November 1965-June 1991), when he retired. However, he continued to serve as a substitute priest until 2005 at churches in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

He also served in several other capacities, including GOYA spirituality leader; public relations committee member for Mayor Daley of Chicago; HANAC Board of Trustees; Jersey City Board of Education, Jersey City Housing Authority; advisory committee for Jersey City's mayor; Lincoln Association Board of Directors. Hudson County Medical Center chaplain in Jersey City; Hudson County Jail, Jersey City; Seaman's Institute, Port Elizabeth, N.J.; St. Basil Academy, Garrison, N.Y.; and the Archbishop Iakovos senior citizen home.

Fr. Economou also was an AHEPA member for 50 years.

Survivors include Presvytera Theodora, four children: Margaret, Catherine, Nicholas and George; three granddaughters; two great-granddaughters; a sister, Grace; and other relatives in the United States and Greece.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a sister, Evelyn.

Funeral services took place Feb. 29 at Holy Cross Chapel in Brookline.

Memorial donations may be made to HCHC in Brookline.

Fr. Nicholas N. Harbatis

FRANKLIN, Tenn. – Fr. Nicholas N. Harbatis, 89, died March 7. He was born April 30, 1926 in Fitchburg, Mass. He completed high school in Clinton, Mass., and enrolled at Wayne State University in Detroit, earning a bachelor degree in education. He then enrolled at Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline and graduated in 1948.

He married Mary Mamangakis of New

York, who predeceased him in 2014.

He was ordained a deacon by Bishop Athenagoras Cavadas at Evangelismos Church in Dover, N.H. in February 1949, and as a priest at Holy Cross Chapel in Brookline in March 1949.

He served at Annunciation Church in Woburn, Mass. (March 1949-November 1950); St. Nicholas, Detroit (November 1950-February 1957); St. John, Tampa, Fla. (February 1957-October 1961); St. Demetrios, Astoria, N.Y. (October 1961-November 1964); St. Nicholas, Detroit (November 1964-August 1975); St. Nicholas, Fort Pierce, Fla. (November 1976-February 1977, after one year leave of absence); St. Andrew, Miami (March 1977-November 1985); St. Nicholas, Detroit (December 1985-June 1998). He retired July 1, 1988.

Survivors include a son and a daughter, with whom he had been living with in Florida when he died.

Helen Voulgares Vans

RESTON, Va. - Helen Voulgares Vans, 95, the first principal of the St. Basil Academy elementary school, died Feb. 21.

She was appointed principal in 1944 by Archbishop Athenagoras.

She was born in Milwaukee, Wis., in 1920 to Theologos and Maria (Kromyda) Voulgares of the Roumeli region of Greece. Her mother was a state licensed midwife who authored a book in Greek on pre-natal and child care and lectured nationally to Greek immigrant women. Her father owned downtown Milwaukee's Empire Shoe Repair and Hat Cleaning.

She graduated from Holy Angels Academy (1937) and Mount Mary College (1941), with a state certificate in elementary education and earned a master's equivalency in early childhood development from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

She was a civilian Army Air Corps chief inspector during WWII. She directed Milwaukee's Athenian Choristers Greek folk music group, and was a former choir director and the first elected woman trustee of Milwaukee's Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church. She was recognized for her service to the Church by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, the Diocese of Chicago, the National Ladies Philoptochos Society, and the Church Choir Federation.

She served as principal at St. Basil Academy until 1947, when she returned to Milwaukee and became a public school kindergarten teacher.

She retired to Northern Virginia in 1985, and was an assistant junior kindergarten teacher at Grace Episcopal School, Alexandria, Va., until 1989.

Her husband of 26 years, Christ Nicholas Vans of Cephallonia, Greece and Milwaukee, an independent grocer, died in 1978. She was also predeceased by siblings Demetra and George (infants) and Georgia Voulgares Popp of Chevy Chase, Md.

She is survived by her son, Gerassimos "Gerry" C. Vans and daughter-in-law Margaret O'Sullivan Vans of McLean, Va.; grandchildren Alexander, Julia, and Crist Vans; nephew, Dean G. Popp and his family.

