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The Annunciator

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Great Lent 2017

Silence as a Lenten Tool!

Although it seems like just yesterday that we celebrated the birth of Christ and all that goes along with the Christmas season, it is now time to put ourselves into the frame of mind for Great Lent. It seems like year after year we hear or read the familiar advice we are given by our Church on how we can make the Lenten journey more meaningful.

We all know about how we need to fast from certain foods and abstain from certain things, and when we do endure and make these sacrifices for forty plus days, it will indeed bring us closer to God.

As I reflected recently on what we as a community of faithful Orthodox Christians might do in order to become closer to our Lord during this period, I thought about how we all know the “basics” of what we need to do, as mentioned above, but within that “knowledge” of what to do, it is what we might not do in reality that will bring us closer to Christ and His Church. Not only during Great Lent, but year round.

One thing we all might work on not doing is talking so much. By this I do not mean staying completely silent for forty days, although that might not be such a bad idea for some of us. All joking aside, many of us just talk too much in the sense that we talk idly.

Some gossip, some spread rumors, some use their words to harm and control others. This is an extremely serious matter when we really take a long hard look at “talking”. Believe it or not if we were to make an honest effort to abstain from idle speech and control our mouths, we would not only benefit others, but we would gain great benefit for ourselves.

When a person constantly has something to say or has to have the last word, he or she might not ever hear the voice of God trying to break through the clutter of pointless and unnecessary chatter. When a person continually speaks and especially utters words of gossip or hate, they not only show a lack of self control, they reflect to others what truly abides in their heart.

Within the Orthodox Christian tradition, silence is considered a great tool in progressing closer to Christ. The desert fathers point to silence on a regular basis in their writings to show us how it gives us discipline and protects us from the assaults of the devil. Think about this during the period of Great Lent. How much better off would each of our daily lives be if we did not constantly announce our thoughts and feelings aloud. Remember the evil one cannot know your true thoughts. Only He who created you knows them. The evil one only knows what is within us when we let it be known. Then he is free to run with this information and put obstacles in every aspect of our lives.

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Theosis, Becoming more Like God

*“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...
[that] You may be partakers of the divine nature” (2Pet. 1:3, 4)*

As we enter and journey through Great Lent, let us pause to reflect on our purpose and ultimate goal in life: our union with God, our salvation. This purpose really started at creation when God Said, “Let *us* make man according to *Our* image (*ikon*, reflection), according to *Our likeness* (*omiosis*)...” (Genesis 1:26) Only man was so created. All other living creatures were created “according to their kind,” not God’s. (Genesis 1:21) Many Church Fathers distinguish between image and likeness. As Clark Carlton explains in his book, “The Life,” man is a reflection of God, but he is called to grow, to mature in the *likeness* of God through his free will. He quotes St. Diadochos of Photiki who wrote: “All men are made in God’s image, but to be in His likeness is granted only to those who through their great love have brought their own freedom into subjection to God...” He also quotes St. Maximus the Confessor from his “Centuries on Love”: “Every rational nature indeed is made to the image of God; but only those who are good and wise are made to His likeness.” In other words, we are to grow in His likeness through love and our imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our model; He has shown us the way for He Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) Only by imitating Him and the great love that He has for us, will we be able to fulfil his commandment of “love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13:34) We do this through helping those in need, in almsgiving as an extension and expression of our love: good works arising out faith and love. We were made for this purpose, to be conformed to the likeness of God. St. Paul reminds of this in Romans 8:29 when he writes:

For Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Furthermore, in Ephesians 2:10, St. Paul reiterates that “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

This process of uniting with Christ and renewing our tarnished image and likeness began with the Incarnation, when Christ took on flesh and assumed our humanity

from the Theotokos. Furthermore, those joined to Christ through faith in Baptism began the renewal, a new life in Christ. As we journey through life, our purpose is to ascend the ladder to Christ and His Kingdom by imitation of Him. Because of the Incarnation of our Lord whose divine nature interpenetrated humanity; and subsequently, through Baptism, we become by grace what God is by nature. As we partake of the Eucharist, the body and blood of our Savior, we are nourished and our “humanity is interpenetrated with the energies of God—we partake of the grace of God. Thus, we share in God’s nature through His energies, not His nature or essence (*ousia*), becoming “partakers of the divine nature.” (2Peter 2:4)

Let us humbly and continuously give thanks and glorify Christ our God, as we do every Divine Liturgy, for His Incarnation, His Sacrificial love for us, for His Resurrection, His Ascension, and His enthronement to the right of the Father. For through all of this, at the Second Coming, we will be returned to the Father renewed and in eternal loving relationship and communion with God. As St. Paul put it, “But God, who is rich in His mercy, because of His great love for us with which He loved us...made us alive *together* with Christ...and raised us up *together*, and made us sit *together* in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4- 6)

During this period of Great Lent, let us engage ourselves in self-reflection and repentance through triad of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. May Christ grant all of us His great love, mercy and compassion, and *kali dinami* as we prepare to meet Him at Holy and Glorious *Pascha*.

Amen.

+Fr. Demetri

One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.

Luke 18:22



YOUTH MINISTRY

How to be an Eastern Orthodox Teen during Lent

Great and Holy Lent is a deep spiritual time in the life of every Orthodox Christian. It is a time of deep reflection, prayer and fasting. A time when we set aside the worldly cares and turn our focus towards Christ. For Orthodox teenagers, Holy Lent is a great struggle and full of challenges. These challenges can be found at school, home, in sports, academics and other extracurricular activities. Many of these challenges are merely obstacles placed before us, obstacles that can be overcome through faith and action in Christ.

