

DECEMBER 2023



Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Saint Andrew Family News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT – DECEMBER 10TH

ELECTIONS FOR PARISH COUNCIL – DECEMBER 10TH

Saint Andrew Family News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

On Sundays we celebrate

Orthros @ 8:15 AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 AM

For other services please check our website or call the office

OFFICE HOURS

Mon – Fri 10am-4pm

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Father John Theodosion, *Editor in Chief*

2023 PARISH COUNCIL

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*Please submit your articles and information on time to
Vasiliki (Bessie) Petrakos info@standrewgonj.org*

*Deadline for the **JANUARY ISSUE** is December 15th*

Please find magazine issues on our web site <https://www.standrewgonj.org>

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DECEMBER 2023 + DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday	3	14th Sunday of Luke
Monday	4	+ST. BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR * <i>Relics</i>
Wednesday	6	+ST. NICHOLAS ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA
Sunday	10	10th Sunday of Luke Christmas Pageant
Tuesday	12	+ST. SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER OF TRYMITHOUS
Friday	15	+ST. ELEUTHERIOS THE HOLY MARTYR
Sunday	17	11th Sunday of Luke
Thursday	21	+ST. ANASTASIA THE GREAT MARTYR
Friday	22	+Orthros and Great Hours
Sunday	24	Sunday before the Nativity Eugenia the Righteous, Eve of the Nativity of Christ
Monday	25	+ Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great @8:15AM
Wednesday	27	+SAINT STEPHEN, Archdeacon and First Martyr
Sunday	31	Sunday after Nativity; Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
Sunday	31	CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION ST. BASIL Great Vespers @3:30pm

Sundays: Orthros @8:15AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:30AM

Weekdays: Orthros @8AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9AM

*(We have this saint's Relics at our Saint Andrew Reliquary) **

Sunday School students will attend the Divine Liturgy at 9:30am, receive Holy Communion and proceed to their classes.

ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΣ 2023 + ΙΕΡΕΣ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΕΣ

Κυριακή	3	ΙΔ' Λουκά
Δευτέρα	4	+ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ* <i>Λείψανα</i>
Τετάρτη	6	+ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΜΥΡΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΚΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Κυριακή	10	Ι' Λουκά
Τρίτη	12	+ΣΠΥΡΙΔΩΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΡΙΜΥΘΟΥΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Παρασκευή	15	+ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ
Κυριακή	17	ΙΑ' Λουκά
Πέμπτη	21	+ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΡΙΑΣ
Παρασκευή	22	Όρθρος και Μέγα Όρες
Κυριακή	24	Η Παραμονή τής Έορτής των Χριστουγέννων; Όσιομάρτυρος Εύγενίας
Δευτέρα	25	Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου <u>ώρα 8.15πμ</u>
Τετάρτη	27	ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ ΠΡΩΤΟΜΑΡΤΥΣ; Μεθεόρτια των Χριστουγέννων
Κυριακή	31	Απόδοσις Γεννήσεως του Χριστού;
Κυριακή	31	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ +ΕΣΠΕΡΙΝΟΣ 3:30ΜΜ

Κυριακή – Όρθρος - ώρα 8.15πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9:30πμ |

καθημερινές – Όρθρος - ώρα 8πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9πμ

*(Έχουμε τα Λείψανα του Αγίου στην Λειψανοθήκη της εκκλησία μας)**

Οι μαθητές Κατηχητικού θα έρθουν πρώτα στην Θεία Λειτουργία ώρα 9.30πμ, μετά την Θεία Κοινωνία στις τάξεις τους.

JANUARY 2024 + DIVINE SERVICES

Monday	1	CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION OF ST. BASIL @8:15AM
Friday	5	EVE OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST: +Orthros, Great Hours, Great Vespers, & Divine Liturgy Of St. Basil The Great, Great Agiasmos (<i>Fasting Day</i>)
Saturday	6	HOLY THEOPHANY, BAPTISM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, Orthros, Divine Liturgy & The Great Agiasmos
Sunday	7	THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY PROPHET, BAPTIST & FORERUNNER; AFTERFEAST OF THE THEOPHANY
Sunday	14	LEAVETAKING OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST
Wednesday	17	+ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT
Thursday	18	+ST. ATHANASIOS THE GREAT & CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA
Saturday	20	+ ST. EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT
Sunday	21	12th Sunday of Luke
Sunday	28	15th Sunday Luke Three Hierarchs Program (HAS & RelEd)
Tuesday	30	+SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HIERARCHS: +BASIL THE GREAT; +GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN; & +JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Sundays: Orthros @8:15AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:30AM

Weekdays: Orthros @8AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9AM

Sunday School students will attend the Divine Liturgy at 9:30am, receive Holy Communion and proceed to their classes.

ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ 2024 + ΙΕΡΕΣ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΕΣ

Δευτέρα	1	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ <u>ώρα 8.15πμ</u>
Παρασκευή	5	ΠΡΟΕΟΡΤΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ ΘΕΟΠΕΜΠΤΟΥ & ΘΕΩΝΑ ΤΩΝ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΩΝ (<i>Νηστεία</i>) – Όρθρος, Μέγα Εσπερινό, Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασιλείου & Ακολουθία του Αγιασμού
Σάββατο	6	ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ; Μέγας Αγιασμός
Κυριακή	7	ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΙΜΙΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΥ; ΜΕΘΕΟΡΤΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ;
Κυριακή	14	ΑΠΟΔΟΣΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΩΝ;
Τετάρτη	17	+ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
Πέμπτη	18	+ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΩΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ
Σάββατο	20	+ ΕΥΘΥΜΙΟΥ ΟΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
Κυριακή	21	ΙΒ΄ Του Λουκά
Κυριακή	28	ΙΕ΄ ΜΑΤΘΑΪΟΥ (Τῆς ΧΑΝΑΝΑΪΑΣ);
Τρίτη	30	ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ +ΜΕΓΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ, +ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΣ, + ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ

Κυριακή – Όρθρος - ώρα 8.15πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9:30πμ |

Καθημερινές – Όρθρος - ώρα 8πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9πμ

Οι μαθητές Κατηχητικού θα έρθουν πρώτα στην Θεία Λειτουργία ώρα 9.30πμ, μετά την Θεία Κοινωνία στις τάξεις τους.



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF
NEW JERSEY

SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. John Theodosion
Pastor

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST PROGRAM

December 17, **SUNDAY @ 8:15 am: 11th Sunday of Luke** - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (SJC)

December 21, **Thursday @ 8:00 am: St. Anastasia the Great Martyr** - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of SJC

December 22, **Friday @ 8:00 am:** Orthros & Great Hours

December 24, **SUNDAY @ 8:15 am: Sunday before the Nativity; Eugenia the Righteous; Eve of the Nativity of Christ** - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of SJC

December 25, **Monday @ 8:15 am: The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ** - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great

December 27, **Wednesday @ 8:00 am: Saint Stephen, Archdeacon and First Martyr** - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of SJC

December 31, **SUNDAY @ 8:15 am: after Nativity; Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ** Orthros & Divine Liturgy of SJC

December 31, **SUNDAY @ 3:30 pm: Circumcision of Our Lord & Commemoration St. Basil the Great** - Great Vespers

NEW YEAR 2024

January 1, **Monday @ 8:15 am: Circumcision of Our Lord and Commemoration of St. Basil the Great** - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great

January 5, **Friday @ 8:00am: Eve of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; The Holy Martyrs Theopemptus and Theonas; (Fasting Day)** - Orthros, The Great Hours, The Great Vespers, Divine Liturgy of St. Basil & Blessing of the Waters

January 6, **Saturday @ 8:00 am: Holy Theophany Baptism of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** - Orthros, Divine Liturgy SJC & The Great Blessing of the Waters

January 7, **SUNDAY @ 8:15 am: The Synaxis of the Holy Prophet St. John the Baptist; Afterfeast of Theophany** – Orthros & Divine Liturgy SJC



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ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΕΟΡΤΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ

- 17 Δεκεμβρίου, **ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ** ώρα 8:15 πμ: **ΙΑ' Λουκά** - Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Ιωάννη Χρυσοστόμου (ΑΙΧ)
- 21 Δεκεμβρίου, **Πέμπτη** ώρα 8:00 πμ: **+Αναστασίας Μεγαλομάρτυρος της Φαρμακεύτριας** - Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία ΑΙΧ
- 22 Δεκεμβρίου: **Παρασκευή** ώρα 8:00 πμ: Όρθρος και Μέγα Ώρες
- 24 Δεκεμβρίου: **ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ** ώρα 8:15 πμ: **Η Παραμονή τής Έορτής τών Χριστουγέννων; Όσιομάρτυρος Εύγενίας** - Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία ΑΙΧ
- 25 Δεκεμβρίου, **Δευτέρα** ώρα 8:15 πμ: **Η Γέννησις του Σωτήρος ημών Ιησού Χριστού** - Όρθρος & Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου
- 27 Δεκεμβρίου, **Τετάρτη** ώρα 8:00 πμ: **Στέφανος Πρωτόμάρτυς** -Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία ΑΙΧ
- 31 Δεκεμβρίου, **ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ** ώρα 8:15 πμ: **Κυριακή μετά τής Χριστού Γεννήσεως; Απόδοσις Γεννήσεως του Χριστού;** Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία ΑΙΧ
- 31 Δεκεμβρίου, **ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ** ώρα 3:30 μμ: **Η κατά σάρκα περιτομή του Χριστού, Βασιλείου αρχιεπισκόπου Καισαρείας** - Μέγα Εσπερινός

ΝΕΟΝ ΈΤΟΣ 2024

- 1 Ιανουαρίου, **Δευτέρα** ώρα 8:15 πμ: **Η κατά σάρκα περιτομή του Χριστού, Βασιλείου αρχιεπισκόπου Καισαρείας** - Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου
- 5 Ιανουαρίου, **Παρασκευή** ώρα 8:00 πμ: **Προεόρτια τών Φώτων; Θεόπεμπτος και Θεωνᾶς Μάρτυρες;** (Νηστεία) - Όρθρος, Μέγα Εσπερινό, Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασιλείου και Ακολουθία του Αγιασμού
- 6 Ιανουαρίου, **Σάββατο** ώρα 8:00 πμ: **Τα άγια Θεοφάνεια του Σωτήρος ημών Ιησού Χριστού** - Όρθρος, Θεία Λειτουργία ΑΙΧ και Μέγα Αγιασμός
- 7 Ιανουαρίου, **ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ** ώρα 8:15 πμ: **Η Σύναξις του Προδρόμου και Βαπτιστού Ιωάννου; Κυριακή μετά των Φώτων** - Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία

God's Gift to Us

Rev Fr John Theodosion

God Loves all of us and from the beginning of creation until now He never stopped loving us. In the Old Testament we can see how tough He could be on the Children of Israel, but even when He was tough on them, He was doing it to teach or correct them. God never gave up teaching, correcting, and doing all He could to bring His people to the correct way of living. Even sending His Son to Earth to save us was His last greatest effort to give us the teachings we need to live our lives as He intended for us. His coming into the world is no less than a gift. A gift for all people. If we could give a title to the Gospel passages which describe the birth of our Lord, it would be "The Gift."



