



THE EPISTLE

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



January 22909 Center Ridge Road, Rocky River, Ohio

2010



Pastoral Thoughts by Fr. Jim Doukas

This message has made the rounds on the Internet, but its worth re-visiting...

AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD

I asked God a question during an interview: "What's the one thing that surprises you most about mankind? He answered:

- ❖ "That they get bored of being children, are in a rush to grow up, and then long to be children again.
- ❖ That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health.
- ❖ That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future.
- ❖ That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they never had lived..."

His hands took mine and we were silent. After a long period, I said, "May I ask you another question?" He replied with a smile. "As a Father, what would You ask Your children to do for the future?" He didn't need to think about this answer.

"I would like them to learn..."

that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives.

- ❖ That a rich person is not one who has the most, but one who needs the least.
- ❖ That they should control their attitudes, otherwise their attitudes will control them.
- ❖ To forgive by practicing forgiveness.
- ❖ That money can buy everything but happiness.
- ❖ That while, at times, they may be entitled to be upset, that not does not give them the right to upset those around them.
- ❖ That true friends are scarce; he or she who has found one has found a true treasure.
- ❖ That they are masters of what they keep to themselves and slaves to what they say.
- ❖ That true happiness is not achieved by their goals but to learn to be satisfied with what they already achieved.
- ❖ That happiness is a decision. They decide to be happy with what they are and have, or die from envy and jealousy of what they lack.

HOUSE BLESSINGS

Please the note the dates below when Fr. Jim will be in each town. If you want your house blessed on the day he'll be in your neighborhood, contact the church office (440-331-2246 or sdrroffice@sbcglobal.net)

Tue., Jan. 5- Rocky River & Westlake

Wed., Jan. 6- Rocky River & Westlake

Thu., Jan. 7 – Avon & Avon Lake

Fri., Jan 8. - Fairview Park & North Olmsted

Mon., Jan. 11 - Bay Village & Rocky River

Tue, Jan., 12- Southern suburbs

Wed., Jan. 13 – Lakewood

If your family will not be available on the given day, Fr. Jim can accommodate you by special appointment later in January.

Preparing your house for Blessing

~Try to have all the family members in attendance.

~Put an icon out on your kitchen or dining room table.

~Turn off all radios, TVs and other sources of distraction

- ❖ That even though they may think they have nothing to give, when a friend cries with them, they find the strength to appease the pain.
- ❖ That even though the word "love" has many different meanings, it loses value when it is overstated.
- ❖ That they can never do something extraordinary for Me to love them; I simply do.
- ❖ That the shortest distance they could be from Me is the distance of a prayer."

As we enter the New Year 2010, may these words inspire us to live healthy Christian lives!

Happy New Year!

The Epistle is the official publication of the

Greek Orthodox Community of St. Demetrios



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www.saintdemetriosrr.org

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Manuel Steffas.....440-871-6362

Crystal Thomas.....440-356-1032

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CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS' CONTACTS

Adult Catechism.....Tom N. Andrews...440-734-6894

Aesthetics.....Elaine Spooner

Bible Study.....Vange Richards...216-221-3003

Bookstore.....Pres. Goldie Doukas...440-899-3257

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Choir Director.....Bill Matzorkis... 216-496-4230

Youth Choir.....Diane Matzorkis...440-463-3068

Greek School, Principal.....Diamanta Poulos...440-250-0685

Board of Education..... Maria Mougianis...440-835-2888

PTO Presidents..... Koula Kadrass, Sophia Souris

GOYA, Advisors.....John & Betty Poulos...440-899-6317

Student President.....James Poulos

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Maria Statheros...216-226-1680

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.....Maggie Steffas...440-871-6362

Theotokos Fellowship.....Angie Giallourakis... 440-871-2681

Website.....Dale Stalnaker...440-933-3912

Yassou Club..... Mary Pappadakes...440-333-7988

OCF (ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP)

Program Coordinator: Mira Damljanovic.....440-888-6213

Baldwin-Wallace: Fr. Andrew Harmon.....440-582-5673

Case Western Reserve University: Ken Kovach...216-921-0900

Cleveland State University: Bill Kostas.....216-687-4526

John Carroll University: Bishop Mikhail.....216-961-8528

PARISH MISSIONARIES/ RELIEF WORK

IOCC..... Pascalis Papouras, U.S. Program Director

Ph: 410-243-9820 email: Ppapouras@iocc.org

OCMC..... George & Pauline Russell in Albania

www.russellmission.org

Publication Deadlines: Weekly Bulletin – Wednesday

Monthly *Epistle* – The 15th of the preceding month



Call Andrew Yanak to book St. Demetrios Hall for your wedding, baptism, holiday, school or business gatherings!

Check out our link at

Catering Experience www.saintdemetriosrr.org

Office 440-409-0099

Email: cateringexp@msn.com

Speaking of Stewardship...

The following is adapted from an article by Fr. Remus Grama of St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Cathedral in Cleveland.

Are you of Christ or of Google?