Let's take a look at a few of the challenges that teenagers may face and how to combat them:

1. Prayer is a very important part of every teenager's life. Every teenager should begin and end the day with prayer. Here are some suggestions to help out;
 - a. Create a prayer rule for yourself, upon first rising from bed say the Lord's Prayer, make the sign of the Cross, give thanks to God for rising you up from sleep.
 - b. Carry a small prayer book with you that may be read throughout the day.
 - c. Download the GOARCH app on your smartphone or another Orthodox Prayer app and utilize it daily.
 - d. Carry an Icon with you,
 - e. Pray before meals (both at home and out of the home), do not hesitate or be embarrassed to make the sign of the Cross before enjoying the meal.
 - f. In the evening, perhaps early on or even before bed, read your evening prayers or some of the psalms.
 - g. If you have questions, need spiritual help or help creating these prayer rules, contact your priest and ask for guidance.
 - h. Create a prayer list of names for those whom you want to pray for and read their names daily.
 - i. Most importantly, make prayer part of your daily life, do not delay and do not put it off, start now and it will carry with you always.
2. Fasting is an important part of an Orthodox teenager's life. Fasting can be carried out in many different ways. Here are some suggestions;
 - a. Focus on what comes out of your mouth rather than what goes in. Matthew 15:11 *"Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."*

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- b. In regards to foods; fast as you can and do not jeopardize your health. There are rules and guides for fasting. There is also *economia* (οἰκονομία) which is generally regarded as being a more flexible application or interpretation of the Canons while the application of *akriveia* (ακρίβεια) is regarded as being a more precise and strict one. For spiritual guidance in fasting, it is suggested that you should discuss this with your priest.
 - c. Fast from various activities that fill your time up with wasteful and idle thinking. An example would be to limit or eliminate social media activity. Watch less TV and/or movies. Watch shows that are spiritual in nature or ones that are uplifting. Decrease video game time and many other ways.
 - d. Listen to music that is focused more on Christ such as Byzantine Chanting of services and hymns.
 - e. Do not participate in gossip and many other ways of fasting that exist outside of food.
3. Attend as many Liturgical Services as possible.
- a. There are three main weekday services during Great and Holy Lent. These services are held every week leading up to Holy Week;
 - i. Great Compline on Monday evenings at 6:00 PM in the St. George Chapel.
 - ii. Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM in the Cathedral
 - iii. Salutation Services on Friday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Cathedral
 - b. Teenagers have a very busy schedule but we hope that you can at least try to make it to one of these services. These services give you a great opportunity to strengthen yourself while journeying through Lent.

The above examples are only a small sampling of how one can grow closer to Christ while journeying through Great and Holy Lent. The Church gives us many opportunities to help us fast and pray and to remain strong during the Lenten Period. I pray you continued strength for Great and Holy Lent and may we each journey towards salvation seeking our Lords Great and Holy Resurrection.

Good Strength (καλή δύναμη) to all,

In Christ,

+Father Gabriel Gadah

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As we proceed through Great Lent let us remember that it is not what we **do** necessarily that allows us to inch closer to Christ, it is often what we do **not do** that truly brings us closer to Christ.

Remember the words of St. John Climacus in his writings from The Ladder of Divine Ascent when he writes the following, “he who has become aware of his sins has controlled his tongue, but a talkative person has not yet come to know himself as he should”.

May our Lord give us the strength to proceed through Great and Holy Lent and to guide us in our efforts to limit idle and needless chatter, so that we may truly hear the voice of He who Is.

+Father Michael



AGOC Kids Joined Thousands Across the Nation to Explore, Think, Articulate and Share their Faith!

by Maria Georgetown, Chair of the Oratorical Festival

On February 12th and 19th, twenty-seven teens, 24% of our Junior and Senior Sunday Church School students took the challenge, opportunity and honor to come forth and share their Faith at the **2017 St. John Chrysostom Parish Oratorical Festival**.

AGOC Sunday Church School students registered in Grades 7 through 12, a total of 113, are identified and eligible to compete in the Parish St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. They select a topic, research and write a short paper which articulates their Orthodox Faith. Who were these motivated students who researched, wrote and presented their papers before their priests, judges, parents and peers? Basil Anaipakos (8), Nia Botti (8), Lily Kyriakides-Crowe (9), Nicholas Kyriakides-Crowe (7), Sophia Gazis (9), John Kearns (7), Andrew Lambakis (8), Charlie McGee (9), Tommy Maglaras (8), Anastasia Matzakos (9), Sophia Pamphilis (9), Artemis Melania Postolos (8), Nick Sullo (8), Irene Zavitsanos (9), Demi Kouzounis (10), Eleni Kouzounis (11), Mary Polydoros (10), Alex Kakadiaris (11), Georgia Elgohary (10), Victoria Pappas (10), Lillian Dolapchiev (10), Christina McGee (12), Socratis Zavitsanos (11), Despina Matzakos (12), Sophia Pineda (10), Peggy Polydoros (11), Diamantis Zavitsanos (11). These young people took the opportunity to discuss thought-provoking topics ranging from “*What is meant by the peace in the opening petition of the Divine Liturgy*”, to “*What is the Psalm that impacts or influences your life*”. Each and every one of the participants humbled us with their understanding and love for their Orthodox Faith.

The job of the judges is never an easy one. Thank you judges, Jacob Espinosa, Greg Halvatzis, Ted Kyriakos, Melina Sitaras, Carol Vartian, John Anaipakos, Dr. Vasilios Mathews, Jeannie Mavritsakis, Dr. Constantina Michalos, and Christina Papazis.