She was a member of Washington's St. Sophia Cathedral where funeral services took place Feb. 25. Burial was at Wauwatosa, Wis.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Fr. John Tavlarides Mosaic Preservation Fund, care of St. Sophia Cathedral.

METROPOLIS NEWS



Holy Trinity Church photo

Donation of love

Fr. Aristotle Damaskos (center), and Dn. George Malanos (left) recently met with Dr. Norvel Goff Sr., presiding elder of Mother Emanuel AME Church in downtown Charleston, S.C., and presented a check for \$6,193 from the Holy Trinity Church in Charleston to help the families members of the nine who were murdered last June. This is a gift of love from one Charleston worshipping community to another.

Chicago Metropolis Holds Basketball Tournament

by John Ackerman

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. – St. Demetrios Church hosted this year's Metropolis of Chicago Western Regional Family Basketball Tournament that gathered parishes from northern and western Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska over Feb. 12-14 weekend.

Banquet keynote speaker was Nefeli Papadakis, 17, who earlier in the day led the St. Demetrios Women's Basketball team to the tournament championship. For her keynote address the focus was her placement on Team USA's Judo Squad for the 2020 Summer Olympics.

Her inspirational address before 500 attendees, including Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, thanked the coaches and members of the Parish community that have helped her in realizing her dreams. The address to the large group of young people, near her age or younger, showed the ability and strength that faith can provide in realizing dreams regardless of how large those dreams may be.

Bishop Demetrios thanked her for her powerful message and spoke of the pride that he and Metropolitan Iakovos have in her accomplishments, and her ability to display for the world the talent of the Metropolis of Chicago youth.



Chicago Metropolis photos

Nefeli Papadakis, keynote speaker, training for 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

Tournament officials included Director and Chairman Tina Houck, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries Deacon Chris Avramopoulos, host parish Chairmen Tom Earth and parish priest Fr. Cosmas Halekakis.

For more information on this event and future Western Regional Family Basketball Tournaments, please contact: Deacon Chris Avramopoulos, Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries director.



Basketball tournament winning girls team with Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos.

METROPOLIS NEWS

Direct Archdiocesan District Clergy Laity Assembly Holds Annual Meeting

by Jim Golding

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. – A record turnout of some 200 delegates attended the Direct Archdiocesan District Clergy Laity Assembly April 2, where Archbishop Demetrios briefed the group on the upcoming Holy and Great Council of all Orthodox Churches.

The Archbishop said the Holy and Great Council is not an ecumenical council. "No ecumenical council called itself ecumenical; they called themselves councils."

He said that following the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in 787, there had been many meetings and gatherings representing many Churches but "they never had the totality of Orthodox Churches present."

The Archbishop said the attendance of 25 bishops from each of the 14 autocephalous Churches in the world is happening for the first time in history.

"The Archdiocese is heavily involved," he said, including financial support from major organizations including Leadership 100. The Archdiocese also is contributing logistical support.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who will chair the Council, has appointed the Archbishop as head of the Patriarchal Delegation to the gathering.

Following the Archbishop's address, a moment of silence was held for Archdiocesan Council Vice President Michael Jaharis, who died in January.

Bishop Andonios of Phasiane, who also serves as the district chancellor in addition to his Archdiocese role, said that 53 of 62 parishes were represented at the Assembly, coming from as far as Washington, Orange, Conn., and the Albany-Schenectady region in the north. He said three major projects currently are underway: the construction of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox National Shrine at the World Trade Center, the expansion of St. Michael's Home and ensuring the future of Camp St. Paul in Connecticut.

The bishop emphasized that, in addition to its status as a national shrine, St. Nicholas will function "solely as a Greek Orthodox church, not a non-denominational church," which he said had been falsely rumored.

St. Michael's Home will soon launch a fund-raising campaign to convert a large facility on Long Island purchased from the Roman Catholic Church into a "state-of-the-art facility."