In the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 11, it mentions many of the heroes of the Old Testament and their accomplishments. It concludes with the words, "All of these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us." We hear in this passage of St. Paul of God's promise, but we hear that His promise was not fulfilled in the Old Testament.

And we today wonder, what happened to that promise from God? Did God fulfill His promise to Abraham? The answer is yes, the promise that God made to Abraham was fulfilled through the gift of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friends, the gospels tell us that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise. In a dream God tells Joseph the Betrothed, "...do not fear to take Mary to be your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." We see here that what was promised to Abraham was brought into reality by the birth of Jesus. God sent His Son to save us from our sins by teaching us what true love is. He not only taught

what true love is through His words, but He demonstrated love through His actions. It did not matter what the people did or did not do or say, He continued to show true love until He was nailed to the Cross. This is what we call unconditional love. He showed through His actions that true love is giving without expecting something to be given in return even if those you are trying to help do not understand or accept your help.

We see here that God offered to us the greatest gift when He sent His Son to be born in a manger in Bethlehem. We read in the Gospel of John that "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." This is the Greatest gift because it is many gifts in one. Jesus is God's promise of forgiveness. He is Emmanuel which means, God with us. Through Jesus we receive the gift of being members of God's family, the gift of a loving heavenly Father, the gift of a God who knows us by name and cares about each of us, the gift of the Holy Spirit abiding with us with all His power, and the gift of a place in God's Heavenly Kingdom.

So, when everyone else is talking about stuff they got for Christmas this year, much of which will be lost, broken, or forgotten by next Christmas, we can think and remember that we received Christ as our Savior and Lord. **Never forgetting that He loves us and cares for us and has a special place for us in His Heavenly Kingdom.** And because we have received Him and we have learned from His example of unconditional love, we in turn can give our time, our love, our friendship, our care, our concern our forgiveness and understanding to all people around us who are in need. It is our way of saying thank you to God for the gift of His unconditional love for us always.



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SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. John Theodosion
Pastor

December 2023

Dear Steward,

As members of the Election Committee, we are notifying you of the Parish Council election on **Sunday, December 10th**, 2023, in the church's assembly hall after services until 1:30pm . The purpose of the election is to fill nine vacancies on the Parish Council The election is held according to the Uniform Parish Regulations Article VIII.

The list of nominated candidates follows. Each candidate (for the Parish Council) may prepare a resume indicating their qualifications, education, and general background, which will be posted on the Church Bulletin Board until December 10th, 2023. We urge you to read the resumes and then participate in the voting process.

We would like to remind you that in order to vote in the election, you must be a steward in good standing of Saint Andrew Church and to have fulfilled at least 90% of your 2023 Commitment. You have until Thursday, December 7th to fulfill 90% of your pledge or to return your signed 2023 Commitment Card with 90% of your pledge.

The list of eligible voters will be posted in the Church office. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please refer them to the Stewardship Committee and the Election Committee by December 7th, 2023. ALL VOTES ARE RECORDED.

If you have any questions about the election process, do not hesitate to call the Church office.

In Christ's name,



+Rev. John Theodosion

Manny Christakos, Greg Crysler, Fotios Kontogiannis, Nick Monokandilos,
Saint Andrew Election Committee – 2023

Parish Council Nominees 3 Year term 2024-25-26

Nikolaos Karkanias, Herbert Schuster, Maro Nicolaou Schuster, Andrew Zezas.

Parish Council Seats being vacated:

Nikolaos Karkanias, Peter Petrou, Herbert Schuster, Maro Nicolaou Schuster.

Auditing Committee for 2023

Peter Ioannou, Athina Kritharis, Veronica Rotsides, James Andrews

In last month's Saint Andrew Family News, we ran the article

FROM NO WHERE MAN TO "THE SERVANT OF GOD" THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

We are happy to be able to provide it this month in Greek for our Greek speaking parishioners

Ο ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΥΘΕΝΑ ΠΟΥ ΓΙΝΕΤΑΙ «Ο ΥΠΗΡΕΤΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ» ΜΕ ΤΗ ΔΩΡΕΑ ΤΟΥ

Πατήρ Ιωάννης Θεοδοσίου

Στο Κατά Λουκάν Ευαγγέλιο 12:16-21, ο Ιησούς μας λέει την παραβολή του άφρονα πλούσιου. Μας θυμίζει κάπως την παλιά επιτυχία των Beatles της δεκαετίας του '60 που λεγόταν «Nowhere man», Ο άνθρωπος του πουθενά. Οι δημιουργοί του τραγουδιού, John Lennon και Paul McCartney, τραγουδούν για έναν άνθρωπο που σκεπτόταν τα σχέδιά του για το πουθενά, έκανε σχέδια για το πουθενά, για κανέναν. Στο τέλος με θλίψη λένε, δεν είναι λίγο σαν εσένα και εμένα;

Λοιπόν, στο Ευαγγέλιο του Λουκά διαβάζουμε για έναν άνθρωπο του οποίου η γη απέδωσε πλούσιο καρπό. Η συγκομιδή ήταν τόσο εξαιρετική που χρειάστηκε να γκρεμίσει τις παλιές αποθήκες και να χτίσει πιο καινούργιες και ακόμη μεγαλύτερες. Ήταν πλούσιος. Τώρα μπορεί να πει στον εαυτό του "Έχω πολλά λεφτά και μπορώ να ζω με άνεση για πολλά χρόνια. Έχω αποθηκευμένα τα πλούτη μου μόνο για τον εαυτό μου και μπορώ να τρώω, να πίνω, και να είμαι χαρούμενος».

Πόσοι από εμάς δεν έχουμε ονειρευτεί μία μέρα να κερδίσουμε το λαχείο; Ή στο Atlantic City ή μήπως στο Las Vegas να φέρουμε νίκη στους κουλοχέρηδες. Τί θα κάναμε με αυτή την αναπάντεχη τύχη; Πόσοι από εμάς έχουμε κάνει χρήση του χρόνου και του ταλέντου που ο Θεός μας χάρισε για να κυνηγήσουμε όνειρα για πλούτο και άνεση; Ενώ δεν υπάρχει κάτι κακό με τον πλούτο και την άνεση αυτά καθ' εαυτά, μπορούν να μας οδηγήσουν στην αμαρτία αν τα θεωρούμε δική μας προσωπική ανταμοιβή. Αυτό θα συμβεί όταν αφήσουμε τον Θεό έξω από τις ζωές μας. Όπως

λέμε στο τέλος της Θείας Λειτουργίας, «πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον ἄνωθεν ἐστὶ καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων.» Κάθε χρόνο διαβάζουμε για «Τον πλούσιο και τον Λάζαρο». Αυτή η παραβολή είναι προειδοποίηση για τους κινδύνους της χρήσης του πλούτου μόνο για τον εαυτό μας όταν κάνουμε τα στραβά μάτια σε όσους μας έχουν ανάγκη.

Ο ανόητος πλούσιος στο ευαγγέλιο που αναφέρθηκα προηγουμένως δεν σκέφτηκε καθόλου την τελική του μοίρα. **Είχε πίστη μόνο στα πλούτη του.** Πόσοι από εμάς σήμερα πιστεύουμε μόνο τον υλικό πλούτο όπως την ακίνητη περιουσία και τις επενδύσεις στη Wall Street; Αν το κάνουμε αυτό, είμαστε σαν τους ανόητους οικοδόμους που χτίζουν το σπίτι τους στην άμμο. Γιατί δεν επενδύουν στον βράχο. Όχι, δεν αναφέρομαι στην Πρόνοια· μιλάμε για τη «βασιλεία του Θεού. Στην επί του όρους ομιλία, ο Ιησούς λέει «Γι' αυτό, εξακολουθήστε να επιζητείτε πρώτα τη Βασιλεία του Θεού και τη δικαιοσύνη Του, και όλα αυτά τα άλλα πράγματα θα σας προστεθούν». (Ματθαίος 6:33). Είναι φυσικά σημαντικό να μεριμνούμε για το μέλλον μας και ειδικά για τη συνταξιοδότησή μας και όταν αναζητούμε τη βασιλεία του Θεού πρώτα, αρχίζουμε να αφιερώνουμε τους εαυτούς μας και ο ένας τον άλλο στον Θεό μας τον Κύριο ημών Ιησού Χριστό. Αυτή είναι η οδός της αληθινής χαράς. Ο αείμνηστος και σεβαστός ιερέας της Εκκλησίας του Αγίου Νικολάου στο Newark, πατήρ Αλούπης ρωτούσε τα παιδιά που συναντούσε «Πώς γράφεται η λέξη joy;» Και αυτά απαντούσαν J-O-Y.

Τότε ο πατήρ τους έλεγε: πρώτα J για τον Ιησού (Jesus), δεύτερον O για τους άλλους (others) και τελευταία Y για τον εαυτό σου (yourself). Αυτή είναι η συνταγή για τη χαρά (JOY) που παίρνεις από την αληθινή Χριστιανική δωρεά.