Thank you Poppy Padley, our photographer and Cesar Canales, timekeeper.

The final results of the Junior and Senior Oratorical Festival are:

Charlie McGee placed **1st** in the Junior Division with his presentation topic #5: *Why the Orthodox Church Focuses more on the Resurrection than it does on the Passion and Suffering of Christ.*

Socratis Zavitsanos placed **1st** in the Senior Division with his presentation topic #3: *Psalms are an integral part of matins, vespers, and many other Church services. Talk about a psalm that impacts or influences your life.*

Artemis Melania Postolos placed **2nd** in the Junior Division as she discussed St. John Chrysostom's words, “*Our alms are judged not on the measure of our gifts, but on the largeness of our mind.*” Discuss how even small acts of kindness and generosity can make a difference.

Christina McGee placed **2nd** in the Senior Division as she discussed topic #3: *Psalms are an integral part of matins, vespers and many other Church services. Talk about a psalm that impacts or influences your life.*

Nicholas Kyriakides-Crowe placed 3rd in the Junior Division with his discussion on *The Opening Petition of the Divine Liturgy* is “In peace let us pray to the Lord.” *What is this peace, and why do we need it to begin our prayers?”*

Peggy Polydoros placed 3rd in the Senior Division as she discussed topic #5: *Jesus said, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”.* *When no political party represents genuine Christian teaching, how does an Orthodox navigate political conversations and make political judgments?*

Charlie McGee and Socratis Zavitsanos will represent Annunciation Cathedral at the Denver Metropolis Oratorical Festival at Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Fort Worth, Texas on March 17-19, 2017.

COMING UP: Elementary St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

Kids write & speak about their faith!

April 23, 2017, 11 am

Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2

Kindergarten

Topic: *One thing I have learned about the Cross...*

Grade 1

Topics:

- 1) One of Jesus’ Miracles... or
- 2) I want to tell you about Jesus’ Baptism in the River Jordan...

Grade 2

Topics:

- 1) I show my love for Jesus when I...
- 2) One symbol of the Church is...
- 3) My favorite saint is...

April 2, 2017, 11 am

Grades 3-4

Grade 3

Topics:

- 1) The hardest Commandment for me to follow is...
- 2) Here’s How I can be a good disciple of Jesus...
- 3) Here’s what happened on the day of Pentecost...

Grade 4

Topics:

- 1) One way I participate in the Divine Liturgy is...
- 2) Prayer is very important to me because...?
- 3) The Virgin Mary is the greatest saint in our Church because...

March 19, 2017, 11 am

Grades 5-6

Grade 5

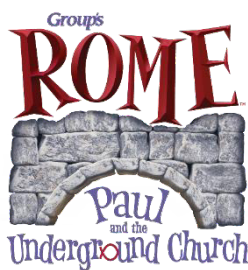
Topics:

- 1) My Bible hero has taught me...
- 2) The Commandment that is the most difficult for me to follow is...
- 3) I want to speak about one commandment I learned from the Sermon on the Mount.

Grade 6

Topics:

- 1) Three ways Jesus makes a difference in my life are...
- 2) The way Jesus taught me to be a good steward is...
- 3) The ways Jesus has shown me his love...



ANNUNCIATION GO CATHEDRAL INVITES FAMILIES TO ROME: PAUL AND THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH, JUNE 12-16

A VBS event, **Rome: Paul and the Underground Church** will be hosted at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral from **June 12 to June 16**. We will step back in time at Rome, exploring the life of the apostle Paul and the underground church. Kids (**Ages 4-Grade 6**), Teens and adults participate in a memorable Bible-times marketplace, sing catchy songs, play teamwork-building games, dig in to Roman eats, visit Paul while he's under house arrest, and collect Bible Memory Makers to remind them of God's Word. Each day

concludes at Extollo—a time of upbeat worship that gets everyone involved.

Kids and adults at Rome will join nearly a million participants in Operation Kid-to-Kid—a project to help provide clean water to people in Peru. With this service opportunity, families' donations will change the lives of other families across the globe by helping provide them with safe drinking water.

Rome will run from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm each day. Complete a Registration form for each child AND volunteer and attach your check made out to "AGOC VBS" of \$35 per child and teen volunteer. Responsible teens who may need service points or those who just want to volunteer for this wonderful program are welcome. To Register go to www.agoc.org and click on VBS in the right hand margin. For more information, call Irene Cassis, 832-242-9262, irenecassis@agoc.org or George Katrib, 713-689-4970, gkatrib@gmail.com.

Important dates...

March 17-19	2017 Metropolis of Denver St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival hosted by St. Demetrios parish, Fort Worth, Texas.
March 19	11-12pm, small Martel Hall. Elementary Oratorical Festival (Grades 5-6).
March 24	6:00pm, Vespers for Forefeast of Annunciation/Salutations to the Theotokos.
March 25	9:30 am, Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos with His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah.
March 26	9 am, One Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah, followed by Groundbreaking Ceremony. No Sunday Church School.
April 2	11-12pm, small Martel Hall. Elementary Oratorical Festival (Grades 3-4).
April 16	PASCHA (Western Easter) 11 am Agape Service. Easter Egg Hunt following Agape Service.
April 23	11-12pm, small Martel Hall, Elementary Oratorical Festival (Grades K-2).
May 21	Last day of Sunday Church School/Attendance Honors/Graduate Honors.
June 9-11	National Oratorical Festival hosted by the Metropolis of Boston, Annunciation parish, Woburn, MA.
June 11-17	Camp Emmanuel, Manzano Mountain Retreat, Torreon, NM, Senior Session.
June 12-16	9:30-12:30 pm, Annunciation GO Cathedral, VBS, ROME: Paul and the Underground Church.
June 18-24	Camp Emmanuel, Manzano Mountain Retreat, Torreon, NM, Junior Session.