Every now and then my phone rings: "Hello, Father, could you please give me the phone number of Mr. X?" I remember Mr. X, a very nice man. I visit him and he calls me when he needs the priest or the Church.

"Of course," I answer. "I will be glad to help you. Mr. X is one of our good members. I see him in church every week. Please wait a minute."

Feverishly, I check the Parish Directory. But his name is not there! Obviously, he must be an older or newest list, so I go there. Oh, no - not there either! I ask the person on hold to hang in there for another minute. I page the parish Secretary to clarify this situation, but she confidently tells me that "Mr. X. is not a paid member of the parish, therefore, his name, address and phone number cannot be easily located."

Disappointed, I reconnect with the caller and explain as best as I can that, "For the time being, we are not able to help, for we do not have the number. Please check the phone book or perhaps you could *Google* this name on whitepages.com. Sorry, he is not on our list, at this time." Without further comment, I wonder: What about last year? Maybe next year?

I ask myself how it is possible for a regular Orthodox Christian NOT to be a member of the Church from where he receives Holy Communion, and ultimately salvation. There are so many Orthodox Christians throughout our city and country. When they need the parish support for citizenship, work references, scholarship recommendations, or work promotions, the priest must be there for them. Like so many other times, when I need to contact members to enlist their support as volunteers for a Festival or other projects, I find myself once again let down. Wouldn't you feel the same if you were me?

The Priest is always one phone call away, but how about each of us? If you are of Christ, you should be on the Parish list, for this proves your love and allegiance to the Lord and His Church. If we are blessed by God to have a computer and to get on *Google*, we should be grateful and give back to the Lord and the community some sense of support, as we are able. At the Last Judgment, when the Lord will be looking for us, He will call His elect, or those sealed in Christ by the Holy Church. Her saints- not *Google*- will judge the world and testify for each of us.

Of course, the vibrancy of the Church is reflected in the relationship between members and the common good we are able to accomplish together. In fact, the living spirit of a parish community is defined by each one of us. Let each one decide for him or herself: Am I of Christ or of *Google*? *Google*, *Facebook*, *Twitter* or others can be great means of communication. But when it comes to the reality of your identity and salvation, each one of us needs the Church, where Christ incarnate comes to us. The local parish is our spiritual home, where our salvation "certificate" is being steadily written by our own actions of Faith. Just being, but not acting, in Christ may not do it, for "faith without deeds is dead!"

Let us then wake up and take up our Cross. Respond to Christ's call if you want Him to respond to your prayer in time of need. "Hello, are you there?" I hope that in the coming weeks many Mr. Xs and Ms. Ys will pledge their stewardship. Then, not only will the Lord find them easily, but when a friend looks for you, the priest can say: "Of course, here is the number of a great member and supporter of our Church." **Ask yourself: Am I of Christ or of *Google*?**

We Regret the Loss of the Else Family

We are sorry to announce the loss of one of our community's most valuable families. Mr. and Mrs. Someone Else have moved away.

The vacancy left will be difficult to fill. The Elses have been with us for many years, and they have always done far more than their fair share of the community service. Whenever there was a job to do or a meeting to attend, their name was on everyone's lips: "Let Someone Else do it."

When there was money to be given to their church, Mr. and Mrs. Else were thought to be the biggest pledgers. "Let Someone Else make up the difference," was often heard.

And they were looked to for inspiration as well as results. "Someone Else will bring new people in to our parish."

The Elses were wonderful people, but of course, they are only human, and they could only spread themselves so far and so thin. Many a night I sat up and talked with Someone and heard him wish aloud for more help. He and his wife did the best they could, but they knew it was impossible to accomplish all that was expected of them.

We have to face the fact that there were just not enough Someone Elses to go around. And now the Elses are gone. What are we going to do? They have left us a wonderful example to follow, but who will follow it? Who is going to do the things that Someone Else did?

-adapted from Ken McLaughlin

Have you turned in your 2010 Pledge?

Did you know that we rely on Stewardship for the majority of our parish income?

Pledge forms are available in the church office and the Narthex. Please fill yours out today!

2010 Calendars are still available to members. You can pick up your calendar in the church office on Monday-Friday, during office hours.

Parish News

OUR NEWEST LITTLE ANGELS

Chloe Anne, daughter of Andrew & Anne Pyros, was born on Oct. 8, 2009.

Nikos, son of Steve & Calypso Roditis, was born on Nov. 23, 2009.

THOSE THAT HAVE PUT ON CHRIST

Della Rose Getts, daughter of Joseph & Christine, was baptized on Dec. 5, 2009. Her nona is Paulette Newman.

Angelika Katherine-Marie Pettet, daughter of Tim Pettet & Anastasia Theodorou, was baptized on Dec. 6, 2009. Her nono is Christos Theodorou of St. Paul Church.

Demetrios "James" and Kleanthi "Gloria" Suleiman, children of Dana Knotek, were baptized on Dec. 6, 2009. Their nona is Sheena Suvak.

Panayiota Sanchez, daughter of Edward & Astacia, was baptized on Dec. 20, 2009. Her nona is Christina Vagotis.