Η αληθινή δωρεά έρχεται από την καρδιά που είναι καλά με τον Θεό. Έρχεται από τη φτώχεια του πνεύματος που κοιτάζει τα θαύματα του Θεού και μετά συνειδητοποιεί πόσο ευλογημένοι και εξαρτώμενοι είμαστε. Είναι μία αποκάλυψη που μας οδηγεί να βλέπουμε τους εαυτούς μας ως ταπεινούς υπηρέτες του καλού και αγαθού Πατέρα στον ουρανό. Τότε αναζητούμε τη βασιλεία Του. Αρχίζουμε να βλέπουμε τους άλλους ως τη θεία εικόνα Του. Αποζητούμε να κάνουμε το θέλημά Του. Βλέπουμε μία ανάγκη και ενστικτωδώς ρωτάμε τον εαυτό μας, Ο Ιησούς τί θα έκανε; Αφού αναζητούμε τη Βασιλεία Του, έχουμε και την πνευματική σοφία να κάνουμε το θέλημά Του. Καθώς ερχόμαστε πιο κοντά Του συνειδητοποιούμε πως τίποτε από όσα έχουμε μας ανήκουν. Είναι δώρο από τον Θεό που τόσο μας αγάπησε ώστε έδωσε τον μοναδικό Του Υιό για να συγχωρεθούν οι αμαρτίες μας. Έχουμε ελευθερωθεί από τις αμαρτίες όταν ακολουθούσαμε τον δικό μας δρόμο. Τώρα όμως έχουμε το Άγιο Πνεύμα που στάλθηκε από τον Πατέρα μέσα από τον Υιό για να μας οδηγήσει στο δρόμο Του.

Αυτό είναι η οικονομία. Είναι η Τριαδική μας ύπαρξη καθώς δίνουμε τον καλύτερό μας χρόνο, ταλέντο, και θησαυρό για να δικαιωνίσουμε αυτό το θαυμάσιο βασίλειο που ολοκληρώνει τη ζωή. Ναι, ο χρόνος, το ταλέντο, και ο θησαυρός του αδιαιρέτου τριαδικού προσώπου.

Σε αυτή την κοινότητα, αρχίζουμε να το καταλαβαίνουμε αυτό. Έχουμε πολλούς ανθρώπους που προσφέρουν τόσο γενναιόδωρα. Έχουμε ζωντανές διακονίες νέων. Οι κατηχητές μας αγαπούν τα παιδιά μας και έχουν επανασχεδιάσει το πρόγραμμα του Κατηχητικού σχολείου της

Κυριακής για να του δώσουν νέα ζωή και να φέρουν ένα καινούργιο ενδιαφέρον στους νέους. Έχουμε εκκλησιασμό τις Κυριακές και τις καθημερινές, μία ενεργή Μελέτη της Βίβλου για ενήλικες, διακονίες πλεξίματος και κατασκευής μαξιλαριών, την κοινωνική δραστηριότητα Faith Kitchen, την ομάδα της Αγάπης για τους συνταξιούχους μας, κ.λ.π. Εμείς στον Άγιο Ανδρέα, αναζητούμε την Βασιλεία Του και την δικαιοσύνη Του.

Στις ειδήσεις του AOL υπήρχε μία θαυμάσια ιστορία για έναν «πανταχού άνθρωπο» που πήρε αυτό το μήνυμα. Ήταν η ιστορία του «Μυστικού Άη Βασίλη» ο οποίος γεννήθηκε φτωχός, ήταν για λίγο άστεγος, παράτησε το κολλέγιο, απολύθηκε από δουλειές και μάλιστα μία φορά σκέφτηκε και τη ληστεία. Είπε πως κάθε φορά που χτύπαγε πάτο στη ζωή του, κάποιος του έδινε χρήματα και φαγητό και για το λόγο αυτό αφιέρωσε τη ζωή του στην ανταπόδοση των ευεργεσιών που δέχτηκε.

Αυτός ο τύπος άλλαξε τελείως τη ζωή του και μετά έγινε εκατομμυριούχος από την καλωδιακή τηλεόραση και την εξ' αποστάσεως τηλεφωνική επιχείρησή του. Αποστολή του είναι να χαρίζει χρήματα μυστικά σε όσους έχουν ανάγκη την περίοδο της εορτής των Χριστουγέννων. Τα τελευταία 26 χρόνια έχει χαρίσει εκατομμύρια δολάρια ανώνυμα και καθώς αντιμετωπίζει την προσωπική του μάχη με τον καρκίνο στον οισοφάγο, επέτρεψε να δημοσιοποιηθεί το όνομά του. Το όνομά του είναι Larry Stewart.

Καθώς ετοιμαζόμαστε να ολοκληρώσουμε το κοινοτικό μας κέντρο, και καθώς αρχίζουμε να προσεγγίζουμε και να δίνουμε ένα μέρος από τους καρπούς των δραστηριοτήτων μας για να βοηθήσουμε όσους έχουν ανάγκη, προσευχόμαστε να αφήσουμε πίσω μας τον άνθρωπο πουθενά και να ακολουθήσουμε τη νουθεσία του Κυρίου μας που μας οδηγεί στη Βασιλεία Του. Τους είπε πως πρέπει να αρχίσουν να αρνούνται τους εαυτούς τους και να σηκώσουν τον σταυρό τους. Κάνοντας

αυτό αφήνουμε τον κόσμο του ανθρώπου του πουθενά και προχωράμε προς τη Βασιλεία του Θεού. Αυτή θα είναι η οικονομική μας δέσμευση. Θα γίνουμε οι πανταχού άνδρες και γυναίκες των οποίων το φως θα προσελκύει έναν χαμένο και πληγωμένο κόσμο προς την ομορφιά και το μυστικισμό του αληθινού και λειτουργικού Ορθόδοξου Χριστιανισμού.

Ας ανέβουμε αυτό το βήμα της πίστης. Ας δείξουμε την αγάπη μ'ίας και ευγνωμοσύνη μας καθώς προσφέρουμε τους εαυτούς μας στην εργασία της εκκλησίας, στις διακονίες της και φιλανθρωπίες της. Έπειτα ας απαντήσουμε στο κάλεσμα να προσφέρουμε τους εαυτούς μας και ο ένας στον άλλο και ολόκληρη τη ζωή μας στον Κύριο ημών Ιησού Χριστό.

Adaptation by Maria Kiritsis, Athens GR

MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION

save the date

MARDI GRAS 2024 CELEBRATION

Αποκριάτικο γλέντι

Hosted by the Saint Andrew PTA

Join us to celebrate and enjoy an evening of entertainment, food, dancing, tricky tray & prizes!

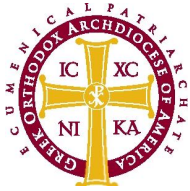
Sunday, February 25th

5:00 p.m.

THE MEADOW WOOD, 461 Route 10 East, Randolph, NJ

More information to follow

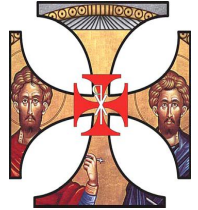




Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey

SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

PHILOPTOCHOS



PHILOPTOCHOS MISSION

To promote charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic outreach, to preserve the sanctity of life and family, and to perpetuate and promote our Orthodox faith and traditions.

2023-2024

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For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. Isaiah 9:6-7

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christmas is a most wonderful and busy time of the year when we are preparing to celebrate the Miracle of Jesus' Birth with family and friends. It is time to reflect on the blessings that have come to each and every one of us through this Miracle. It is a time to create happy memories that will last a lifetime.

Life continues to be challenging for many. Let us celebrate the Christmas Miracle while thinking about the needs of others and let us be thankful for the blessings that have been bestowed upon us.

The Saint Andrew Philoptochos thanks all of you for your support, your generosity, your dedication, your selflessness, your compassion, and perseverance through all the challenges that we face.

It is our promise that we will continue to open our hearts to those who are struggling. As we give of ourselves, we will truly feel the blessings of the Gift of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ now and throughout the New Year.

May Christmas bring tranquility to everyone's soul. Where there is a need let us pray for abundance, where there is a disease, let us pray for good health, where there are fears let us pray for courage, where there is hatred let us pray for love, where there is war let us pray for peace.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With love in Christ,
Eleni Constantinides

The rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much.



For what he gives away remains his forever.

St. John Chrysostom

The Gifts of the Magi: *The Spirit of Stewardship*

The Gifts of the Magi icon presents the Wise Men offering gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child. These wealthy scholars and priests of the East endured numerous dangers, and traveled great distances to offer their treasures to Christ, the newborn king. What a beautiful and meaningful example of stewardship they set for all future generations, helping us to understand the blessing of properly using and sharing God's gifts.

To begin with, the Magi represent a sincere desire to seek after God, searching through science, nature, and their cultural traditions to communicate with their Creator and discover His will for them, even when it was something so unexpected. Imagine their long, arduous journey, possibly a 1500 mile expedition from Persia to Bethlehem, over mountains and deserts, a journey that took many months. Surely on such a trip they faced numerous dangers from nature, from bandits, and from the fear of the unknown.

What faith, determination and sacrifice they must have had. They surely faced questions and skepticism at the start. During their journey, unexpected challenges and discouraging setbacks would have been commonplace. Yet they persevered. They overcame the difficult trials and tests of their journey, and persisted in their search for God's truth.

When they finally met the Christ Child, they bowed down in worship. They offered Jesus the most precious of their gifts. Although they were the "wise men" of their day, they didn't allow their ego to interfere with their unexpected discovery. Even when the journey surprisingly took them beyond the king's palace in Jerusalem to the insignificant village of Bethlehem, they went forward in faith. Everything seemed so astonishing, and yet in humility they approached the Christ Child to worship Him and offer the best of their gifts – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The Story of the Magi is not simply a cute part of Christmas, but it represents central characters

who model a path of faith and stewardship worthy of imitation. They offer an example of a sincere search for God using the intellectual gifts they possessed; a willingness to overcome any obstacles or challenging inconveniences in their journey towards God; and the witness of offering the best they had once they encounter the Christ Child.

In connection with this inspiring story of the Magi, we can also reflect on St. John Chrysostom's words, "*The rich man is not the one who has much, but the one who gives much. For what one gives away, he keeps for all eternity.*" Both the Magi and Chrysostom offer a challenging perspective of Christian Stewardship. We are called to understand that all we have in life - from life itself, to our intellectual abilities and specific talents, as well as to our faith experiences and material possessions - all we have in life is a gift from God, and each of us is called to act as a proper and good steward of these gifts.