A separate presentation on the project will appear in the May issue of the Orthodox Observer. Camp St. Paul, "is a ministry that has grown exponentially," Bishop Andonios said. In 2015, the camp had four sold-out sessions with more than 675 campers.

He said the district recently entered a three-year arrangement for the camp's lease for an increased amount. "It is apparent we need to find a permanent site which belongs to us," the bishop said. This would enable the use of the facility year-around, offering programs for different age groups. He said that visits have been made to "five or six properties in Upstate New York and Western Connecticut" as potential sites.

The chancellor said two major issues that need addressing are the decreasing church attendance and the low level of giving among individual members.

Archbishop Demetrios, in commenting on these issues, said the "substantive question" relating to them is whether "this low level is indicative of the lack of appreciation

of Church, the low degree of engagement of the faithful in the life of the Church, or the lack of understanding of what it means to be an Orthodox Christian." He challenged the parish priests and parish council presidents attending to actively address these issues.

A lengthy presentation followed on the St. Nicholas National Shrine by Archdiocese Executive Director of Administration Jerry Dimitriou. He said that, when the church/shrine is completed, it would function with a board and council, with some members elected and some appointed by the Archbishop. An extensive presentation of his report will appear in the June issue.

District Finance Committee Chairman Harry Raptakis said the current parish allocation system approved by the biennial Clergy-Laity congress that met in Nashville has entered its 10th year and the Archdiocesan District has met 103 percent of its allocation for 2015. "It's the best to date," said Raptakis.

Of the 63 parishes in the district, only 10 were not current as of the time of the assembly.

He also noted that the stewardship parishes have a greater success rate than those continuing with a dues system. "It's time for all parishes to switch to stewardship," he said.

A presentation followed on the stewardship program by Fr. Jim Kordaris, director of Stewardship, Outreach and Evangelism, with reports from Fr. Dennis Strouzas, Archangel Michael, Port Washington; Fr. Nick Anctil, Holy Trinity, New Rochelle; and Fr. Peter Orfanakos, St. Barbara Church, Orange, Conn., on the success of the program in their communities.

In the election of representatives to the Archdiocesan Council for the next two years, delegates elected Fr. Luke Melackrinos of St. Paul Cathedral, Hempstead, as the clergy representative, and George Raptakis and George Zimmar as the laity representatives.

At the conclusion of the assembly, Archbishop Demetrios praised those in attendance for their participation in the life of their parishes. "It is one of best expressions of volunteerism," he said.

He also urged greater participation in the life of the Church by the faithful in general. "The Direct Archdiocesan District is not distinguished for good participation," he said. "Is it a lack of interest, elitism, lack of information?" He extended his plea for greater participation at the July Clergy-Laity congress, and at the Greek Independence Day Parade on April 10.

Adding to his previous comments on the Great Council, the Archbishop said the body will also focus on three issues of concern:

- "Poverty in all its ramifications: financial, spiritual, educational;
- "Violence: as a family matter, social matter, as conflict between nations; and as a religious phenomenon;
- "Youth: does youth of today have a future? In society we see how young people are entangled in all sorts of situations; is there any future for them? We don't say youth is future of the church; we say that the church is the future of the youth; We have to reverse the thinking. The church is the future of the youth," he emphasized.

Regarding speculation on the unity of the Churches, the Archbishop commented that "Unity will happen when God wants it and how God wants it."



Denver Metropolis photo

Reaching Secular America Theme of Denver Metropolis Clergy Retreat

Fifty-six clergymen gathered at the Metropolis of Denver Feb. 23-26, for the annual Metropolis Clergy Syndesmos Pre-Lenten Retreat.

Due to the vast geographical makeup of the mountains and plains states which make up the Denver Metropolis, many brother clergy live far away from each other, often making fellowship and personal interaction only an annual occasion.

This year one retreat goal was to provide more opportunities for fellowship so the retreat schedule was expanded.

Metropolitan Isaiah hosted the event and was present throughout the retreat.