JOINED WITH STEFANA

John Katsaros & Kristine Bodnar were married on Dec. 12, 2009. Their koumbari are Frank & Monica Moore of Holy Cross Church, Pittsburgh, PA.

ASLEEP IN THE LORD



Peter Diakandru, husband of Pauline, father Brother Demetrios and Angela (Thomas) Stauffer, and grandfather of three, passed away on Dec. 2, 2009. *His 40 day memorial will be on Jan. 10.*



Thano Pasalis, husband of Barbara, father of Constantine "Dean" and Anastasi "Taz," son of Vasiliki, brother of Dessey Corpas, Thalia Mandros, Dr. John G. and Nicholas G., passed away on Dec. 6, 2009. *His 40 day memorial will be on Jan. 10.*



Theano "Thelma" Burpulis (nee Pirovolos) mother of Eugenia, Maria Dee Kratsas (Ted) and Cynthia Koutris (Peter), grandmother of George Kratsas (Vicky), Julie Kratsas, Ross Koutris (Kim) and Jeffery; great-grandmother of Deven Maria Kratsas, Petey, Alexander, and Zachary Koutris; sister of Steve Pirovolos (Anna) and Irene Catavolos (Pete), and aunt of many, passed away on Dec. 12, 2009.

We also extend our condolences to Margaret Safos on the loss of her father.

2010 PARISH COUNCIL

Swearing in of the 2010 board will take place this month. We welcome back Steve Alex, Angelo Coutris, and Byron T. Spooner. And we also welcome new board member Steve Steffas! The two open spots on council will be filled by appointment after the swearing in. We thank our outgoing Parish Council members John G. Asimou, Agnes Arabian and Vasiliki Diamantis. We appreciate your years of service!

Also, "Efharisto" (Big thanks!) to:

~Everyone who contributed toward the Giving Tree for Laura's House. (See p. 9 for photos.)

~Mr. & Mrs. Bill Pastis and Mr. & Mrs. Gus Corpas for donating household items to Laura's House and Zoe House.

~Our anonymous donors for assisting two needy families.

~All those who have already submitted their 2010 Pledge Forms!

~Allen Arabian for beautifully decorating the entire facility for Christmas.

PHILOPTOCHOS CORNER

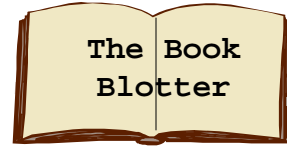
The New Year is a time for looking back and also a time to look ahead. It is first, a time to say "Thank you" once again to everyone in the St. Demetrios Community for all of your support for all of the activities that we have had since September. Looking ahead, I know that we can count on you to continue to join us in the coming months as we plan other events that will benefit our own Community and the one we live in. Our meeting in January on Tuesday the 12th will be a Coffee Klatch. It will be about Fellowship and coming together for coffee and conversation. I look forward to seeing you all there.

The New Year is also a time for Resolutions. Those dreaded resolutions that we all break every year. But maybe this year we can all make a resolution that we won't break.... The Resolution to "be more Philanthropic". It shouldn't be a hard Resolution to keep, and if we can help in anyway, just let us know. You know where to find us.

Best wishes for a Healthy, Happy and Philanthropic New Year ahead filled with all of your Family and Friends, Prayerfully yours, *Jeanne C. Paras – Philoptochos President*

We also received the following letter last month:

"Thank you from ZOE for Life! We would like to thank Philoptochos and everyone at St. Demetrios who participated in the October baby shower to benefit ZOE for Life!, a non-profit Christ-centered support organization with three major goals: to help women in crisis pregnancy, to assist Orthodox Christian couples seeking to adopt, and to create an Orthodox Christian abstinence program to educate young people. The efforts in organizing the shower and the baby gifts donated to ZOE for Life were amazing. Thank you all so much for your generosity! You can only imagine how much your kindness has done for the women, children, and families who come to ZOE House in need. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Lea Georgantzas or Irene Panagopoulos at 440-356-0789."



Children of all ages got to visit with St. Nick on his nameday. Sam Pappandreas (above) trying to convince his young son to talk to Santa. For more Sunday School photos –with actual children- see p. 8.

Bible Study Meetings will resume on Tue., Jan. 5.

Theotokos Fellowship We will resume on Mon, Jan. 11 to discuss Chapter 4.

Local Author Anthone Colovas, author of “A Short History of Modern Greece” will be the keynote speaker at the Greek Letters Day luncheon on Jan. 31 (see p. 12 for more details.) Copies of the book will be sold and the author on hand to sign your copy!

Commemorative Album The 50th Anniversary Album will be coming soon! The 200-page, hard-cover book is full of photos & memories from the past 50 years of our community. For a sneak preview of just some of the photos included, see the article on the 50th Anniversary Bulletin Board at church.

Copies of the album have been set aside for all those who purchased full, half or third-page ads, but a limited number of extra copies will be available for sale at \$50 each. To reserve your copy, fill out the form below and return to the church office in January.