Think about how the Magi were conscientious stewards with their knowledge, experience and wisdom, as well as stewards of their time and effort, which culminated in their good stewardship of their treasure. St. John Chrysostom highlights that true wealth comes through sharing what we have first received from God Himself. Ultimately, whatever we have isn't ours! All is God's, and we are simply caretakers of His riches. As we learn to generously give of ourselves, of our time, talents and treasure, we only increase our wealth and make eternal investments.

Christian Stewardship is all about becoming good caretakers of all that God has given us. Think about all that God has given us - our health, our family, our opportunities in life, our intelligence, our talents. God has given each of

us special and unique gifts. And through Holy Scripture He teaches us all that we have is a loan. He lends everything to us, and reminds us that one day He will ask us to give a detailed accounting of what we have done with the gifts He has given us. How have we used our time, our talents, and our treasure? Have we used them in a self-centered way or God-glorifying ways? Archbishop Anastasios of Albania has noted that "we find ourselves by offering ourselves." Have we learned the blessedness of generously giving to others of all we have?

Everything we have is temporal. We don't know for how long we have it. The fundamental question, though, is how will we use all that we have for the glory of God?

One day, a person complained to his priest that the Church and Christianity is one continual "give, give, give." To which the priest replied, "Thank you very much for the finest definition of Christianity I have ever heard. Your right, Christianity is all about a constant "give, give, give." God giving His only Son to the world to show His unconditional love. His Son Jesus giving His life on the cross to forgive our sins and destroy death. Then our Lord's disciples giving all they had to make sure God's Good News of love was preached to all people everywhere. They not only gave away their homes and businesses, but even gave up their lives as martyrs in gratitude to God! And after all that giving of God to the world, yes, God does ask His followers of today to imitate His own generosity by giving - by offering back from all that He ultimately has given each person! So, yes, the Church and Christianity is one continual "give, give, and give," but from a good and holy perspective!

The Gifts of the Magi and the words of St. John Chrysostom help clarify our understanding of Christian Stewardship and what it means to act as a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Luke A. Veronis

Τα Δώρα των Μάγων: Το Πνεύμα της Οικονομίας/ Δωρεάς

Η εικόνα Τα Δώρα των Μάγων απεικονίζει τους Μάγους να προσφέρουν τα δώρα τους στο βρέφος Ιησού, χρυσό, λιβάνι και μύρο. Αυτοί οι εύποροι επιστήμονες και ιερείς της Ανατολής υπέμειναν πολλούς κινδύνους, και ταξίδεψαν μεγάλες αποστάσεις για να προσφέρουν τους θησαυρούς τους στον Χριστό, τον νεογέννητο βασιλιά. Τί πιο ωραίο και βαθυστόχαστο παράδειγμα που είναι της οικονομίας για όλες τις μελλοντικές γενεές, μας βοηθά να κατανοήσουμε την ευλογία να χρησιμοποιείς σωστά και να μοιράζεσαι τα δώρα του Θεού.

Καταρχάς, οι Μάγοι αντιπροσωπεύουν την ειλικρινή επιθυμία της αναζήτησης του Θεού. Μέσα από την επιστήμη, τη φύση, και πολιτιστικές παραδόσεις αναζητούν την επικοινωνία με τον Δημιουργό και να ανακαλύψουν το θέλημά Του, ακόμη και αν ήταν κάτι τόσο απρόσμενο. Φανταστείτε το μακρύ, κουραστικό ταξίδι τους, πιθανά μία αποστολή 1500 μιλίων από την Περσία στη Βηθλεέμ, πέρα από βουνά και ερήμους, ένα ταξίδι πολλών μηνών. Σίγουρα σε τέτοιο ταξίδι θα αντιμετώπισαν πολλούς κινδύνους της φύσης, των ληστών, και τον φόβο του αγνώστου.

Τί πίστη, αποφασιστικότητα και αίσθημα θυσίας θα πρέπει να είχαν. Σίγουρα στην αρχή θα ήλθαν αντιμετώπι με ερωτήσεις και σκεπτικισμό. Κατά τη διάρκεια τέτοιου ταξιδιού, απρόσμενες προκλήσεις και αποθαρρυντικά εμπόδια είναι κοινά. Και όμως επέζησαν. Ξεπέρασαν τις δύσκολες δοκιμασίες της διαδρομής τους, και επέμειναν στην αναζήτηση της αλήθειας του Θεού.

Όταν τελικά συνάντησαν το βρέφος Ιησού, υποκλίθηκαν και τον προσκύνησαν.



Προσέφεραν στον Ιησού τα πιο πολύτιμα από τα δώρα τους. Αν και ήταν «οι σοφοί μάγοι» στην εποχή τους, δεν επέτρεψαν στον εγωισμό τους να τους παρασύρει στην απρόσμενη ανακάλυψή τους. Ακόμη και όταν το ταξίδι τους συνεχίστηκε πέρα από το παλάτι του βασιλιά στην Ιερουσαλήμ, στο ασήμαντο χωριό τη Βηθλεέμ, προχώρησαν με πίστη. Όλα φαίνονταν τόσο εκπληκτικά, και όμως με ταπεινότητα πλησίασαν το παιδί Ιησού για να Τον προσκυνήσουν και να προσφέρουν τα καλύτερα των δώρων – χρυσό, λιβάνι, και μύρο.

Η Ιστορία των Μάγων δεν είναι απλά ένα χαριτωμένο κομμάτι των Χριστουγέννων, αντιπροσωπεύει κεντρικούς χαρακτήρες που είναι υπόδειγμα πίστης και οικονομίας που αξίζει να τους μιμηθούμε. Προσφέρουν το υπόδειγμα ειλικρινούς αναζήτησης του Θεού χρησιμοποιώντας τα πνευματικά δώρα που κατείχαν· την προθυμία να ξεπεράσουν όποια εμπόδια ή προκλήσεις στον δρόμο τους προς τον Θεό· και τη μαρτυρία της προσφοράς των καλύτερων μόλις συναντήσουν το Βρέφος Ιησού.

Σε συνδυασμό με αυτή την εμπνευσμένη ιστορία των Μάγων, μπορούμε επίσης να σκεφτούμε και τα λόγια του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Χρυσοστόμου, «Πλούσιος δεν είναι αυτός που έχει πολλά, αλλά αυτός που δίνει πολλά. Γιατί αυτό που κάποιος χαρίζει, το κρατά αιώνια.» Και οι Μάγοι και ο Χρυσόστομος προσφέρουν μία απαιτητική άποψη της Χριστιανικής Οικονομίας. Καλούμαστε να

καταλάβουμε πως ό,τι έχουμε στη ζωή – ξεκινώντας από την ίδια τη ζωή, μέχρι τις πνευματικές μας ικανότητες και ιδιαίτερα ταλέντα, όπως και οι εμπειρίες της πίστης μας και τα υλικά μας αγαθά – όλα όσα έχουμε στη ζωή είναι δώρα από τον Θεό, και ο καθένας μας καλείται να πράττει ως ένας σωστός και καλός οικονόμος αυτών των δώρων.

Σκεφτείτε πώς οι Μάγοι ήταν ευσυνείδητοι οικονόμοι με την γνώση τους, την πείρα και τη σοφία, όπως και οικονόμοι του χρόνου και των κόπων τους, με αποκορύφωμα την καλή τους οικονομία των θησαυρών τους. Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος τονίζει ότι ο αληθινός πλούτος έρχεται όταν μοιραζόμαστε αυτό που έχουμε λάβει από τον ίδιο τον Θεό. Στο τέλος, τίποτε από όσα έχουμε δεν είναι δικά μας! Όλα είναι του Θεού, εμείς είμαστε απλά οι φροντιστές των αγαθών Του. Όσο μαθαίνουμε να δίνουμε γενναιόδωρα από τον εαυτό μας, τα ταλέντα μας και τους θησαυρούς μας, τόσο αυξάνουμε τον πλούτο μας και κάνουμε αιώνιες επενδύσεις.

Η Χριστιανική Οικονομία / δωρεά τελικά δείχνει πόσο καλοί διαχειριστές είμαστε όλων όσων ο Θεός μας έχει δώσει. Σκεφτείτε όλα όσα μας έχει δώσει ο Θεός – την υγεία μας, την οικογένειά μας, τις ευκαιρίες στη ζωή μας, την ευφυΐα μας, τα ταλέντα μας. Ο Θεός έχει δώσει στον κάθε ένα από εμάς ιδιαίτερα και μοναδικά δώρα. Και μέσα από τις Άγιες Γραφές μας διδάσκει όλους πως όσα έχουμε είναι δανεικά. Μας δανείζει τα πάντα, και μας θυμίζει πως μια μέρα θα μας ζητήσει αναλυτικό λογαριασμό του τί κάναμε με τα δώρα που μας έδωσε. Πώς κάναμε χρήση του χρόνου μας, των ταλέντων μας, και των θησαυρών μας; Τα χρησιμοποιήσαμε εγωκεντρικά ή με τρόπους που δοξάζουν τον Θεό; Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αλβανίας Αναστάσιος σημειώνει πως «βρίσκουμε τους εαυτούς μας προσφέροντας τους εαυτούς μας.» Έχουμε

μάθει την ευλογία της γενναιόδωρης προσφοράς όλων όσων έχουμε;

Όλα όσα έχουμε είναι προσωρινά. Δεν γνωρίζουμε πόσο καιρό θα τα έχουμε. Το βασικό ερώτημα όμως, είναι πώς θα χειριστούμε όλα όσα έχουμε προς δόξα Θεού;

Μία μέρα, ένας άνθρωπος παραπονέθηκε στον ιερέα του ότι η Εκκλησία και ο Χριστιανισμός είναι ένα συνεχές «δώσε, δώσε, δώσε.» Ο ιερέας του αποκρίθηκε, «Σε ευχαριστώ πάρα πολύ για τον καλύτερο ορισμό του Χριστιανισμού που έχω ακούσει ποτέ. Έχεις δίκιο, ο Χριστιανισμός είναι ένα συνεχές «δώσε, δώσε, δώσε.» Ο Θεός που δίνει στον κόσμο τον μοναδικό του Υιό για να δείξει την ανιδιοτελή του αγάπη. Ο Υιός του ο Ιησούς που δίνει τη ζωή Του πάνω στον σταυρό για να συγχωρεθούν οι αμαρτίες μας και να κατατροπώσει τον Θάνατο. Έπειτα οι Απόστολοι του Κυρίου δίνουν όλα όσα είχαν για να βεβαιωθούν ότι οι Καλές Ειδήσεις της αγάπης του Κυρίου μας να κηρυχθούν σε όλο τον κόσμο και παντού. Όχι μόνο έδωσαν τα σπίτια τους και τις δουλειές τους, αλλά παρέδωσαν και τις ζωές τους ως μάρτυρες για την ευγνωμοσύνη στον Θεό! Και μετά από όλα αυτά που χάρισε ο Θεός στον κόσμο, ναι, ο Θεός ζητά από τους πιστούς Του να μιμηθούν τη δική Του γενναιοδωρία και να δώσουν – να ανταποδώσουν όλα όσα έχει δώσει σε κάθε άνθρωπο! Έτσι, ναι, η Εκκλησία και ο Χριστιανισμός είναι ένα συνεχές «δώσε, δώσε και δώσε,» αλλά μέσα από μια καλή και άγια προοπτική!