This year's theme was based on the conference, "Speaking to Secular America: How the Church is Reaching out to the Non-Religious in our Society," held at Holy Cross in October 2015.

Fr. Theodore Dorrance and Dr. Philip

Mamalakis, both conference speakers, were invited to present during the four day retreat. Fr. Theodore shared numerous ideas for parishes for Orthodox Missions and Evangelism.

Outreach examples included emphasizing the parish festival as an outreach event where the parish promotes Orthodoxy through the bookstore, church tours and inquiry classes for those interested in learning more about the faith.

Dr. Mamalakis authentically encouraged participants to continue finding ways to apply Orthodox Scripture and Sacred Tradition to present day realities, since all are in the process of learning to peacefully live in the tension between sinner and saint.


By God's grace the retreat nourished, refreshed and equipped the fathers for returning to their parishes and the people entrusted to their care.

Stewardship Ministries

PARISH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

An Inspiring Interactive Program for Your Parish

The National Stewardship Ministries Leadership Training Group provides an interactive, educational program to offer parish leadership a new vision for stewardship. The program includes training of parish leadership in the principles and procedures for implementing effective parish ministries. Key components of this training include an off-site, interactive seminar, outlining a vision for the future of the parish and developing skills for consensus-building, engagement of volunteers, and development of a council of ministries.



The process is as rewarding as the outcome, bringing parishioners together for thoughtful discussions of critical issues in parish leadership. Participants leave fulfilled, enlightened and energized, equipped with the tools, information and ideas to create a welcoming stewardship parish, dedicated to a life in Christ, where spiritual needs are met.

Contact the Training Team:
 George Matthews 404-405-6017 & George Vourvoulis 773-771-2717
 or the Department of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism 646-519-6760

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METROPOLIS NEWS

500 Attend Sights & Sounds

by Marissa Costidis

WESTFIELD, N.J. - It is mid-day on a warm and sunny Saturday in March. Anastasia Chasabenis, Angeliki Vergis and Eva Sakellakis are excited to participate in the annual Sights & Sounds Festival.

Organized by Holy Trinity Church and celebrating its 45th year, Sights & Sounds brings together Goyans from all over New Jersey to compete in areas of art, crafts, individual and group singing, instrument solos, Greek and American plays and Greek Folk Dance.

This year 15 parishes and close to 500 Goyans attended. Anastasia, Angeliki and Eva were dressed in matching bright orange sweaters and were anxious for their competition. Although the continuing

practices were tiring, they were happy that the rehearsals gave them an opportunity, as first year Goyans, to become closer with the members of their own GOYA from St. George Church in Clifton. Even though the practices were long and constant they say, "It was all worth it!"

One parent, Maria-Elaina Markos-Jenkins, remembers participating when her parents chaired of Sights & Sounds in the 80s and 90s. She is now here for the first time with her son.

"It's my home. Sights & Sounds is a great event. The idea that a program like this can continue for so many years is amazing. The benefit to the youth is priceless. There is such camaraderie and the benefit for our Goyans to find their hidden talents is something that is unique. This program gives



Holy Trinity church photo

Sights & Sounds organizing committee members.

kids confidence to pursue a skill or talent."

Markos-Jenkins was also happy to catch up with those who participated with her when she was a teen-ager and who now have children in the program.

"It's a perpetuation of our culture, heritage and faith."

Pamela and Gino Genile are still at

the helm of a very large and organized committee including Marigo Chantzis and George and Alison Youlios plus more than 80 volunteers on that day. While categories change with the times the basic goal of the program remains the same: to encourage talent and to bring young people together in the arms of the Church.



GOA photos



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METROPOLIS NEWS

Illinois Parish Hosts Ecumenical Prayer Event

by John Ackerman

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Christian leaders of various traditions gathered at St. Anthony Church to pray for suffering Christians in the Middle East as well as all people suffering in the world including in Illinois.