2017 St. John Chrysostom Parish Oratorical Festival

Senior Division



L-R standing: Socratis Zavitsanos, Peggy Polydoros, Despina Matzakos, Christina McGee, Lillian Dolapchiev, Sophia Pineda, Diamantis Zavitsanos
L-R seated: Demi Kouzounis, Eleni Kouzounis, Alex Kakadiaris, Victoria Pappas, Mary Polydoros, Georgia Elgohary

Junior Division



L-R standing: Nicholas Kyriakides-Crowe, John Kearns, Nick Sullo, Basil Anaipakos, Andrew Lambakis, Tommy Maglaras, Charlie McGee
L-R seated: Nia Botti, Sophia Pamphilis, Anastasia Matzakos, Artemis Melania Postolos, Lily Kyriakides-Crowe, Sophia Gazis, Irene Zavitsanos

2017 St. John Chrysostom Parish Oratorical Festival Finalists

Senior Division



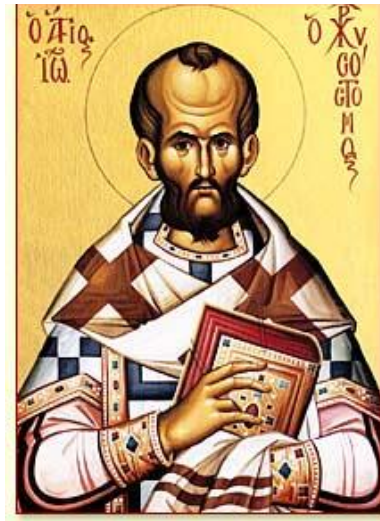
Socratis Zavitsanos
1st Place Senior Division



Christina McGee
2nd Place Senior Division



Peggy Polydoros
3rd Place Senior Division



Artemis Melania Postolos
2nd Place Junior Division



Charlie McGee
1st Place Junior Division



Nicholas Kyriakides-Crowe
3rd Place Junior Division

Junior Division

Annunciation Greek Language and Culture School News

Katerina Kontogeorgaki, Director

Dear Parishioners,

Our school continues its successful year filled with academic excellence and wonderful cultural events.

The school year started on September 16 with the blessing from our priests. Our children's program has two kindergarten classes, six elementary classes and one advanced class. Our adult program has six classes from Beginners to Advanced. We are blessed to have twelve very qualified, talented, and dedicated teachers: Mrs. Elissavet Vrettos, Mrs. Poppy Padley, Mrs. Elena Papadopoulou, Mrs. Alexandra Mavrikou, Mrs. Deena Metaxas, Mr. Panagiotis Statiras, Mrs. Maro Yuanidis, Mrs. Vaso Leontopoulou, Mrs. Valia Geis, Mrs. Poppy Emmanouil and Mrs. Katerina Kontogeorgaki. Our wonderful teachers along with our music teacher Mrs. Tatiana Zakolikou work tirelessly to provide to our students the best education in Greek language and culture.

On Friday October 28th, we celebrated **OXI Day**. Our students performed poems and songs. The event was well attended and we all had the opportunity to honor the Greek History and feel proud for our children and our heritage. During the celebration we also honored the students who received the Certification of Attainment of Modern Greek, levels B and C: Christiana Avouris, Alkiviades Boukas, Paschalis Economou, Christos Georgiadis, Despina Georgiadi, Georgios Mikos, and Mary Mikos.

On December 16, we had the **Christmas celebration**. The students, all dressed with their festive clothes, sang the traditional Greek carols as well as other fun Christmas songs. Father Michael blessed the celebration, and parents and students watched a short presentation about the meaning of Christmas and the Greek traditions. All the Greek School families and many friends enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner organized by the PTO.

The New Year started with the cutting of the vasilopita and blessing by Fr. Christopher. January also marks the **Three Hierarchs**, and the Greek letters day that our school celebrated with a festive dinner, dance, and silent auction on Saturday January 28th. It was a great event attended by more than 200 guests who enjoyed an excellent dinner, live music, dance and above all "kali pareia" (fellowship) in a friendly, family atmosphere. Thank you to the PTO board: Mrs. Pam Papadopoulos (president), Mrs. Dimitra Tsioufi, Mrs. Evy Pappas, Mrs. Elise Dale, Ms. Lydia Kavraki, Mrs. Angie Barut, Mrs. Andrea Caracostis, Mrs. Stacey Kalovidouris, and Ms. Maria Polakis, for organizing our wonderful fundraising event! Thank you all for coming and for supporting our school!

An important part of the Three Hierarchs event is the scholarship awards. This year three qualified students were awarded merit scholarships for their continuous academic performance: Dimitrios Bernitsas, Aphrodite Kehribar, and Socrates Strafkos. The scholarship funds were provided by the Macedonian Association, the Hellenic Cultural Center, and Mr. Giannitsopoulos. Many other organizations such as the Hellenic Professional Society of Texas, the Pan-Cyprian Association, and the Arcadians, as well as many individuals provided financial support to our school. Thank you all for your continued support and generosity!

Coming up, our school is having the **Greek Independence Day** celebration on **Sunday April 2nd** at 12.30 pm at the Martel Hall. Our students, dressed in the traditional costumes, will present poems, dances, and songs. You are all invited to attend this important event and honor the Greek history and culture.

