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St. Catherine's Newsletter

Assumption Greek
Orthodox Church

December, 2010



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Families gathered in Plato Hall to decorate the tree. Children made an assortment of ornaments to hang on the tree, shared-fellowship and enjoyed dinner.

Honoring Those Who Serve by Marika Maggos



Over Columbus Day weekend this past October, I took a trip to Washington D.C. with a small group from my school. One of the sites we visited was Arlington National Cemetery. This is a special cemetery where you can find the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, JFK's tomb, and many soldiers' tombs in general. I had the opportunity to be one of the two students from my school who got to participate in the wreath laying ceremony. During the ceremony, we laid a wreath by the Tomb of the Unknowns with our school's name on it. A uniformed soldier introduced himself to us, instructed us on what to do, and accompanied us. Taps were also played. The experience was uplifting, very moving, and once in a lifetime. To be selected for this ceremony we had to write an essay about what participating meant to us. This assignment really made me think about our country and honoring our troops. It reminded me of how we have memorials in our church for people who have passed, too. This is my essay:

When you see an American flag, what does it mean to you? For some, the flag represents our freedom as Americans. For others, it shows the hardships our country has endured and overcome. Regardless, the "piece of cloth" we call our American flag, symbolizes the United States for everyone. What would the United States be today, without the men and women who serve our country? America would be quite different, and we would not have the freedoms we are privileged to call our own.

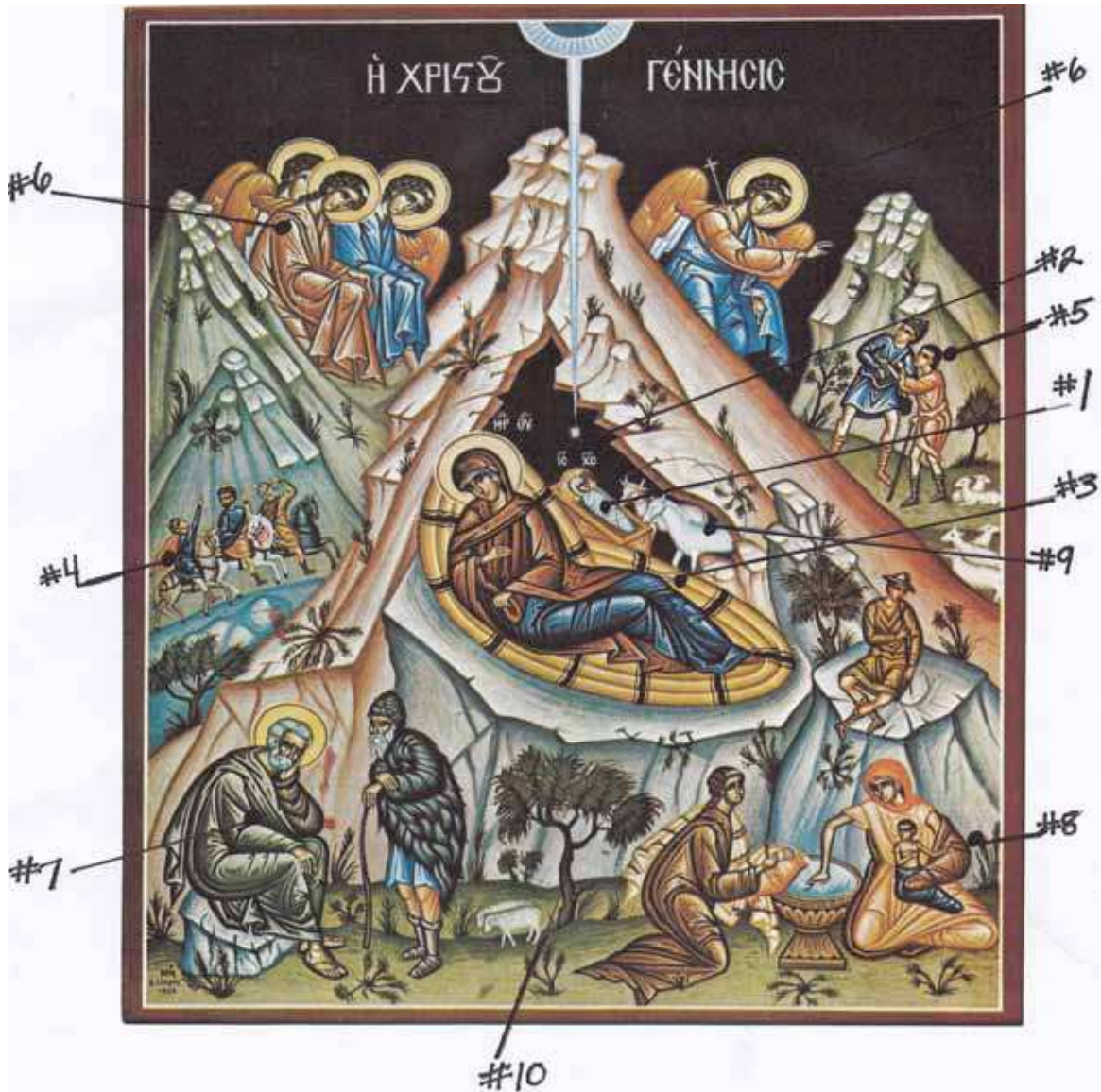
From the Revolutionary War, to the war currently in the Middle East, men and women have been serving our country for over 200 years! It is because of these devoted people, the United States is the country it is today. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers specifically honors the Americans who lost their lives in World Wars I and II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War. My grandfather and several great uncles served in World War II. When I ask my grandfather about it, he talks about his time on a submarine. To this day he will not eat mashed potatoes and peas because that is all they had to eat on the ship. I cannot imagine what it was like for them, or any of the Americans who served in the war. Books, movies and the news have helped me realize that our troops deserve our full gratitude. It is because of their willingness to serve that we maintain such a prosperous country. They make sacrifices of being separated from their loved ones and are ready to give their lives. Our soldiers are some of the most brave, passionate, and courageous people.