At the St. Modestus Pet Blessing last month Fr. Jim blessed the “domestic animals” of (l-r) Leia & Irene Steffas & “Sonny”, Estelle Callas, Anthony Santarelli & “Chloe,” Jai Newkirk & “Louie,” JP Jenks & “Bubba” and Allen Arabian & “Hercules”.

ST. DEMETRIOS HOSPITALITY

On Sun., Dec. 13, Fr. Jim welcomed to our community father & son Sen. Paul Sarbannes and Rep. John Sarbannes, both of Maryland. (pictured right receiving antidoro.)

Last month, Fr. Jim also welcomed the 6th grade class from North Olmsted’s Middle School and their teacher, who is teaching the class about different religions. The students were given a tour of the church by Fr. Jim and learn more about Orthodoxy.



50th ANNIVERSARY ALBUM

PRE-ORDER FORM

Please reserve ____ copy(ies) of the 50th Anniversary Album at \$50 each

TOTAL _____

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime phone _____

Email: _____

Payment is not due until pick up of the book. Delivery date to be announced.

⁶ Four Coins at St. Demetrios

Once again the Yassou Club held their annual Christmas gala to much success but they may have outdone themselves this year!

The evening traditionally includes some musical entertainment. This year it was the Four Coins, the Greek-American singing group whose hits from the 1950s include "Shangri La." The foursome sang their hits, Greek songs and even Christmas carols in a rousing concert, much to the raves of all those present.

Many wonder how Yassou Club can possibly top that next year, but we have faith in the planning prowess of the Steering Committee (pictured, bottom) Stella Steffas, Argie Katsaros, Mary Pappadakes, Vivian Herouvis,, Helen Kariotakis, Nancy Andos, Mary Ciolfi, Estelle & Gus Callas. And not pictured: Sophie Tetorakis.



(left) The Four Coins on St. Demetrios Hall stage, still putting on a great show!

(above) Mary Pappadakes and Helen Kariotakis were among the audience that enjoyed the show.

Photos courtesy of Allen Arabian and Eleni Papouras-Jenks



ZAPIS ACTIVITY CENTER

Nick Hillman, Activities Director

activitycenternick@yahoo.com

GOYA TO HOST 2010 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

February 5-7, 2010, St. Demetrios GOYA will be hosting a Metropolis of Pittsburgh Basketball Tournament. Games will take place in the Zapis Activity Center, as well as other locations throughout Cleveland, all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Schedules to be announced. Make plans to come cheer on our teams!

WANTED: Timers and score keepers for the tournament weekend (games on Sat., Feb. 6.) Call or sign up at the activity center...or we will find you !

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Kids' Open Play	Sun	After Church	In Session
Open Walk	M-F	9:30 a.m.-Noon	Year-round
Men's Basketball	Mon	9:00 p.m.	Year-round
GOYA Boys' basketball	M / W	7:00-9:00 p.m.	In Session
Exercise with Sophia	T/ Th	8:30 a.m.	Year-round
GOYA Girls' Basketball	Tu /Th	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	In Session
Men's Basketball	Fri	8:30 p.m.	Year-round
Kids' Basketball	Sat	1-3 p.m.	Dec. 5-March 27



GOYA Basketball Program Sponsorship Form

St. Demetrios Church
February 5, 6, 7th, 2010



Help Our Kids Out...send your ad in today!

Sponsor Information (please print clearly)

* indicates required field

Company Name			
Contact Name*			
Billing address*			
City*	State*	Zip Code*	
Telephone*			
E-Mail*			
Fax			

Advertisement in Program	Circle Level of Commitment
Full page ad on covers of program book -----	\$100
Full page ad -----	\$75
Half page ad -----	\$50
Quarter page and/or business card ad -----	\$25
Family name or well wishes (Use line below for your text)-----	\$25

Please include digital artwork when submitting this form, preferably via email with attached artwork file. All ads will be reproduced in a single color.



Please make checks payable to "St. Demetrios Church", a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is tax deductible.

COMPLETED FORMS & PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY SUNDAY 1/17/10
 Program Book Contact: Sam Papandreas, 440-846-1661, sampapandreas@roadrunner.com

Celebrate Youth !

GREEK SCHOOL

PTO Scholarships Graduating high school seniors who also graduated from the Balourdas Greek School are eligible to apply for the PTO & Anna Poulos Memorial Scholarships. Applications in the office. Submission deadline Jan. 7, 2010.

The Greek School Christmas Program took place on Dec. 20 (Photos courtesy of Koula Kadras and Angela Kolocouris)



Triple Double Vision! (left) The Chalkias twins with Kosta Katsaros; (right) the Lonardo twins; (below) the Kolocouris twins!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please note there is no Sunday School on Jan. 31 due to the Greek School Open House.

COMING UP...Sun., Feb. 14 is Godparents' Sunday! Students are encouraged to attend Divine Liturgy and take Holy Communion with their godparents that day. That same day will be the first (local) round of the Oratorical Festival.