Our next major fundraising activity is the **Tsourekia sale** (Easter Bread). Please, join the team of our wonderful volunteers during the Bake days on April 5 and 6 (Wednesday and Thursday) at the Boozalis Festival Center and help prepare those delicious breads. Please, call or email Katerina Kontogeorgaki (at 832-242-9257 or katerinakonto@agoc.org) to volunteer or place your order (tsourekia cost \$18 each). You can pick up your order on Friday April 7 between 2:00pm and 6:30 pm.

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Our fundraising events are organized by the school's PTO. We try to raise important funds that will benefit the everyday operation of our school (books, supplies), as well as our efforts to achieve academic excellence through teachers education, history presentations, and special music and dance workshops.

Finally, I would like to discuss our program for adults. We offer Modern Greek Language classes for every level: Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced. The classes take place every Tuesday at 6:30pm. We encourage everyone to attend our classes and see how exciting it is to learn the Greek language.

Please, contact me for more information about the children and adult programs, our upcoming cultural events, and different ways to help and support the Greek School.

Best regards and *Kali Sarakosti!*

Katerina Kontogeorgaki,
School Director,



Annunciation Greek Language & Culture School Students, Christmas Program
December 2016

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:34

Certificate of Attainment in Greek Language



Congratulations to the students who received the Certificate of Attainment in Greek Language: Christos Georgiadis, Christiana Avouris, Mary Mikos, Georgios Mikos, and Alkiviadis Boukas, with Director Katerina Kontogeorgaki. Not pictured: Paschalis Economou and Despina Georgiadi.

Scholarship Recipients, Greek Language & Culture School



Congratulations to our scholarship recipients: Aphrodite Kehribar, Socrates Strafkos and Dimitrios Bernitsas, with the representatives of the Macedonian Association, HCC, the Gianitsopoulos family, and the director Katerina Kontogeorgaki.

Philoptochos

To Be A Friend To Those In Need

Marie Halvatzis, President

In a recent edition of “The Morning Offering,” Abbott Tryphon said we are to “become God’s collaborators” as we live, not just espouse, Orthodox Christianity. This is the essence of the mission of The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society that was founded to be the philanthropic arm of the Church in North America.

There are so many “in need” in our country and world and the types of need vary greatly. Our parish and Philoptochos chapter have been blessed abundantly with the ability to help others due to the ceaseless work of many of our members and the financial generosity of the parish.

Can you imagine being a child or teenager and having to live at a residential facility because your family is unable to provide a suitable home for you? Or being the young widow of a priest with seven children to care for and wondering how you will be able to provide for them? These are the stories of the residents of St. Basil Academy. Some of the funds to operate the Academy come from the annual Vasilopita Celebrations held by Philoptochos chapters across the country. This year, our chapter raised \$47,817! In the past five years, we have, through your generosity, been able to donate \$180,453. It is not possible to change the unfortunate circumstances that brought each of the residents to St. Basil’s but we can show them we care by helping provide the home they need. *Pictured: Fr. Michael Lambakis handing check to Marie Halvatzis, Eleni Kyriazis and Martha Stefanidakis.*



Closer to home, Philoptochos members and other caring parishioners, visit those members of the parish who are no longer able to get out much. In December, we visited thirty Special Friends and delivered *koulourakia* and *tsoureki* to them. In addition we delivered cards and gift baskets prepared by AOS students to twenty-one parishioners. Throughout the year, our volunteers pay visits to those who are homebound or in care facilities. We are always looking for more volunteers and can work to accommodate a volunteer’s schedule and area of town.

In January, several Philoptochos members toured the new home of SEARCH Homeless Services and were updated on its role in the City’s “A Houston Without Homelessness Initiative.” There are many, varied, ways for us to help SEARCH in its mission. If you are interested in learning more, contact Marie Halvatzis (mhalvatzis@gmail.com).

Dean Triantifilou, Executive Director of International Orthodox Christian Charities, was our guest speaker in February. IOCC partners with like organizations to bring help to a hurting world through many programs that provide food, shelter, basic supplies, and economic opportunity for long -range improvement of their plight. Philoptochos is proud to support the work of IOCC and encourage individuals to consider doing so, also.

If you are not already a member of Philoptochos, please join us in doing the work of the Church. There is a place for everyone in Philoptochos!

Senior Citizens

Kiki Pantazis & Paula Phocas

Hi everyone.

I hope you all are doing well.

Now that all the Christmas holidays and the nice and mild winter is almost over it is time to think about spring and Holy Easter.

Our holidays were very nice and a lot of fun as always, thanks to our wonderful sponsors who all go out of their way to do the best for us. We are very grateful to all of you - THANK YOU!

We still have several meetings to go before summer is here and I hope you attend all of them and enjoy the fun and fellowship with us. Paula and I are so pleased to see so many new people at our meetings this year. We both look forward to seeing more of you. I hope you can attend all of these meetings and have fun with us

We serve good tasty meals. We work with you to create a menu that you like. Our Lenten meals are great and very tasty too. We always look for sponsors and if anyone is interested for the next year 2017-2018, we have only three openings left. Please contact me, Kiki Pantazis, at: 713-340-1113 or Paula Phocas at 713-661-5017. We can celebrate any occasion -- birthdays, anniversaries or the memory of a loved one.

Our schedule and hosts for the rest of the year:

FEBRUARY 21 - The Pappas Family in memory of their loved ones.

MARCH 7 - Leo Kozadinos in memory of his father Demetri.

MARCH 21 - Maria Simeon in memory of her husband and her sons Nick and John.