The event featured Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, the Metropolis of Chicago chancellor, who has recently been calling attention to the suffering of Christians in the Middle East. He was joined in representing the Greek Orthodox faithful by Fr. Michael Condos of Champaign Ill., Fr. Anastasios Theodoropoulos of Town & Country Mo., Fr. Anthony Tzortzis of Springfield Ill., and Fr. George Pyle also of Springfield.

In addition they were joined by the executive director of the Illinois Conference of Churches Rev. Laurie Vial, the ecumenical officer of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Fr. Kevin Laughery, Rev. Thomas Christell of historic Grace Lutheran Church of Springfield, Rev. Walter Carlson of the United Methodist Church of Springfield, and George Johnston of the Presbyterian Church of Springfield.

The host parish for this event, St. Anthony's was packed with parishioners from all faiths in Springfield.

While not in attendance, Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner had met with Bishop Demetrios the week before and sent his prayers and thoughts on the occasion in the form of a formal letter. Additionally, Illinois state Sen. Bill Brady sent his thoughts and prayers as well. Sen. Brady was the successful sponsor in 2013 of SR70, a resolution calling for the Religious Freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and part of an effort nationally by the Greek Orthodox Archons to pass similar resolutions in each state.

Another supporter of SR70, Illinois state Sen. Sam McCann joined Bishop Demetrios at this event and was honored to walk side by side with the bishop during the event. Sen. McCann spoke on his Christian values, his strong support of His Grace's effort to bring needed attention to the Genocide of Christians in the Middle East, and his prayers for suffering Christians throughout the world. He thanked Fr. Pyle and the leadership of St. Anthony Church in Springfield for hosting this event.

Fr. Pyle said "the Greek Orthodox Church has had a long and vibrant history for advocating for people who are suffering, through the examples of great saints and modern leaders of the Church." "St. Anthony Church has the responsibility of representing the Orthodox Christians

of Illinois at the state capital and we are honored to have Bishop Demetrios, Illinois State Sen. Sam McCann, and other religious leaders within this capital of Illinois join us in calling attention to these individuals in need," Fr. Pyle added.

On the importance of such events, Bishop Demetrios noted, "While it may seem like we in the United States have little ability to change matters in the Middle East and elsewhere, I am convinced change can be achieved through added education and attention to the problem."

When asked about the need for the United States to officially recognize the situation in Syria and the Middle East as genocide against Christians, he replied, "We made a commitment along with the other member nations of the United Nations to never again sit back and allow such heinous crimes to be committed. Now that we see them displayed before our very eyes, how can we ignore that commitment?"

Fr. Kevin Laughery with the Springfield Roman Catholic Diocese says religious hatred is causing the persecution, and it can be dealt with.

"If we are to reduce religious hatred, it all starts with the virtues that we are called by our very Christian faith to practice," said Laughery.

"Despite the differences that exist among our various communities of Christ, we gather this night, oh Lord, one in you, to seek your forgiveness, to seek your guidance, to be reminded of your love, grace, and peace for all the people of this world – Christians as well as others who faithfully follow you as the one, true God," said Rev. Thomas Christell of Grace Lutheran Church. Bishop Demetrios says politicians are hypocritical on the issue of religious persecution.

"The problem, as I and others see it, is not that our government or even most do not recognize the suffering of those people in their homelands, it's that for political expedience these authorities do not want to name it genocide," said Bishop Demetrios.

The Metropolis of Chicago has called on the president, senators, and congressmen to take the steps required to officially enact the U.N.'s "Responsibility to Protect" resolution.

For more information, contact: Fr. George Pyle, St. Anthony. (217) 202-0188, geopyle@aol.com

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GOA/D. Panagos

Direct Archdiocese District Holds 4th Dance Festival

NEW YORK – Parathosi 2016, the annual celebration of Hellenic Heritage & Dance of the Direct Archdiocesan District and now in its fourth year, took place Feb. 26-Feb. 27, with more than 300 participants comprising 22 groups.

Greek dancing during the competition was held at Lefrak Concert Hall at Queens College.

Traditional musicians and vocalists from many regions of Greece kicked-off this year's events in a night of dancing and fellowship, a Parathosiako Glendi, Feb. 26 at Terrace on the Park, in Flushing N.Y.