At last month's Communion Breakfast, which took place on Dec. 6, "St. Nick" stopped by to listen to requests and celebrate his nameday! Talking to Santa were: Alexa Kadras, Ava Jelepis, Yanni Petousis, Jordan Prok, Maria Kolocouris, Victoria Masson and Alexandra Manos.



Photos: Eleni Papouras-Jenks

GOYA

Thank you to everyone that helped with Laura's Home. We had a wonderful time. All the residents were happy to see us there, especially the children. The children sat and listened to Fr. Jim talk about St. Nicholas and they were so excited to see Santa Claus, and receive a gift from Santa. It made us all appreciate and be thankful for what we have. – *Betty Poulos*



(above) GOYA prepares to go to Laura's House

(left & right) GOYA visited seven homes to bring Christmas cheer through carols!

Photos: Betty Poulos, Eleni Papouras-Jenks

HELLENIC DANCERS

“GREEK NIGHT”

SATURDAY JAN. 16TH

@ ANNUNCIATION CHURCH HALL

2187 W. 14th St., CLEVELAND

SPONSORED BY ANNUNCIATION GOYA

ADMISSION: \$5.00 PER PERSON

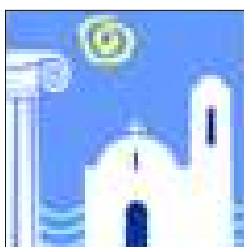
- **LOCAL GREEK CHURCHES DANCE TROUPE DANCE OFF**
- **LIVE GREEK MUSIC BY ORION EXPRESS**

Senior Dancers who wish to perform at the Dance Off, should email Eleni at sdrroffice@sbcglobal.net for rehearsal times, etc.



SPIRIT WEAR You can now order sweatshirts and sweatpants that say “St. Demetrios Rocky River.” GOYA has set up a link through www.companycasuals.com/stdapparel. Log onto this site, place your order and the company will call back within a couple days to get your credit card information. Orders take about three weeks. Extra charge to add names to the back of items.

Northern winters may have inspired “California Dreaming” but Orthodox teens have many more options to think about for summer vacation!



Ionian Village, the unique summer camping program located in Greece and operated by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, announces dates for summer camp 2010!

Summer Travel Camp: July 1-20

Byzantine Venture: July 25-Aug. 13.

Teens who have completed grades 7-12 may attend either session. Registration starts in January! For more information visit www.ionianvillage.org or contact the Ionian Village office at 646.519.6190.

YOCAMA Mission Trip 2010 Dates

Montana: July 9-16, 2010

New Mexico: July 16-24

Contact Angie Giallourakis at 440-871-2681 for more information.



On Sun., Dec. 13, our Sunday School and Youth Choir presented a beautiful program of readings, hymns and pageantry depicting the story of Christ's birth, and helping all those present get the true meaning of the holiday season.

(above) The Youth Choir, directed by Diane Matzorkis.

(below l-r, across both pages) Narrator Mary Papandreas, Soloists Eleni Nikolakis, Matthew Szekely, Antonia Hadgis, Mary Tjotjos, Angelia Szekely, and Alexis Bahas.

Photos: Eleni Papouras-Jenks



Christmas Celebration



The younger Sunday School students representing the angels and shepherds also sang carols.

(center, left) Mary Matzorkis singing a Greek hymn with the Annunciation tableaux in the background.

(center) Cassie Packis, x, Yiana Tjotjos present the Nativity Tableaux

(center, right) the Stamatis boys and Spyro Romell as the Three Wise Men.



On the Bulletin Board

The Parent Teacher Organization of
St. Demetrios Balourdas Greek School invites you to the annual
Three Hierarchs and Greek Letters Day Luncheon

Sunday, January 31, 2010

Open House in Greek School classrooms immediately after Divine Liturgy

Luncheon to follow in the Cultural Hall

Presentation of PTO Scholarships

and

Keynote Speaker Anthone Colovas, Author of "A Short History of Modern Greece"

\$12/adult for Chicken Marsala and \$6/child for chicken tenders

Tickets will be sold during coffee hours in January or

Call Sofia Souris (440-899-9676) or Koula Kadras (440-268-6129)

OCMC
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER

2010
MISSION TEAMS



JOIN A 2-4 WEEK MISSION TEAM TODAY!