MARCH 28 - Our yearly outing. This year we are going to visit St. Paraskevi Monastery.

APRIL 4 - Mary Verges in memory of her loved ones.

APRIL 20 (THURSDAY) - AHEPA & Daughters of Penelope hosting their annual Easter celebration for us.

MAY 2 - Paul Voinis.

MAY 16 - AOS (Annunciation Orthodox School).

JUNE 6 - Dimitri Karastamatis in memory of Jimmy & Frances Catsis.

GUIDELINES:

Everyone who is 55 years and older and is a member of the Annunciation church please join us in the seniors program and enjoy the fun and the fellowship our program provides.

TO ATTEND OUR OUTINGS you have to be a regular member of the Sr. Citizens, with the exception of out of town visitors who are VERY welcome at any time.

For more information call:

KIKI PANTAZIS 713-340-1113 OR PAULA PHOCAS 713-661-5017

HIS TOUCH FELLOWSHIP

Annual Widows' Project

The widows' outreach ministry, His Touch Fellowship (HTF) each year donates children's knitted, winter hats for Trinity Foster Care. The hats are hand made with a needle/loom or store bought for sizes infants through teens. Also, we collect unused yarn and gratefully accept cash to buy yarn.

The knitted hats and blankets were delivered to Trinity Foster Care in time for the Children's Christmas party. The in-kind amount of the hats and blankets donated from HTF was \$1,036.21. Also many toys were donated from members. Many thanks to our knitters, donors, and supporters. Special thanks to Effie Rombakis, Doris Frankel, Anna Payavla, Barbara Mousoudakis, Virginia Humphrey, Matina Bonnen, Georgia Markopoulos and Monica Savage.

The HTF widow's project for foster children is open to anyone who would like to knit at their leisure and in the comfort of their own home. Hats (and baby blankets, if you prefer) are collected from volunteers in November and distributed to Trinity Foster Care in early December. Please call Harriett Semander (832-283-3159) or Anna Payavla (713-977-7898) for instructions on using a loom, which may be purchased at Michael's.

Kali Parea is the social outreach of His Touch Fellowship. The Luncheons are scheduled once a month, usually the 3rd Saturday, at local restaurants, 12 noon-1:30 pm, Dutch treat (each person pays her own check). If you are interested in joining *Kali Parea* for friendship, comfort, and support, please call Harriett Semander (713-771-4790) to receive the 2017 dates and locations of our Luncheons...come join our circle of strength and bring another widow with you.



Kali Parea Christmas Luncheon December 2016 .

Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be taken up and cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.

Mark 11:23

Welcome Committee

Marti Iatridis

Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Romans 15:7

Have you ever been “new” to the church? It’s such a great feeling to be warmly greeted with a smile! Our Welcome Committee will continue to present a small golden lapel pin cross to the Newcomers of our church. If you notice someone wearing the Newcomers’ Cross, please greet them and help them in any way that you can.

We are looking for additional volunteers to join the Welcome Committee this year! It’s a great way to meet new people and make new friends. Helping visitors at our beautiful Cathedral is an easy job, but very important.

Sign up to greet Newcomers to Annunciation Cathedral. Volunteers are needed to help at the Welcome Table during the coffee hour for about 20 minutes each Sunday after first or second Liturgy.

To volunteer, call or text Marti Iatridis at 469-878-4544.

Email: iatridismarti@comcast.net

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
METROPOLIS OF DENVER



NATIONAL YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2017
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Ages 18-32

REGISTRATION & WEEKEND INFORMATION COMING SOON!!!

SAVE THE DATE! YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS OUT!!!

Annunciation Orthodox School Chapel at AOS

Rob Wise, Director of Admissions

As we approach the season of Great Lent, wonderful things are happening at Annunciation Orthodox School. Our students are busy with schoolwork, applications to high school, athletics, creating music and art, and worshipping together each day and week.

Early each Monday morning you can see the Early Childhood teachers, students, and parents walk across the street to the St. George Chapel. All of the children and their parents pack into the chapel with Mrs. Koinis and Mr. Rowaldt or Mrs. Bonasso. There is always an exciting object lesson where we learn how God loves us and how we are to love each other. We sing, pray, and spend time together in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing cuter than when 70 three and four-year-olds gather together to pray...surely God is present among them!

Later in the week, the Kindergartners through eighth graders gather together with their teachers for chapel service in the gym or Annunciation Cathedral. Kindergartners and first graders have seventh and eighth grade chapel buddies who teach them the service and help them to understand what's happening throughout. The Cathedral is filled with the voices of our students as they recite the Trisagion Prayers, petitions, and hymn of the Annunciation. Father Michael, Father Gabriel, or Father Christopher lead the school in the prayers, read the Gospel, and proclaim the good news.

The most beautiful aspect of our chapel services is bringing together many different families and children from around Houston to worship together in the Greek Orthodox Church. Many different faiths are represented at AOS in a culture of peace and love. As we prepare for Great and Holy Lent, we change our hymns and prayers to reflect the subdued nature of the time and the "bright sadness" of the season in preparation for the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We stand together and say the Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim then attempt to practice those precepts of loving each other unconditionally.





The 100 Year Anniversary Committee *Needs Your Story!!*

We are asking for **written stories** and **photographs** of families, both Greek and non-Greek, who call Annunciation Cathedral their home. You can write the story of how your parents or grandparents came to this country **OR** you may just wish to share a story or two about your family as part of this community of believers.

Are you a **convert** to the Faith? We want your story too! Tell us how you found the Church and some of your experiences. Why did you come to Annunciation Cathedral?