Τα Δώρα των Μάγων και τα λόγια του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Χρυσόστομου βοηθούν να διευκρινίσουμε πώς κατανοούμε τη Χριστιανική Οικονομία /Δωρεά και τί σημαίνει να ενεργείς ως πιστός ακόλουθος του Ιησού Χριστού.

Fr. Luke A. Veronis
Adaptation by Maria Kiritsis

GOYA December 2023

St. Andrews' third month of GOYA has been very eventful. Among the many events, GOYAns participated in the Ascension Fairview GOYA Bowling tournament. GOYAns bowled at a new facility this year - Lodi Lanes. To top things off, we returned to the Fairview church and had a dinner dance and award ceremony. One of our GOYAns, Alexander Barrett, placed in the bowling tournament, earning a medal. Overall, it was a fun night and a great time for all who participated.



Some of us also participated in the Faith Kitchen, hosted before the Bowling tournament. We made sandwiches after our monthly meeting and helped prepare a hot meal, to serve, the day of the Faith Kitchen. All meals were served to the homeless at the soup kitchen, in Dover New Jersey.

Upcoming GOYA events include Christmas Caroling to our homebound parishioners and the Christmas dance, which will be hosted at Saint George, in Clifton.

Along with considering participation in these events, we hope GOYAns will also start thinking about their Sights & Sounds performances.

We look forward to seeing all GOYAns at our next event!
Written by: Peter Karipidis



DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE NEWS



The Daughters of Penelope spent a memorable evening dining and dancing at the Fifth District Order of AHEPA Cancer Research Foundation Gala on November 11, 2023. The mission of the Foundation is to facilitate fundraising and to award grants to scientists and medical research institutions whose primary goal is to find a cure for cancer. This year, we were thrilled to support the Foundation with a very generous donation of \$2500.

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE
& PHILOPTOCHOS

CHRISTMAS DINNER

*After a year of hard work, it's
time to unwind & celebrate!*

WHEN

14 December 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.
Cost \$45/person

WHERE

Benito's Trattoria, Chester, NJ

RSVP

DimitraP164@gmail.com by 12/1/23



DROP OFF LOCATION

HERE

**Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church
1447 Sussex Turnpike Randolph NJ**

TOYS FOR TOTS

ACCEPT ONLY **NEW UNWRAPPED TOYS**

DROP OFF ON Sunday
or during the week

Will be collecting up until December 15th

Bring on
the
NEW YEAR!

Saint Andrew Families
are coming together on
Sunday, Dec. 31st
in our Community Center to
Bring on the NEW YEAR!
More information coming soon.

Annual Christmas Pageant

Students of Religious Education and Hellenic Afternoon Schools
will present a CHRISTMAS PAGEANT after Services on
Sunday December 10th (Snow date 12/17)



ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΙΑΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ

Οι μαθητές του Κατηχητικού Σχολείου μαζί με τους μαθητές του Ελληνικού Απογευματινού Σχολείου θα μας παρουσιάσουν το ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΙΑΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ, την **Κυριακή 10 Δεκεμβρίου** μετά την Θεία Λειτουργία

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR CAROLS

SILENT NIGHT

Silent Night, Holy Night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Saviour is born
Christ, the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

ΆΓΙΑ ΝΥΧΤΑ

Άγια Νύχτα, σε προσμένουν
με χαρά οι Χριστιανοί
και με πίστη ανυμνούμε,
το Θεό δοξολογούμε
μ' ένα στόμα, μια φωνή,
ναι, με μια φωνή...

Η ψυχή μας φτερουγίζει
πέρα στ' άγια τα βουνά,
όπου ψάλλουν οι αγγέλοι
απ' τα ουράνια θεία μέλη,
στο Σωτήρα «Ωσαννά»
ψάλλουν «Ωσαννά».

Στης Βηθλεέμ ελάτε όλοι
τα βουνά τα ιερά
και μ' ευλάβεια μεγάλη
'κει που Άγιο Φως προβάλλει
προσκυνήστε με χαρά
ναι, με μια χαρά.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟ ΤΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ

Η Γέννησίς Σου, Χριστέ ο Θεός ημών,
ανέτειλε τω κόσμω το φως το της
γνώσεως·
εν αυτή γαρ οι τοις άστροις λατρεύοντες,
υπό αστέρος
εδιδάσκοντο, Σε προσκυνείν, τον Ήλιον της
δικαιοσύνης,
και Σε γινώσκειν εξ ύψους ανατολήν,
Κύριε, δόξα Σοι».

I GHENISI SOU XRISTE

I ghenisis sou Christe o Theos i-mon
a-ne-ti-le to kosmo to fos to tis
gno-se-os.
en af-ti ghar I tis astris la-tre-von-tes
i-po as-te-ros
e-dhi-dhaskonto se proskinin ton i-lion tis
dhi-ke-o-si-nis
ke se ginoskin ex i-psus A-ana-to-lyn
Ki-rie-dho-xa-see

Your birth, O Christ our God, brought to the world the light of knowledge. For through it those who had adored the stars were taught by a star to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness and to know You as the Dawn from Heaven. O Lord, glory to You

ΚΑΛΑΝΤΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ

Καλήν εσπέραν άρχοντες,
αν είναι αν είναι ορισμός σας,
Χριστού την Θεϊαν Γέννησιν
να μπω να μπω στ' άρχοντικό σας.

Χριστός γεννάται σήμεραν
εν Βη εν Βηθλεέμ τη πόλει,
οι Ουρανοί αγάλλονται,
χαίρει η κτίσις όλη.

Εν τω σπηλαίω τίκτεται,
εν φάτνη των αλόγων,
ο Βασιλεύς των Ουρανών
και ποιητής των όλων.
Χρόνια Πολλά

JINGLE BELLS

Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh (2x)

Dashing through the snow
On a one horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go,
Laughing all the way
Bells on bob tail ring,
making spirits bright
What fun it is to laugh and sing
A sleighing song tonight

Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh

Ka-la-nta Chri-stou-ge-non

Ka-lin es-pe-ran ar-hon-tes
An i-nee an-ene o-ris-mos sas
Hris-tu tit hi-a ye-ni-si
Na mpo na mpo st-ar-ho-di-ko sas

Hristow ye-na-te si-me-ron,
En vi en vi-thle-en ti po-li
Oι ou-ra-ni ar-gha-lon-te,
He-re- he-re-te I fi-sis o-li

En to spi-le-o ti-kte-te
En fa en fa-tni ton al-o-gon
O Va-si-lefs ton ou-ra-non
Ke pi-it is ton o-lon
Chro-nia po-la

ΤΡΙΓΩΝΑ Κ'ΑΛΑΝΤΑ

Τρίγωνα, κάλαντα, σκόρπισαν παντού
κάθε σπίτι μια φωλιά του μικρού Χριστού,
Τρίγωνα, κάλαντα μες στη γειτονιά
ήρθαν τα Χριστούγεννα κι
η Πρωτοχρονιά

Άστρο φωτεινό, θα 'βγει γιορτινό
μήνυμα θα φέρει από τον ουρανό
Τρέχουν τα παιδιά μέσα στο χιονιά
ήρθαν τα Χριστούγεννα κι
η Πρωτοχρονιά

Τρίγωνα, κάλαντα σκόρπισαν παντού
κάθε σπίτι μια φωλιά του μικρού Χριστού
Τρίγωνα, κάλαντα μες στη γειτονιά
ήρθαν τα Χριστούγεννα κι
η Πρωτοχρονιά..

ΚΑΛΑΝΤΑ ΠΡΩΤΟΧΡΟΝΙΑΣ

Αρχιμηνιά κι Αρχιχρονιά
ψηλή μου δεντρολίβανιά
κι αρχή κι αρχή καλός μας χρόνος
εκκλησιά εκκλησιά μετ' άγιος θρόνος

Αρκεί που βγήκε ο Χριστός
Άγιος και Πνευματικός
στη γη στη γη να περπατήσει
και να και να μας καλοκαρδίσει

Άγιος Βασίλης έρχεται
και όλους μας καταδέχεται
από από την Καισαρεία
συ σα συ σα Αρχόντισσα Κυρία

ΠΑΕΙ Ο ΠΑΛΙΟΣ Ο ΧΡΟΝΟΣ

Πάει ο παλιός ο χρόνος
ας γιορτάσουμε παιδιά
και του χωρισμού ο πόνος
ας κοιμάται στη καρδιά.
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
χαρούμενη, χρυσή Πρωτοχρονιά.

Γέρε χρόνε φύγε τώρα
παι η δική σου η σειρά
ήρθε ο νέος με τα δώρα,
με τραγούδια και χαρά.
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
χαρούμενη, χρυσή Πρωτοχρονιά.

Μα κι αν φεύγεις πια μακριά μας
στην καρδιά μας πάντα ζει
κάθε λύπη και χαρά μας
που περάσαμε μαζί.
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
χαρούμενη, χρυσή Πρωτοχρονιά.