My other grandfather grew up in Greece, without such a strong military. During World War II he, his father, and the other men in his village had to live in fear of the Nazis and go into hiding. He saw people hung in the middle of the town square. His own father even got taken prisoner for a period of time. Hearing these stories from my grandfather shows me just how fortunate I am to live in a country with a wonderful military that keeps us secure.

Therefore, taking part in the wreath laying ceremony would truly mean a lot to me. Comparing our country's military to others just proves we are in deep debt to the men and women who serve America. It is because of them, we enjoy and maintain our most cherished rights and safety. For hundred of years people have been fighting and sacrificing their lives for the United States, which is the greatest gift they can give. Recognizing them is a small thing I can do to show my gratitude and respect to these devoted people. Every year, I genuinely learn more and more. It is immensely important to remember and honor the men and women who have served our country. Taking part in the laying of the wreath ceremony would be a huge honor, and hits very close to my heart.

The Nativity of Christ

by Very Rev. Fr. Timothy Bakakos

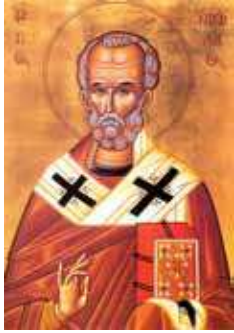


The icon of the Nativity of Christ calls us to praise and glorify the Birth of Christ. You expect to see Baby Jesus, the Virgin Mary and Joseph in a manger. However, if you look closely, there are several other depictions in the icon. Follow the numbers on the icon to learn more.

- 1. The Christ Child wrapped in swaddling clothing lying in a manger. His presence shines radically with the black opening of the cave.
- 2. The black mouth of the cave, then symbolically, is precisely this fallen world in which the “Sun of Righteousness” has dawned, this wilderness which the “Light of Wisdom” has illumined.
- 3. The Virgin Mother is shown half-sitting, supported by a hammock-type bed used by the early Jews in their travels. Striking is the absence of the usual sufferings of childbirth which is iconographically seen to be an indication of the virgin-birth of Christ.
- 4. The Wise Men represent the learned and astute.
- 5. The shepherds represent the humble of this world.
- 6. A multitude of Angels give glory to God and announce this good news to mankind.
- 7. In the bottom left corner, Joseph sits in painful thought, while the Devil, under the guise of an old and bent shepherd, suggests new doubts and suspicions to him.
- 8. In the lower right corner, two women are seen bathing the newborn Infant, to show the real humanity of Jesus.
- 9. In the cave, the Infant lies guarded by an ox and donkey. While the Gospels do not speak of them, all icons of the Nativity portray them because of the manifest fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, “An ox know its owner, and an ass its master’s manger.” (Is. 1:3)
- 10. One final detail is the tree painted across from the image of Joseph, included not only in its own right as an offering to Christ, but also as a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. In the words of the Prophet Isaiah, “But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him.” (Is. 11:1-2)