We hope to incorporate some of these stories in the **100 Year Anniversary Commemorative Book and History**. We want all of your stories to be included in our **Archives of Annunciation**. Some may even be selected in whole or part to be **presented to our congregation** either on Sunday after liturgy, or on our website and Facebook page.

So get out your laptop, open up your notebook, look through your photographs, and get thinking about why YOU (or your family) chose this wonderful Cathedral to be your own. Send all of it to **Irene Cassis** (irenecassis@agoc.org). We can't wait to hear from you!!
(Deadline for submissions of stories and photographs: December 2017)

Cathedral Calendar

March 20 - April 30, 2017

Monday, March 20, 2017

Great Compline 6:00 pm, St. George Chapel

Tuesday, March 21

Sr. Citizens Meeting & Lunch 10:15 am, Martel Hall

Bible Study 1:00 pm, Room 219

Bible Study 6:30 pm, Room 219

Wednesday, March 22

Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm

Friday, March 24

Greek School 5:00 pm

6:00 pm Great Vespers of Annunciation / Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 25 - Annunciation of the Theotokos

8:30 am Orthros / 9:30 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Philoptochos Reception following Divine Liturgy, Martel Hall

Sunday, March 26 - Sunday of St. John Climacus

ONE DIVINE LITURGY -

Groundbreaking for Cathedral Expansion

7:45 am Orthros / 9:00 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Groundbreaking, following Divine Liturgy, in front of Cathedral entrance

Reception in Martel Hall, following Groundbreaking

Monday, March 27

Great Compline 6:00 pm, St. George Chapel

Tuesday, March 28

Sr. Citizens Outing, depart Martel Hall 9:00 am

Bible Study 1:00 pm, Room 219

Bible Study 6:30 pm, Room 219

Wednesday, March 29

Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm

Thursday, March 30

Philoptochos General Meeting 7:00 pm, small Martel Hall

Friday, March 31

Greek School 5:00 pm

Akathist Hymn 7:00 pm

Sunday, April 2 - Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

Orthros 7:45 am/Divine Liturgies 9:00 & 11:00 am/ SCS

Oratorical Festival (Grades 3-4) 10:45 am, small Martel Hall

Greek School Greek Independence Day Celebration 12:30pm, Martel Hall

Monday, April 3

Great Compline 6:00 pm, St. George Chapel

Tuesday, April 4

Sr. Citizens Meeting & Lunch 10:15 am, Martel Hall

Wednesday, April 5

Greek School Tsourekia Baking 9:00 am, Boozalis Festival Center

Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm

Thursday, April 6

Greek School Tsourekia Baking 9:00 am

Friday, April 7

FAITH Ministry 10:00 am, Cathedral

Greek School 5:00 pm

Saturday, April 8 - Saturday of Lazarus

Orthros 8:30 am / Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Sunday, April 9 - PALM SUNDAY

Orthros 7:45 am/Divine Liturgies 9:00 & 11:00 am

Palm Sunday Fish Dinner, follow each Divine Liturgy, Martel Hall

Service of the Bridegroom 7:00 pm

HOLY MONDAY, April 10

Service of the Bridegroom 7:00 pm

HOLY TUESDAY, April 11

Service of the Bridegroom 7:00 pm

HOLY WEDNESDAY, April 12

Presanctified Liturgy 9:30 am

Sacrament of Holy Unction 3:00 pm

Sacrament of Holy Unction 7:00 pm

HOLY THURSDAY, April 13

Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 8:00 am

Service of the Passion of Our Lord / Reading of the
Twelve Gospels 7:00 pm**HOLY FRIDAY, April 14**

Royal Hours 9:00 am

Apokathilosis / Descent from the Cross 3:00 pm

Epitaphios Thrinos / The Lamentations 7:00 pm

HOLY SATURDAY, April 15

Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 8:00 am

Resurrection Orthros & Divine Liturgy 11:30 pm

HOLY PASCHA SUNDAY, April 16 -

The Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Agape Vespers 11:00 am

Easter Egg Hunt, Courtyard, following Agape Vespers
*no fasting during Bright Week***MONDAY OF BRIGHT WEEK, April 17**

Cathedral Office Closed

FRIDAY OF BRIGHT WEEK, April 21 -

Feast of the Life-Giving Fountain

Orthros 8:30 am / Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

FAITH Ministry 10:00 am, St. George Chapel

Sr. Citizens Pascha Luncheon 10:30 am

Sunday, April 23 - Sunday of St. Thomas

Orthros 7:45am/Divine Liturgies 9:00 & 11:00 am/SCS

Oratorical Festival (Grades K, 1 & 2), 10:45 am,
small Martel Hall**Friday, April 28**

Greek School 5:00 pm

Saturday, April 29

AHEPA Career Day 9am-4pm, Martel Hall

Sunday, April 30 -

Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women

Orthros 7:45 am/Divine Liturgies 9:00 & 11:00 am/SCS

Calling ALL youth from our Cathedral!!!**Friday April 07, 2017**

6:30 pm in the Martel Hall

Please come and join in the fun of helping to
assemble Palm Crosses for Palm SundayA Lenten meal will be served for those helping
to make the Palm Crosses

REGISTRY

August 23, 2016 - March 12, 2017

WEDDINGS

Eleni Jude Christou and
Bryan Scott Franklin
Sponsor: Christos Christou

Lauren Ashley Lewis and
Salvatore Matthew Schibetta
Sponsor: Karen P. Pratt

Madison Alyse Loveless and
Michael Patrick Dewey
Sponsor: Adriana Pantazis

Joanna Maria Papakonstantinou and
Chris Hanson
Sponsor: Linda Janes Makris

Olga Achkasova Patrick and
Mark Thomas Barron
Sponsor: Svitlana Achkasova

Leydiana Fernandez-Kamboureli and
Jason Bryan Kamboureli
Sponsor: Emanuel Stamatakis