ALASKA

Outreach

Dates: June 4 - 13, 2010

Cost: \$845 + airfare

Teaching

Dates: July 12 - 24, 2010

Cost: \$1,140 + airfare

ALBANIA

Youth Outreach

Dates: June 13 - 30, 2010

Cost: \$1,125 + airfare

GUATEMALA

Youth Outreach

Dates: July 7 - 20, 2010

Cost: \$840 + airfare

INDIA

Teaching

Dates: October 6 - 23, 2010

Cost: \$1,360 + airfare

KENYA

Teaching

Dates: Feb. 19 - Mar. 1, 2010

Cost: \$1,410 + airfare

MADAGASCAR

Teaching

Dates: August 1 - 20, 2010

Cost: \$1,905 + airfare

ROMANIA

Youth Outreach

Dates: July 9 - 21, 2010

Cost: \$1,615 + airfare

SOUTH AFRICA

Teaching

Dates: October 6 - 21, 2010

Cost: \$1,775 + airfare

SOUTH KOREA

Youth Outreach

Dates: July 23 - Aug. 7, 2010

Cost: \$1,315 + airfare

TANZANIA

Teaching

Dates: July 22 - Aug. 7, 2010

Cost: \$1,585 + airfare

UGANDA

Health Care

Dates: June 11 - 26, 2010

Cost: \$1,880 + airfare

ZIMBABWE

Teaching

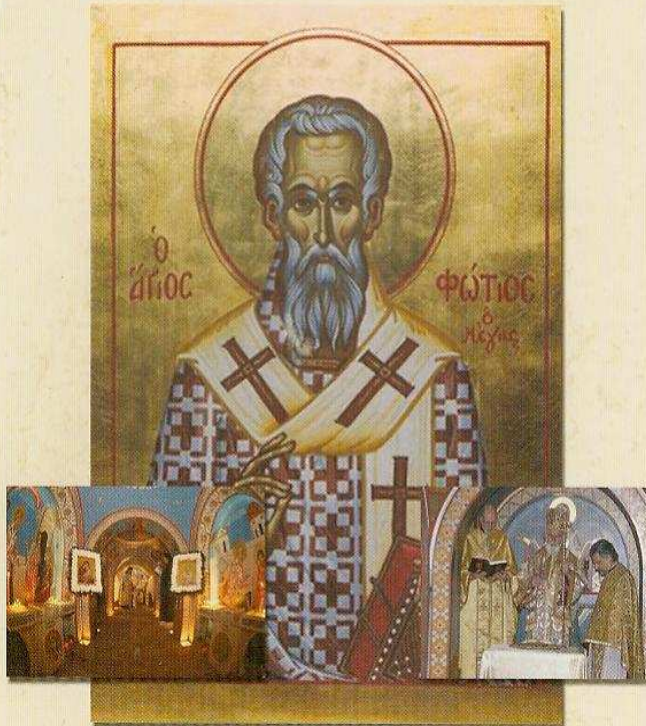
Dates: Aug. 22 - Sep. 9, 2010

Cost: \$1,990 + airfare

Share
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ST. PHOTIOS GREEK ORTHODOX
NATIONAL SHRINE
28TH ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE WEEKEND



Save the Date

FEBRUARY 5 - 7, 2010

Friday, February 5 at St. Photios Shrine

3-5 p.m. Authors Bill & Gine Samonides of Canton, Ohio, will speak about and sign their book, *Greeks of Stark County*

6-7 p.m. Great Vespers

7 p.m. Unveiling of the Wall of Tribute

Saturday, February 6 ~ Feast of St. Photios

8:30-11 a.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy

Sunday, February 7 at Casa Monica Hotel

12:30 p.m. Luncheon and Keynote address by Fr. Alkiviades Calivas



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010

Help Our Parish Become Souper Bowl Champions!

On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 7, 2010, team up with our parish's youth to help the needy in our community and around the world. Help our team in the "Souper Bowl of Caring" by bringing one dollar and a canned good with you to Liturgy. Please support this effort and help our parish become Souper Bowl Champions!



International Orthodox Christian Charities
P.O. Box 630225 • Baltimore, MD 21263-0225
Toll-Free: (877) 803-4622 • Fax: (410) 243-9824
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Around Town

CHRISTMAS TRADITION CONTINUES

Ten choirs representing six ethnic traditions gathered at St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church for the 17th annual Inter-Orthodox Nativity Concert on Dec. 13, with hundreds of faithful in attendance.

The St. Demetrios Choir, directed by Bill Matzorkis, (pictured below) was among those who presented the beautiful hymns and carols of the various Orthodox traditions. Also present were St. Sava's Serbian Njegos Choir, St. Mary Romanian Cathedral Choir, The Greater Cleveland Russian Choir, Annunciation Choir, St. Herman's Monastery, Holy Trinity Church Choir, St. Vladimir Ukrainian Choir and of course, the host church, St. Paul Choir.



The concert also marked the debut of the Pan-Orthodox Young Adult Fellowship Choir, directed by Gerald Largent, made up of members from the various Orthodox churches of Cleveland including our own Mary Matzorkis, Lea Georgantas and Irene Panagopoulos. (pictured below, 1st, 3rd & 5th singers)

This year's free will collection was earmarked to support the campus Orthodox Christian Fellowship. As always, the final carols were sung by all those present. St. Paul Philoptochos and the Eastern Orthodox Women's Guild presented refreshments after. *Photos: Eleni Papouras-Jenks*



YOUNG ADULT MEETING IN NEW YEAR

The Cleveland area POYAF (Pan-Orthodox Young Adult Fellowship) invites all young adults (ages 20-40) to the first meeting of the year at St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church, 4548 Wallings Rd, North Royalton. The meeting will be at 7 pm on Fri., Jan. 22 and will include a short discussion, dinner, and fellowship. Hope to see you there!