Όλα γύρω χιονισμένα
όλα γύρω παγωνιά
μα θα λιώσουν ένα ένα
με τη νέα τη χρονιά.
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
Καλή χρονιά, χρόνια πολλά,
χαρούμενη, χρυσή Πρωτοχρονιά.

THE OLD YEAR HAS LEFT

The old year has left
let us celebrate children
and the pain of separation
let it sleep within the heart.
Good year, many years,
Good year, many years,
joyous, golden New Year's Day.

Old year leave now
your turn has ended
the new year has come with gifts
with songs and joy.
Good year, many years,
Good year, many years,
joyous, golden New Year's Day.

But even if you are leaving far from us
in our hearts always will live
every sorrow and joy
we went through together.
Good year, many years,
Good year, many years,
joyous, golden New Year's Day.

All around covered in snow
all around frozen
but will melt one by one
with the new year.
Good year, many years,
Good year, many years,
joyous, golden New Year's Day.

The Incarnation - The Real Christmas

What is the Incarnation? The Nativity Lenten period is that critical time for each of us to take seriously this question. Unless we evaluate our Christian faith as actually practiced, we risk losing the very core of our faith. The Incarnation brings each of us before the core of our Orthodoxy - How do I make sense of Jesus' humanity in light of His divinity? Against this fundamental mystery, we are called to respond. "We know Christ by acknowledging Him, by confessing Him as Lord and God. In knowing Christ, we acknowledge what confronts us is *revelation*, revelation that tells us that there is true humanity and true God" (Thomas F. Torrance, Incarnation, 2008 page 3).



There is a tendency to dismiss theological reflection because "mystery" can be frustrating. We want to know, but how? The answer is simple - participate! Our Orthodoxy is, and always has been, a personal relationship with God. How do we know? It is the mystery of the Incarnation that actualizes how we live our faith! Christianity is not a religion of universal ideals or ethical behavior. For many, Incarnation suggests the occupation of a human form, but such putting on a human costume is completely false. Our need to explain mystery often results in the loss of this mystery; it merely becomes another explanation without any reality. When this happens, Christ is another event we remember at Christmas. Sadly, the Incarnation is being squeezed out of Christmas that has become the season for giving while silencing God's gift to all of us.

"The ultimate fact that confronts us, embedded in history and in the historical witness and proclamation of the New Testament, is the mysterious duality in unity of Jesus Christ, God without reserve, humanity without reserve, the eternal truth in time, the Word of God made flesh"

(Torrance, pg. 3). Jesus Christ "confronts" each of us to examine ourselves. It has become common to transition "Sin" into ethical contexts, to evaluate our worth before God by rules and behaviors. But Sin resonates at the deepest level of who each of us is. The Incarnation reveals to us who we are in the way God created each and every one of us. Think of the Parable of the Prodigal Son and focus not on the two sons, each lost in their own individuality, alienated from their true image of God, but on the father. Notice what the father does - he waits. Only When he sees his returning son does he run to embrace him. Imagine - God, Creator "waits" for us! Despite our prodigal human condition, God never gives up on us. Our genuine human freedom is so essential to God that God allows us the opportunity to return. The Incarnation reveals to us God's love for us. It is our freedom to love God in return. Only under this freedom is love real. Unfortunately, the world, ourselves, and fallen reality has convinced us to reject this offer.

As we fast, let's not focus on the things we might reluctantly have set aside. Take a few minutes each day and start reading each of the Gospels in order to renew meaning of the Incarnation for Christmas. Keep a journal of your readings, your questions and bring these to Fr. John for discussion, for answers. If prayer is something seldom practiced, start a prayer journey through the Psalms. Find one Psalm that speaks to you and make that Psalm your daily prayer. It might be hard to get up, to make it through the day, but let God know that and expect God's assistance. Never expect God to answer you in the way you expect but stay alert to God's ways for responding to your needs.

Consider how you feel when you look forward to something you really want. There's a sense of excitement as each day draws you closer to your expectation being realized. Until the event actually arrives, it fills you and your days with a "now but not yet". The Incarnation is an unimaginable event in our lives. It is mystery with a reality those expecting it will experience. But it can't simple be some theological explanation too deep for most of us. If God is revealing the very reality of God in the Incarnation, then we aren't being asked to accept a teaching our Church offers. We are given a gift from God that reaches into our brokenness, our alienation, our fullness and announces God is

waiting. How do we know? Because in the Incarnation God, in Jesus, assumes all that we are, our humanity.

So, while Christmas is a truly joyous time of the year, let's shift our focus from the man in the red suit sneaking down chimneys to God who has come down into our hearts with the greatest gift - life restored. The Incarnation is God entering the human condition in order for us to enter the divine as St. Athanasios confessed.

Herbert Schuster

SAVE THE DATES in January 2024

January 7th - Stewardship Sunday

We will ask you to prayerfully consider your blessings as you make your 2024 pledge to Saint Andrew.

January 7th Cutting of our Community Vasilopita

Our yearly tradition has it, we will cut our Community's Vasilopita. Fr. John will bless the Vasilopita with the cutting knife crosswise in the "*Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"

Fr then will cut the center in a circle as an offering to our Lord Jesus, Who is first in our life. Then he will proceed to cut wedges starting with a piece for the *Ever-Virgin Mary*, for *Saint Basil* and for *St. Andrew*. Subsequently, a wedge will be cut and received by a representative on behalf of each one of our *St. Andrew ministries* and *organizations*. Please join us in wishing all a Blessed and fruitful New Year.

January 21st Ministry Sunday

Come and see what our ministries and organizations are all about. Talk to our Parish Council, Stewardship Committee, Sunday school teachers, GOYA Advisors, Greek Dancing, Philoptochos, AHEPA, Daughters of Penelope...

THE NATIVITY

God Becomes Human to Show us the Way

Father Thomas Fitzgerald

What shall we offer you, O Christ?
Who for our sake appeared on earth as a human?
Every creature made by you offers you
thanksgiving.

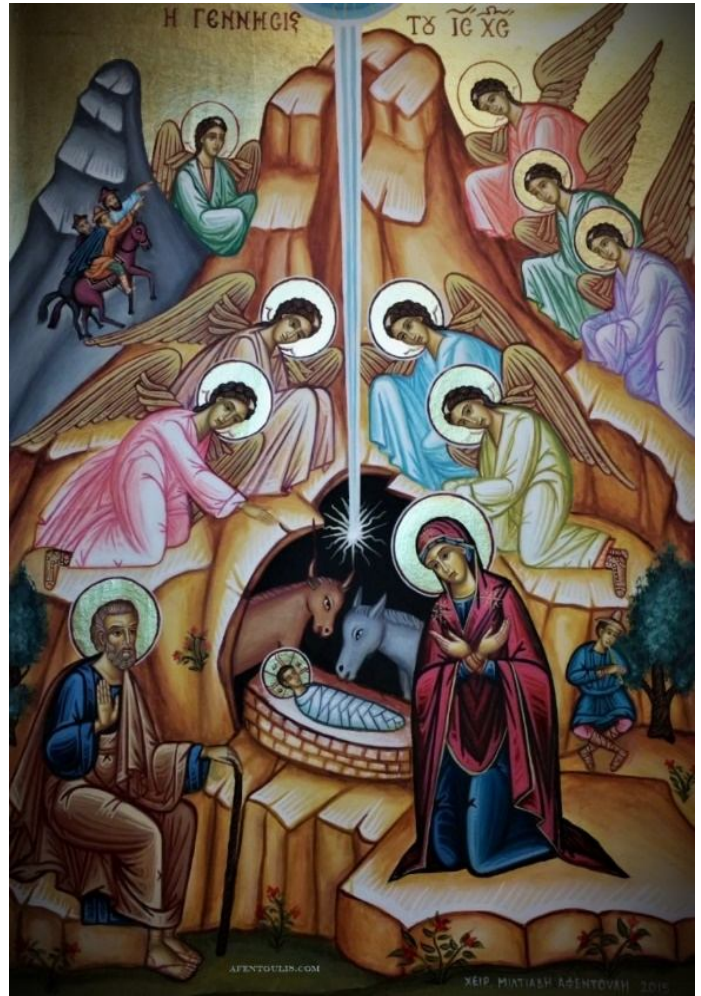
The angels offer you a hymn,
The heavens, a star,
The magi, gifts,
The shepherds, their wonder,
The earth, its cave,
The wilderness, a manger,
And we offer to you, a Virgin Mother.

Hymn of Vespers

The simplicity of the story of Christ's birth reveals the depth of God's love and the mystery of His actions in our life. As we celebrate Christmas anew this year, once again Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and wise men, the angels and animals direct our attention to the Lord Jesus. He who is truly the 'way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:1) who reveals Himself in the humble circumstances of a cave in Bethlehem. All of time is centered upon his coming. All of creation surrounds Him who fashioned the creation!

The Expression of Divine Love

The story of the birth of Christ is a vivid reminder of the depth of God's love for us. He loves us so much that he has entered into life in this world in the person of Christ. The infinite God mysteriously accepted the limitations of our humanity. It was not enough for God to act through signs and wonders of the physical world. It was not enough



for God to guide us through the prophets and teachers of old. No, this was not enough for our God.

To express his boundless love for us, the Living God appeared among us in the person of Christ Our Lord. By fully identifying himself with us, Christ has come to teach us, to heal us and to lead us back to the Father. He has come to remind us that we are the Father's precious daughters and sons. As St. John the Evangelist says: "God so loved the world that he sent His Only begotten Son so that all who believe in him will not be lost but will have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

Many years before the Beatitudes were taught and many years before His glorious Resurrection, Christ revealed God's love for us through the simple events of his birth. The Lord of Glory demonstrated his love for us simply by entering into our life and by sharing in all that is truly human. St. Basil the

great reminds us of this saying: "Every act and every word of our Savior is a guide for holiness and virtue. For this reason, he became human, so that in images he may depict both holiness and virtue for us...For this reason he bears a body so that we may imitate His life" (Ascetical Principles, 1).