PARATHOSI 2016 Dance Festival strives to bring together the youth of our parishes and communities, to provide a platform for their talents and pride in traditional dancing; and to cultivate and promote our rich Hellenic heritage.

"Our vision is to involve as many

groups and teams as possible in order that we expand and continue to promote the deep love and respect we all have for our ancestral traditions," said Dn. Panagiotis Papazafiroopoulos, the director of the Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

This year, the event has been opened to groups from other Metropolises of the Archdiocese and groups from Greek-American community associations representing various regions of Greece. The festival is organized in divisions according to age. Division 4 is for children up to 8 years old and their dance performances are not judged in competition.

Division 3 is for children 9-11 years of age, division 2 is for youths 12-14, division 1 is for teenagers 15-17; and young adults 18 and over, they compete in the senior division.

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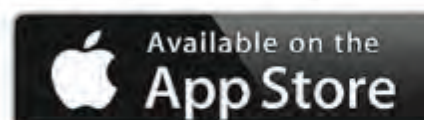


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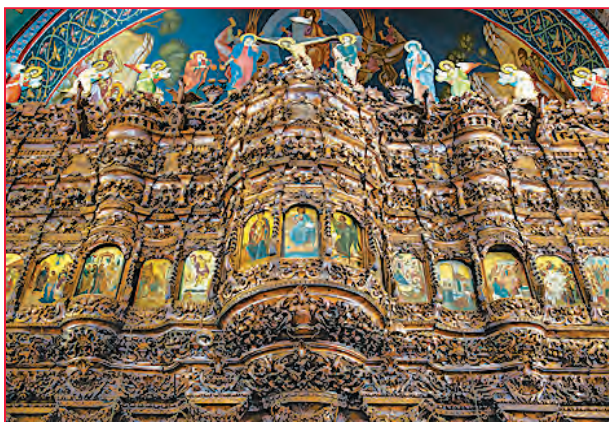
▷ from page 23

home reconstruction in Fiji.

The IOCC assistance will support the efforts of the Greek Orthodox Mission to Fiji on Vanua Levu Island, one of the most impoverished of the nation's islands due to its remote location. The effort was led by Fr. Paul Patitsas from Cleveland, a former member of the IOCC U.S. Emergency Response Network, or Frontline, who currently lives in Auckland, New Zealand and oversees the Fiji Mission.

You can help the victims of poverty and conflicts around the world, like those suffering from Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji, by making a financial gift to the International Emergency Response Fund which will provide immediate relief, as well as long-term support through the provision of emergency aid, recovery assistance and other support to help those in need. To make a gift, please visit iocc.org or call toll free at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622), or mail a check or money order payable to IOCC, P.O. Box 17398, Baltimore, MD 21297.

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youth and young adult news

200-Plus Attend 'Bee the Bee's' Chicago Beetreat

GLENVIEW, Ill. - In late February, 200 Orthodox Christians gathered at Sts. Peter and Paul Church for the fifth "Beetreat" of the academic year. Participants travelled from as far as Michigan to attend.

Based on "Be the Bee," the popular YouTube video series, "Beetreats" are retreats designed for youth, parents, youth workers, and young adults.

Chicago Beetreat organizers were Deacon Chris Avromopoulos, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Metropolis of Chicago, and Deacon Kosmas Kallis, youth director at Sts. Peter and Paul Church.

The weekend began with youth and adults gathering for Matins before beginning the Beetreat. They split off into two tracks for the day's sessions.

Steven Christoforou, director of the Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Y2AM) and the Office of Camping Ministries, led the youth sessions on finding union with God, healing the divisions within our selves, and growing closer to our neighbors.

Area youth workers assisted Mr. Christoforou with break-out groups.

Ambassadors from both Hellenic Col-



Chicago Metropolis photo

lege Holy Cross and St. Katherine College also participated in the Beetreat.