CLEVELAND ADULT GREEK DANCE DEBUT

On Sat., Jan. 23, the Cleveland Adult Greek Dance Group will make their debut performance at a medical conference taking place downtown. The private performance is the first time that adult dancers from Sts. Constantine & Helen, St. Demetrios and Annunciation will perform together as a group.

NEW BOOK ABOUT ARCHBISHOP

A new book entitled "**Archbishop Demetrios of America, The First Decade 1999-2009**" was released last month. It is a beautifully produced book that presents a full spectrum of the activities in the life of the Greek Orthodox Church in America from the years 1999-2009, the first ten years of Archiepiscopal Ministry of Archbishop Demetrios of America. The 368-page high-gloss, hard cover book contains 537 photographs, all the work of the Official Photographer of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Dimitrios Panagos, and it is edited by journalist Revekka Papadopoulou. This book was first presented to Archbishop Demetrios for his 10th Anniversary of his enthronement by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on October 28, during the Archdiocesan Leadership dinner held in New York's Boat House in honor of his All Holiness. Copies of the book can be ordered from the Archdiocese (\$75 per copy + \$10 S&H) by calling 212-774-0244, or email gotel@goarch.org. The proceeds will benefit a fellowship fund initiated by the Archbishop.

SAE COORDINATOR TO SPEAK AT ANNUNCIATION

The president of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE), USA Regional Coordinator Theodoros Spyropoulos, will be the keynote speaker at Annunciation Greek School's Three Hierarchs celebration on Saturday, January 30 at 4:00 p.m.

For more information on the program, contact the office of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 2187 W. 14th St., Cleveland at 216-861-0116 or visit www.annunciationcleveland.com.

Fighting superstition in Uganda by Sharon & Peter Georges

We celebrated Christmas in Uganda this past year, far from our beloved family, far from our dear friends. As we reflect on the choices that brought us here, and on our work and ministry, we recall certain questions that are often asked and that sometimes arise unbidden in our own minds: “Why are we here?” “What do we hope to accomplish?” “Are we really making a difference?”

According to the latest census, 80% of Ugandans are Christians. Yet for the vast majority of these professing believers, Christianity is but a thin, brittle shell, barely disguising a persistent belief in the old religion, in the “small gods.”

The prophet Isaiah talks about “the people who walked in darkness.” He describes those who “inquire of mediums and necromancers; who whisper and mutter.” He asks, “Should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?”

Indigenous African religion is not based on love, or hope, or joy. It is based on fear. Fear that the dead will return and harm the living if the ancient rituals are not performed. Fear that a neighbor may be a witch and put a curse on you or your children. Fear that compels people to give what little they have to the witchdoctors in the vain hope of warding off a curse or to appease the arbitrary antagonism of a dead relative.

Colonialism, European philosophy, political independence, the importation of Western popular culture, and millions of dollars in aid money have done little to dispel these fears or to alleviate the grinding poverty that still afflicts most Ugandan families. To continue with Isaiah, “They will roam through the land greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will curse their king and their God. They will look up to the sky and down to the earth but will find only distress and darkness. They are in the darkness of fear, and wander lost in the darkness.”

Can there be love when a child is just another mouth to feed?

Can there be hope when tomorrow offers no better than today, and maybe worse?

Can there be joy for those who dwell in a land of darkness?

Education can make a difference and education is what we do. The educated are more able to free themselves from the yoke of superstition and fear. The educated are more employable in sustainable and better paying jobs. The educated are less likely to engage in risky and potentially fatal behaviors. This is conventional wisdom, and to a great extent it’s true. To quote the Uganda School Anthem:

We young women and men of Uganda are marching along the path of education;

Singing and dancing with joy together, uniting for a better Uganda.

Thanks to your concern, prayers, and financial support, together we are making it possible for more than 200 Ugandan children and teens to attend school. Not only are their school fees paid for, they are given everything they need to succeed academically: books, pens & pencils, daily lunch, uniforms, and comprehensive medical care. Most of these children are orphans, and all are living in an impoverished section of Kampala, Uganda’s teeming capital. Without the support we provide, they have little hope of completing primary and secondary school and their opportunities for a better life are limited. The cycle of poverty will claim yet another generation.

But education alone cannot eliminate the pervasive corruption and discrimination that plague the poorest of the poor. The minds and hearts of this young generation must be shown that self-improvement alone will not lead to a “better Uganda.” To this end, we are more than a bursary, more than an impersonal provider of school fees. Together with our Ugandan associates, Frank and Agnes, we demonstrate a personal interest in each and every child in our program. We advise, encourage, guide and admonish. We teach and promote honesty, integrity, responsibility, and concern for each other.

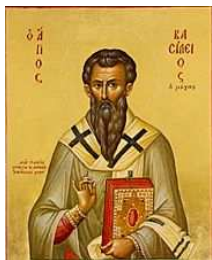
We confront them openly with society’s moral failures, and direct them to be the generation that will ultimately make a difference- not only in their own futures, but for the sake of their neighbors, families, and the generations to come.