Martha Liliana Vega and
Theodore Nicholas Snyder
Sponsor: Cynthia G. Kostas

BAPTISMS

Malcolm Thomas
Parents: Anna and Andrew Argyris
Godparent: Christopher George Argyris

Maxwell David (Maximus)
Parents: Emily and Nicholas Catechis
Godparent: Stephen Anastacios Catechis

Vivian Catherine
Parents: Catherine and Raphael DAmico
Godparent: Despina Vallianos Mann

Alexander Dean Edward
Parents: Victoria and Dean Enterline
Godparent: Theodore N. Snyder

Michael
Parents: Emily and George Grivon
Godparent: Lucas Postolos

Hayden Griffin (Aidan)
Parents: Georgea and Hayden Griffin Haby III
Godparent: James Christopher Pappas

John Lefteris
Parents: Alexandra and Nathan Holub
Godparent: Lauran Dewey

Theodore
Parents: Christina and Joshua King
Godparent: Sophia Pamphilis

Emmanuela Katerina
Parents: Erica and Antonios Kouros
Godparent: Eleni Kouros

Sofia Marie
Parents: Erica and Antonios Kouros
Godparent: Tonia Perry

Paul Andrew
Parents: Amelia and Frank Leong
Godparent: Marcia Rousonelos

Jase Daniel (Iason)
Parents: Amalia and Marcus Lalumandier
Godparent: Laura Voinis

Vasiliki
Parents: Androula and Panayiotis Melas
Godparents: Maria Kyriakidou and George
Papageorgiou

Julianna Christina
Parents: Irene and Jason Miura
Godparent: Presvytera Ariadne Livaditis

Michael Leonidas
Parents: Irene and Jason Miura
Godparent: Yanni Livaditis

Alexander
Parents: Violeta and Vaios Papandreou
Godparents: Kelly and Kostas Apostolopoulos

Leonidas
Parents: Violeta and Vaios Papandreou
Godparents: Sophia and Chris Demos

Stefanos Tsambikos
Parents: Mary and John Papapavlou
Godparent: Maria Papapavlou Hritcko

Marina Zenovia
Parents: Christina and Petros Papazis
Godparents: Kris and Richard McGee

Gregory Harris
Parents: Alexandra and Harris Demetri Pappas
Godparent: Dana Kantalis

Matthew Peter
Parent: Megan Jane Poulos
Godparent: Taylor Poulos

James Adam (Dimitrios)
Parents: Mary and James Reeks
Godparent: Constantina Bond

Alexander Gabriel
Parents: Olena and Andrey Reznichenko
Godparents: Rallou and Andreas Matzakos

Andreas Nikolas
Parents: Evanthia and Rickey Wayne Riddle, Jr.
Godparents: Paraskevi and Shaun Connelly

Georgios Eustathios
Parents: Natalie and Eustathios Simos
Godparents: Sotiria and Vasilios Diamantopoulos

Nicholas James
Parents: Martha Mae and Nicholas Sissa
Godparents: Rania Crispen and Brandon Woodrum

Theodora Anahi
Parents: Lisa and Moises Garcia
Godparent: Maria Stratigis

Sophia Angelica
Parents: Marie Chantal and Charles Stillman III
Godparent: Nicholas Dorsey Stillman

Alexandros Leonidas
Parents: Elina and Nicholas Vardalos
Godparents: Effie and George Katsoufis

Eda (Elizabeth) Bejko
Godparent: George Bejko

Irena (Irene) Bejko
Godparent: George Bejko

CHRISMATIONS

Chris (Christopher) Hanson
Sponsor: Linda Makris

Scott (John) Stoeckel
Sponsors: Kathy and Dean Pappas

FUNERALS

Stelios Arapoglou
Reena Candis
Helen Beys Catsinas
James George Charkalis
George Thomas Denos, Sr
Priscilla "Anastasia" Whitaker East
Nick Evangelos Gianake
Dimitrios Giannakopoulos
John Samuel Gianukos
George J. Kostas
Johnny Charles Kriticos
Diana Elyse Lioliou
Irene Drizos Lykos
Michael Thomas Panos
Julianna (Julie) Pappas
Steven Elias Petrou
Barbara Petrutsas
Gerald van de Bruinhorst II
Nikolaos Andreas Vionis
Sophie Vonas

It's the Family Vacation of a Lifetime!



Bring your entire family to the ancient city of Rome! You'll travel back into Bible times—without setting foot outside our community.

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Irene Cassis, irenecassis@agoc.or & George Katrib, gkatrib@gmail.com

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So mark these dates on your calendar: June 12 - 16, 2017 .

The adventure starts at 9:30 am and will end at 12:30 am .

To register your family for this awesome Bible adventure, call this number:

To Register go to www.agoc.org & click on VBS in the right hand margin .

Sincerely,



Your Rome Director





Registration opens March 1, 2017

Camp Emmanuel offers two sessions, Junior Session and Senior Session, each summer each one week in length.

<u>Senior Session</u>	<u>Junior Session</u>
• Ages 15-18	• Ages 11-14
• June 11-17	• June 18-24

Located at Manzano Mountain Retreat, Torreon NM

For more info visit:

<http://www.youth.denver.goarch.org/ministries/campemmanuel>



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