Through His birth in Bethlehem, Our Lord reveals to us the breath and depth of God's love for us. Whether we see him as the child in Bethlehem, the teacher in Galilee, or the Risen Lord in Jerusalem; Christ is truly the greatest gift of the Father 'for us and for our salvation.'

A Sense of Wonder

The story of Christ's birth speaks to us about the mysterious ways of God. The Triune God acts in ways that we do not always expect! His ways are truly wonder-filled. For centuries, the Ancient Israelites had expected the Messiah. The prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah, called the people to readiness and openness to God's actions. Their message provided the people with indications about the coming Messiah.

Yet, when 'the fullness of time had come' (Gal. 4:4), the Messiah did not arrive as a conquering hero in a golden chariot with pomp and splendor. He was not robed in expensive clothing. He did not appear in the capital city. Throngs of adoring followers did not accompany him.

When the Messiah finally arrived, he came first as a baby. He was born to a young girl who was not formally married. The event occurred in the simple village of Bethlehem. He was sheltered in a place reserved for animals because the inn was full. There, in such simple circumstances, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth..." (Jn.1: 14). This is the mysterious way of God!

Through the Christmas story, Our Lord reveals that God acts in ways that we do not always expect. We cannot shape the mighty acts of God to our limited

understanding. The Triune God is greater than our limited perceptions of Him. He acts in mysterious and wondrous ways to draw us to Him and to one another in love.

An Open Heart

The persons who are involved in the story of Christ's birth were all quite different. Mary and Joseph were humble travelers seeking a place of shelter. The shepherds were simple men of the land tending their flocks. The wise men were wealthy and aristocratic foreigners wandering in a strange land.

Yet, each of them shared a common characteristic. They opened their hearts to the actions of the Lord who mysteriously led them to the village of Bethlehem. Each of them permitted God to act in their lives.

Mary and Joseph were willing to change their whole life to nurture and protect the child Jesus. The shepherds were willing to hear the words of the angels. The wise men were willing to follow the star. We remember them to this day because they opened their hearts and trusted in the Lord.

Through His birth in Bethlehem, Jesus reveals that we too must open our hearts to his presence and actions. God wants us to share in His work of reconciliation. Like the participants in the first Christmas, we too are called to be person whose hearts are open to the divine presence and actions.

Centering the Season on Christ

The story of the birth of Christ and its true significance is often clouded by the commercialism of the season. There is a very frenzied pace to these days which can so easily depersonalize us and dampen the true joy of the season. The stores tempt us for weeks on end to buy this thing or by that thing. Some of us prefer to speak of the 'Holiday Season' rather than of Christmas. Many schools have forbidden the remembrance of Christ's birth in the classroom. Yes, throughout our

society, many fail to remember that the coming of Christ is truly at the heart of the Christmas celebrations.

What can we do? Let us remember that the season celebrates the love of God revealed in the coming of Christ. For those with faith, the colored lights, the green trees, the wreaths and the flowers are the symbols of the joy of Christmas. Let us celebrate the joy of Christ's coming!

Let us share the love of God with others. Christ has come to bear witness to the Father's love for us. We too can share this love with others, especially with the poor and less fortunate among us. We can be sensitive to those who cannot easily celebrate

because of a loss in their lives. Let us be the ambassadors of God who share His care and philanthropy.

Let us seek the Lord with an open heart as the shepherds and wise men did. This means that we find opportunities for prayer and meditation, for reading the Scriptures related to Christ's coming. This means that we can make Christmas a special day by participating in the Divine Liturgy and by receiving Holy Communion with reverence for God, with faith and with love.

To Christ Our Lord be glory, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

SAVE THE DATES in February 2024

February 10th GYRO & SOUVLAKI TAKE OUT

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February 18th GODPARENT'S SUNDAY

Please join us as we celebrate and pray for this special relationship and ask for God's blessing for godparents and godchildren everywhere. Let us make it a Day for Godparents, Godchildren, Family and Friends to Worship God Together. Following the Services please join us in the social hall for fellowship and refreshments.

February 25th MARDI GRAS

The PTA is hosting the Mardi Gras at the Meadowood Manor in Randolph NJ. This event is one of the most fun for young and old alike. The kids get to show off their Greek Dancing and the parents and grandparents are always beaming with pride. We all get to dance the night away; did we mention that the food at the Meadowood Manor is always great!

PARENTS' CORNER

By Alexandra Protopapas

CHRISTMAS 2023 - ARE YOU ALONE?

As CHRISTIANS, WE ARE NEVER ALONE. If we are CHRISTians, why can't we say MERRY CHRISTMAS? If you know someone is not CHRISTian, why would we say Happy Holidays if they do not celebrate a holiday? If they were of the Jewish faith, we would say Happy Hanukkah, no? So how do we teach our children and ourselves to remember to keep CHRIST in CHRISTmas so we would never be alone, at least spiritually?

There is no way we can take away the tradition of the Christmas tree and the lights and the decorations. One thing we must remember to do, however, is to keep CHRIST as the focus and make sure we have a Nativity Scene under the tree. In our chaotic world today, religion has become so important with a declared war in the Middle East, parts of Israel and Gaza, and more conflict in eastern Europe in Ukraine. This holiday 2023 season is so unpredictable. So many are spending their holidays alone.

I know this Christmas the immediate family I will be spending time with will be my son. Losing my husband recently, and missing my daughter and mother, brings back so many unforgettable happy memories. I was only eight years old when my father passed away, but I pray for their souls in every prayer. I have my sister in Florida, my husband's sister in Rhodes / Karpathos, and I will continue visiting them when I can. However, I strive not to be alone. I have my cousins, my church family, my work colleagues, many good friends, and my doggie, Mickey. I strive to keep busy in all I do and have learned how to balance my time without being overwhelmed. Now is the time to get busy with CHRISTmas because I WILL NOT BE ALONE.

Spend time with others. Let's begin with our own children! It's okay to do the CHRISTmas shopping, and buy gifts, but let's not go nuts! The most important gift this CHRISTmas is for your children to find one special gift for CHRIST. It doesn't matter what it is. It could be a candle, an ornament for the tree, or a letter. Make it a tradition. Another idea for your children to give each other as gifts would be to give a gift of service. Maybe they can make the bed for their brother or sister for a week, or for you, vacuum for a week, take out the garbage for a week, or breakfast! Let's not forget reading passages about CHRISTmas and of course, church!

How about going CHRISTmas caroling with your children or singing religious CHRISTmas hymns and songs together. I will visit my adult son and will find quality time with him as well!

Busy yet? Are you alone like me? Take time out for yourself and learn to say no sometimes! Wow! I have plenty to keep me busy with my church family and retirees' family, and of course tasks at home! I know when to say no to many events I am invited to, but I do have some health issues, I don't like to drive, and I do what I can do! I have my relaxation time at home. I read, watch television, spend time with my dog, and check up on one of my elderly next door neighbors who has no family to turn to.

Let's keep CHRIST in CHRISTmas with the way we act, and the way we speak, and the way we treat one another. Let's keep things simple. If you are alone, this is more important than ever! Let's remember our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. Let that be our focus and everything else should be secondary.

My Personal MORNING PRAYER... 🙏

✝️ Lord, help me to face with peace of mind all that this day will bring. Help me to surrender completely to Your holy will. At every hour of this day enlighten me and strengthen me for everything. Whatever news I receive during this day, teach me to accept it calmly and with the conviction that it comes from Your holy will. Guide my thoughts and feelings in all my works and words. In all unforeseen circumstances do not let me forget that everything comes from You. Teach me to treat each member of my family with honesty and prudence so that I do not compare and upset anyone. Lord, give me the strength to endure the trouble and all the events of this day throughout its duration. Guide my will and teach me to pray, To believe, to endure, to forgive and to love.

Amen. 🙏

Alexandra and my son, Nicholas

This month's Table Prayer Guide Prayers:

"Today is born of a Virgin, He who holds creation in the hollow of His hand. As a mortal He is wrapped in swaddling rags, He who in His being cannot be handled. God lies in a manger, who of old established the heavens in the beginning. He is nourished with milk from the breast, He who rained Manna on the People in the desert. He summons Magi, the Bridegroom of the Church. He accepts their gifts, the Son of the Virgin. We worship your birth, O Christ. Show us also your divine Epiphany."

Christmas Royal Hours, 9th hour

On behalf of my son Nicholas, we would like to wish you all a Joyous and Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year, 2024!

Feel free to e-mail me with your comments and suggestions for our "Parents' Corner" at: alexandraproto@gmail.com - Have a good month and a Blessed Thanksgiving! | (You can also find me on Facebook & Messenger under my name Alexandra Alex Protopapas) | **Alexandra Protopapas Med** | Certified Teacher of the Handicapped & Social Sciences – Retired | Educational Services of Morris County (ESC) (currently part-time at Academy of St Elizabeth)



Annual Interfaith Food Pantry Thanksgiving Food Drive



The Saint Andrew Community collected **893 lbs.** for its Annual Interfaith Food Pantry Thanksgiving Food Drive. The donations included 200 lbs of turkeys (13) / hams (3) and 693 lbs. of other Thanksgiving food items. Thank you to all who donated; your generosity will help feed approximately 500 people. God bless and we wish you and your family a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving.

Saint Andrew Philoptochos

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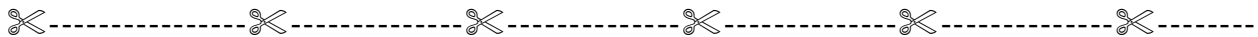
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It's the Most Wonderful Name in the World

Fr. Mark Sietsema

The greatest Christmas gift of all is a name.

There was a time when parents gave a lot of consideration to naming their children. Nowadays, it seems, the trend is to spill a bowl of alphabet soup and see what you come up with. Traditional names all have meanings, and there was a time when people concerned themselves with such things.

"Mark," for example, is an interesting name. It was a common name among the Romans as Marcus, and its meaning related to Mars, the god of war. It would be a wonderful coincidence if the first astronaut to land on Mars were named Mark: he would be someone who made his "mark" (wink, wink) in history by landing on the planet named for the Roman god of war.