Most importantly, we love them. They come to know this love, and they also know that we are representatives of your love; that there is a great family around the world which cares about them. The knowledge of this love brings them joy, and this joy give them hope. Yes, together we are making a difference!



Agnes & Jovia in their school sweaters

- 16 *At the start of each New Year, Orthodox Christians commemorate St. Basil the Great, a major saint in our calendar (and also the figure of “Santa Claus” to children in Greece!) Although many saints we commemorate struggled for the faith alone, in secret or in martyrdom, St. Basil is an example of what can result when an entire family is strong in their faith.*



The Family that Prays Together

Saint Basil the Great was born in 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia (now Turkey) to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. His parents' names were Basil and Emily. In addition to his feastday on January 1, the Church commemorates his grandmother St. Makrina the Elder on May 30, his mother Emily and sister St. Makrina on July 19, and his brothers St. Peter of Sebastia on Jan. 9, St. Gregory of Nyssa on Jan. 10, and Naucratius.

St. Makrina the Elder, grandmother of St. Basil and his siblings, was outstanding for her intellect and piety. She was a disciple of St. Gregory the Wonder-worker of Neocaesarea. During the persecutions in the reign of Diocletian, she and her husband (also named Basil,) abandoned their home and hid in the forests and deserts. Although their home was confiscated, they felt no regret. Stripped of everything except their love of God, they settled in an ancient forest and spent 7 years there. By God's providence, goats would come down from the mountains and provide them with food. They both died peacefully in the 4th century, after great suffering for the Christian faith.

Saint Makrina, the elder sister of Saint Basil (whose mother had had a vision of St. Thekla shortly before her birth) was sought after by many as a bride because of her beauty, wisdom, and illustrious birth. She was betrothed at a young age to a noble bridegroom. But when her betrothed died before the marriage could take place, the teenaged Makrina refused any other suitors, saying that since her betrothed was alive in Christ, it was not right to turn to another. Instead she devoted herself to a life of virginity, asceticism, and prayer. She established a monastery and, along with her mother Emily, became a nun.

In the meantime, Basil studied in Constantinople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "the Theologian." When he returned home, puffed up with much youthful pride, it was the good influence and holy example of his blessed sister Makrina that persuaded him to turn from seeking worldly glory to the service of God. He chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career and visiting monks throughout the Middle East. Upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and his sister were already treading the path of the ascetical life; here he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, he was elected to succeed the bishop and tended the flock for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and strict asceticism. The Emperor Valens, influenced by the Arian heresy, threatened the Saint with exile and torments to get him to agree with them, because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia.

But St. Basil was willing to endure every suffering for the sake of the Faith, and showed himself to be a martyr by volition. The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labors, at the helm of the church, reposed in the Lord on Jan. 1, 379, at the age of 49.

St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, was born in 331, two years after Basil. While still a young man, their godly mother Emily implored Gregory to attend a service in honor of the 40 Martyrs at her retreat at Annesi, on the River Iris in Pontus. Gregory came, but weary from the journey and feeling little zeal, fell asleep during the service. The 40 Martyrs then appeared to him in a dream, reproaching him for his slothfulness. After that, he repented and became very diligent in the service of God. He became a bishop in 372, but because of his Orthodoxy, was exiled in 374 by Valens, who was an Arian. After Valens' death, Gregory was recalled by the Emperor Gratian. He attended the Local Council of Antioch, which sent him to visit the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which had been ravaged by Arianism. He also attended the 2nd Ecumenical Council in 381.

He reposed in 395, leaving many remarkable writings, including a work on the resurrection of the dead which is cast in the form of a dialogue between himself and his sister Makrina. In it, he is the earnest but ignorant student and she the wise and patient teacher. St. Makrina had reposed in peace in 379 and was buried by her brother Gregory, who wrote a moving account of her last days and his grief at seeing such a light pass out of the world.

It is also through the writings of St. Gregory that we know of Naucratius, the second of the four brothers. St. Gregory wrote that he was very talented, with great physical beauty, strength, swiftness and facility for everything. In 352, at the age of 21, Naucratius spoke so well at a public recital that the whole audience was deeply moved. But prompted by some Divine Providence, he rejected all the opportunities of a career in the courts of law. Instead, he entered a life of solitude and poverty, settling in a remote spot by the Iris River. He took care of some destitute old men, who lived nearby, together in sickness and feebleness. He would go on fishing expeditions and since he was expert in every form of sport, he provided food to his grateful wards by this means for five years. St. Basil evidently followed his example when he went to the same area in search of solitude in 357. But Before Basil arrived, Naucratius was killed in a hunting accident.

St. Peter II, Bishop of Sebastia was the 10th and youngest child of the family. Their father died shortly after Peter's birth in 319 and he was raised mostly by his sister Makrina. He was ordained to the priesthood by his brother Basil in 370, and consecrated Bishop of Sebastia at the start of the 2nd Ecumenical Council in 381, in which he took an active part. He oversaw his flock wisely and reposed in peace.