St. Nicholas

By Nikos Chulos Saarinen



Saint Nicholas of Myra (in modern Turkey) lived during the time of Saint Constantine the Great. When he was a young man, he went to Jerusalem to concentrate on prayerful life. Instead, God wanted Saint Nicholas to return to his homeland to spread the faith to the people there. He returned to Myra where he was appointed bishop. At the first Ecumenical Council in 325, Saint Nicholas, hearing that Arius had spoken against the Son of God, hit him in the face. Since it was prohibited for bishops to hit any person, the other bishops planned to take away his office. But these bishops were stopped when the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lady the Theotokos appeared to them and said that Saint Nicholas did not hit Arius out of anger, but of love. Because of this, Saint Nicholas remained as bishop. He became one of the best known and loved Saints ever and is remembered for giving to the poor. He was later known as a giver of gifts to children on December 6, the date of his death and feast day.

Spotlight on Sunday Church School

Congratulations to the monthly perfect attendance winners: Lily Jurasek for September, Thalia Becker for October, and Vasili Anast for November. Thalia Holguin won the newsletter contest about changes in St. Catherine's Chapel.

We welcome teachers Mrs. Georgia Tsaganos, 5th grade and Mrs. Catherine Karabas, high school. Congratulations to Katherine Kott on her recent wedding. She is now Mrs. Katherine Jones.



Reflections by Eleni Caprio



Christmas: A time for family, giving to others, and receiving gifts. To me it seems all I see at Christmastime is sales for toys and decorations for the house. I believe at Christmas we should be as thankful as at Thanksgiving. I mean, think of all the children who suffer from hunger and the cold on Christmas. The least we can do is donate some food to a food pantry, or collect food from your neighbors. Make a flyer and put it in people's mailboxes. To me, Christmas is a time to give to others less fortunate and to thank God for what we have. So the next time you ask your parents for a new toy and they say "No," try compromising. Say, "Mom, if I donate one toy can I get this one?" Then just maybe you'll get the toy. Remember, Christmas is a time for giving, friends, family, and God.

Cold

The cold sets in
 And you look out
 Your frosty window
 Thinking about those
 Who do not have
 The hot chocolate at your side.
 You grab your purse, your coat and leave
 Walking quickly through the bitter wind.
 Soon you see a Salvation Army person,
 With a bell and a bucket.
 You stuff a whole 50 dollars in there
 Just on a whim.
 And hurry home, hoping that
 That was enough
 Because you are too
 cold



contest

List 10 things you see in the Nativity of Christ Icon

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____
9. _____ 10. _____

Name: _____

Return to St. Catherine's Narthex by Sunday, January 2, 2011

INFO

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HOURS

MATINS — 8:30 AM
DIVINE LITURGY—10:00 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL LITURGY—
9:45 AM

We're on the web!

www.assumptionchicago.org

The St. Catherine's Newsletter was created in 2007 by a Sunday School student. It serves to inform, educate, and entertain the children of the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church community. All are welcome and encouraged to contribute to the newsletter.

If you are interested in writing an article, sending in a self written piece of work, or just for more information... PLEASE CONTACT: Very Rev. Fr. Timothy Bakakos — FrTimothy@assumptionchicago.org or Dr. Evie Maggos — demags@aol.com

SAVE THE DATE
Apokreatiko Glendi
Sunday, February 27th
Diplomat West Banquets

MAIL TO:



***Knock knock. Who's there?** Ho. Ho who? Ho who?
No, it's Ho ho ho.

***What do you call a cheese that is not yours?**
"Nacho Cheese"

***What word starts with "e," ends with "e" and only has one letter in it?** *"Envelope"*

***Why was six afraid of seven?** *"Because seven eight nine."*

***Why wasn't six afraid of seven?** *"Because seven had a stomach-ache."*



Contributed
by:
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and
Luke Maggos



Artwork by Lea Arvanites