With a little knowledge of names and their origins, you find are able to see some beautiful coincidences in the Bible. The name "John" goes back to the Hebrew name "Johanan," which means "gift of God." John the Baptist was given this name by his father, not because it was a name in the family line, but because the angel said so. John certainly was an unexpected gift to his parents in their old age. John baptized in the Jordan River. "Jordan" comes from the Hebrew word for "it descends." The Jordan River indeed descends quite a ways in elevation until it empties far below sea level into the Dead Sea. Put John and the Jordan together, and you get "the gift of God descends." And when Jesus came to be baptized, that's exactly what happened! The Holy Spirit—God's gift for humanity—descended on Jesus in the form of a dove.

Speaking of coincidental names, the early Christians were fascinated by the name of God's incarnate



Son. They knew from the Scriptures that Jesus was from the Aramaic name *Yeshuah*, meaning "The LORD is salvation." But when you put that name into Greek, it must be adjusted. The 'h' at the end of the word had a very rough enunciation, and the best approximation in Greek would be the sound 's'. Greek had no way to spell the 'sh' sound, so that also gets rendered as 's'. Long story short, what starts in Aramaic as *Yeshuah* winds up in Greek as *Iesous*.

And this is where the fascination comes in. As a Greek name, *Iesous* picks up a new meaning. It could be a name derived from *iaso* or *ieso*, meaning "healer." Saint Cyril of Jerusalem writes in his Catechetical Lecture 10, Section 13:

"*Jesus* then means according to the Hebrew *Savior*, but in the Greek tongue *The Healer*; since He is physician of souls and bodies, curer of spirits, curing the blind in body, and leading minds into light, healing the visibly lame, and guiding sinners' steps

to repentance, saying to the palsied, Sin no more, and, Take up your bed and walk. For since the body was palsied for the sin of the soul, He ministered first to the soul that He might extend the healing to the body.”

The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea says the same in his *Demonstration of the Gospel*, Book 4, chapter 10:

“So, then, God the Word was called the Son of Man, and was named *Jesus*, because He made His approach to us to cure and to heal the souls of men.”

Of like opinion were other Church Fathers like Epiphanius of Salamis, Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria. For them also, this name *Jesus* was not a mere linguistic accident, but an intentional revelation of God. His name reveals His mission: to save the fallen soul from sin, and to save the broken body from illness and suffering. It’s even better than a Martian astronaut named Mark!

Saint Paul was perhaps the first to realize the astounding beauty of the name *Jesus*. And so he wrote to the Philippians (2:9-11): “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him *the name which is above every name*, that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

When the Son of God came into our world on Christmas Day, He brought to all mankind a

wonderful gift—this name of immeasurable power, *Iesous*. In the name of Jesus, our prayers reach heaven. By the name of Jesus, fevers are quenched. At the name of Jesus, demons are dispelled. With the name of Jesus, signs and wonders are wrought. Through the name of Jesus, sins are confessed and absolved. The very name is a blessing, for it is the name Jesus Christ that the priest’s fingers are spelling out (in Greek) as he signs the Cross over you.

His name not only means salvation and healing ... His name itself IS salvation and healing. “For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved ... And His name, by faith in His name, has made this man strong” (Acts 4:12, 3:16). The Book of Acts tells us that even non-Christians recognized the marvelous might of this name, and tried to use it for their own purposes (Acts 19:13).

In the year ahead, we should resolve never to use this great name in vain, as so many in our society do, and as we hear so often on the airwaves. In the year ahead, we should resolve to speak this name reverently and prayerfully, and so to gain all the benefits that these sacred syllables hold for us.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from this time forth, and unto the ages of ages!

A Blessed Christmas to you and yours, and a Happy and Holy New Year in the name of Jesus our King.

Fr Mark Sietsema serves the parish of Holy Trinity in Lansing, Michigan.
He received his M.Div. (summa cum laude) from Holy Cross in 1998.
He has a B.A. (summa cum laude) in Comparative Religion from the University of Michigan (1985)
and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from M.I.T. (1989); his dissertation was on African tone languages.
Before ordination Fr. Mark worked as the pronunciation editor for Merriam-Webster dictionaries.

BAPTISMS – ΒΑΠΤΙΣΙΣ

SABRINA LEIKEND STEIN was received into Greek Orthodox Church by the Holy Sacrament of Baptism on Saturday October 28th at 11am and given the name **ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ - APHRODITE**. Godfather was Neophytos D. Zambas.

ODYSSEUS ANDREW HARRIS, son of Rodney Harris & Christina Candelario was received into Greek Orthodox Church by the Holy Sacrament of Baptism on Saturday, November 4th at 4pm and given the name **ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ - ODYSSEUS**. Godmother was Krista Zuccheri.

CONSTANTINE SERGIO GATOULIS, son of Sergio & Anastasia (Loukanaris) Gatoulis was received into Greek Orthodox Church by the Holy Sacrament of Baptism on Sunday, November 5th at 12:15pm and given the name **ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ – CONSTANTINE**. Godparents were Irene & George Baroulakis

MARIA THEODORA GATOULIS, daughter of Sergio & Anastasia (Loukanaris) Gatoulis was received into Greek Orthodox Church by the Holy Sacrament of Baptism on Sunday, November 5th at 12:15pm and given the name **ΜΑΡΙΑ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΑ - MARIA THEODORA**. Godparents were Maria & George Papadakis,

Congratulations to all wishing them all the blessings.
Συγχαρητήρια σε όλους και τους ευχόμαστε όλες τις ευλογίες.

WEDDING - ΓΑΜΟΣ

On Friday, November 10th at 2:00pm **EDWARD JOSEPH RYDER** of Brooklyn, NY and **ANASTASIA MARIA DEMOPOULOS** of Randolph, NJ were joined in Holy Matrimony according to the rites of Eastern Orthodox Church. Sponsors were Zachary and Andrea Stoumbos, witness was Phyllis Demopoulos.

Congratulations and may God always bless you with lots of love and joy.
Συγχαρητήρια, ο Θεός να σας ευλογεί πάντα με πολλή αγάπη και χαρά!

OBITS & FUNERAL SERVICES - ΝΕΚΡΟΛΟΓΙΕΣ & ΚΗΔΕΙΕΣ



+Kallirroï S Tsoukalas, 73 years of Flanders, passed away on Wednesday November 1, 2023, at her residence. She was born in Plati, Messina, the daughter of Konstantinos Sklavos and Stavroula (née Moragiannis). She is survived by her sons Konstantinos of Staten Island and Spiros of Flanders, NJ.

A Funeral Service was held for the repose of her soul on Wednesday, November 8th at Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church. Internment followed at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Randolph, NJ. Viewing was on Tuesday 6-8 at the Tuttle Funeral Home in Randolph NJ. Sincerest condolences to her family and may her memory be eternal.

Jese (Ζήσης, Ζήσιμος) Pagonis, 90, of Florham Park, passed away peacefully on October 14, 2023.

Jesse was born in the Bronx on 10/22/1932. He received a BA degree from New York University and received his JD from Brooklyn Law School. He loved learning and held a property casualty, life and health license, a CPCU designation and Associate in Risk Management. He started his career as a claims attorney for Travelers and Nabisco. He was Director of Risk Management at Otis Elevator, Foster Wheeler and Engelhard Corporation.

He travelled all over the world with his wife Irene and was an avid reader. He loved teaching and public speaking. He taught CPCU courses and was President of the NY RIMS chapter. He was an amazing storyteller and was proud of his Greek heritage. He also served in the army.



Beloved husband of 67 years to Irene Pagonis. Devoted father of Karen Pagonis, Cynthia Delane, Suzanne Pagonis, Denise Pepe and her husband Albert. Cherished grandfather of Frank Christian, Timothy and Alexandra, Kristina and Nicholas. Loving uncle of Cathy Shaw, her husband Kevin, and their children Paul and Nicolette.

Jesse was pre-deceased by his parents George and Coralea Pagonis, his sister Thea Vardakis, his niece Elena Vardakis and his son in law Frank Delane.

The funeral service was on Wednesday October 18th at Ss. Nicholas, Constantine, and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Roseland at 10am. Interment at Hillside Cemetery in Lyndhurst. Sincerest condolences to his family and may his memory be eternal.

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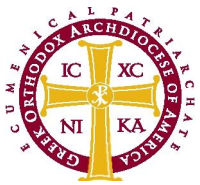
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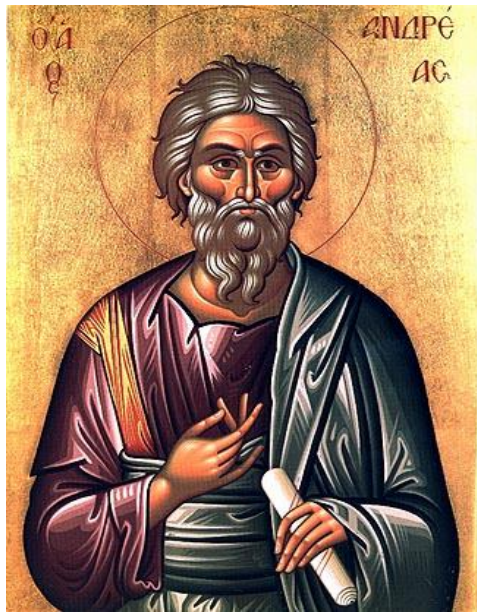
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The Gifts of the Magi icon presents the Wise Men offering gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child. These wealthy scholars and priests of the East endured numerous dangers and traveled great distances to offer their treasures to Christ, the newborn king. What a beautiful and meaningful example of stewardship they set for all future generations, helping us to understand the blessing of properly using and sharing God's gifts.

HYMN OF THE APOSTLE SAINT ANDREW

As first called of the Apostles and brother of Peter the Preeminent, O Andrew, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace to the whole world, and great mercy to our souls.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΕΟΥ

Ως των Αποστόλων πρωτόκλητος,
και του κορυφαίου ατάδελφος,
τον Δεσπότην των όλων Ανδρέα ικέτευε,
ειρήνην τη οικουμένη δωρήσασθαι,
και ταις ψυχαίς ημών το μέγα έλεο

THE SAINT ANDREW VISION STATEMENT

Our Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church is a welcoming place where our family is committed to God, and salvation through Orthodox worship, Christian education, philanthropy, and sharing of Hellenic culture, for the benefit of those whose lives we touch.