Jacob Corbin, trip planning coordinator with FOCUS North America, led the third session. He helped participants explore practical ways to grow closer to our neighbors, and ended the session with the creation of blessing bags to be offered to those in need.

Christian Gonzalez, Young Adult Ministries coordinator with Y2AM, led two sessions for youth workers on developing a healthy vision for ministry and practical tips for implementing it.

Melissa Tsongranis, associate director of the GOARCH Center for Family Care, led two sessions for parents on their primary role in ministry and how to implement that in the home.

After Vespers, 70 young adults gathered for fellowship and discussion at "Orthodoxy on Tap," with Mr. Christoforou offering a short talk on vocation and living out our relationship with Christ. The event was hosted at the headquarters of Raise.

The weekend concluded with Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, celebrated by Fr. Panagiotis Boznos, Sts. Peter and

Paul Orthodox Church head priest. Mr. Christoforou offered the sermon.

Participants left the Beetreat feeling uplifted and spiritually energized, and reported feeling grateful for a program that spiritually nourished both children and adults.

More details, including an information pamphlet and the full calendar of upcoming Beetreats, are available at bethebee.goarch.org/retreats.

— from the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries)

"From the Director"

You Are What You Eat

by Steven Christoforou

As we make our way through Great Lent, our attention constantly shifts to food. Every hamburger commercial is a reminder of food we're abstaining from, of delicious treats we're setting aside for a few weeks.

There's a certain pain, or at least discomfort, that comes with fasting.

Choosing to join with the rest of the Church and fast from meat and other animal products is not easy.

Which is interesting because, practically speaking, fasting has never been easier. It will not put our health in danger. Abstaining from meat and dairy will not result in malnutrition or otherwise hurt us; if anything, it will probably help our physical health. There are a great variety of cheap and nutritious foods we can sustain ourselves on during the course of the Fast without any trouble.

Yet we still set rich foods aside with great reluctance, as if our lives depended on them.

While our ancestors may have re-

served meat and cheese for special occasions, rich and heavy foods are a staple of our everyday diet, something we've grown accustomed to. We can fill our stomachs with a variety of animals products for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Each and every day.

It seems that the more food we have available, the more we want. And the harder it is to say "no" to it.

There's an old saying you've probably heard before: "you are what you eat."

It's a phrase normally associated with health: our bodies are built up based on our diets and the food we choose to eat, so we had better choose wisely. Yet there's a theological resonance to this saying, too, one that especially comes to mind during Great Lent.

For many of us, food has become a luxury: we eat, not because we have to, but because we choose to. We snack because we're bored; we eat because we crave a particular flavor. Sometimes eat out of nothing more than habit.

At its most basic, food is a tool we use to ensure our survival. It is a substance

designed to meet our most basic and existential needs: to give us the calories and raw materials that our bodies need to keep functioning in the world. We eat because, if we do not, we will starve.

Yet even when we are well fed, when we eat because of choice rather than necessity, food still fills a need in our lives. Even if it doesn't satisfy a need for our stomachs, it fills a space in our hearts.

Food becomes an emotional crutch, a source of comfort and stability. It is company when we are lonely, reassurance when we are feeling down, entertainment when we are bored. It becomes a pain killer that numbs our dissatisfaction, a medicine that hides our symptoms without the need to determine what's wrong in our lives.

The things that we place in the center of our lives begin to shape the very character of our lives. If our existence revolves around our next snack, on the next time we can eat our way to comfort or happiness, then our lives begin to be shaped by this false view of comfort and happiness. If our days are spent building up false alternatives to true communion and joy, then our lives will never be full of the real thing.

As we remove food from the central place it occupies in our lives, we can challenge ourselves to see it in proper context. We don't need another slice of pizza or hamburger. We will survive, and even thrive, despite the lack of meat and cheese on our tables. And, as we strip out the things that we don't really need, perhaps we can refocus on what we do need.

No longer numbed by the misleading comfort of a full stomach, perhaps we can work to give our hearts the true rest they so desperately need: surrounded by people rather than things, sustained by the authentic and never-fading love of our Lord.



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