

The Voice of Saint Anthony

December 2023

Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church

Reverend Father Peter Stratos

778 S. Rosemead Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91107

(626) 449-6943 Office (626) 449-6974 FAX

Saint Barbara	4 December
Saint Nicholas	6 December
Conception of Theotokos	9 December
Saint Spyridon	12 December
Prophet Daniel	17 December
Saint Anastasia	22 December
Holy Nativity of our Lord	25 December
Saint Stephen	27 December

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Nativity of our Lord
25 December

Deadline for January Newsletter is Saturday, 23 December
Please send to: newsletter_church@aol.com

Message from Father Peter

SAINT ANTHONY
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. Peter Stratos, Pastor

November 30, 2023 (Andrew the First-Called Apostle)

Beloved Parishioners,

May the grace, peace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!
We give glory to God for the blessings He has bestowed on our parish. We are grateful to all our parishioners, Parish and Ministry leaders for your stewardship and commitment to the well-being and vibrancy of our St. Anthony family.

Stewardship is our total commitment to God through the giving of our time, talents and treasures. It is our recognition that everything is His. It is our gratitude for all our blessings. In St. Paul's 2nd Letter to the Corinthians, we read,

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

St. Paul teaches us that our attitude, when we give, is more important than the amount we give. Our means, our hearts, our faith together determine the amount. But God is concerned about "how" we give from the resources we have: our time, talents and treasure. We are stewards of every gift, using each for our own and our neighbor's salvation. (Read the Parable of the Talents Matthew 25:14-30)

We ask that you prayerfully complete your 2024 Stewardship Card for your household, indicating the contribution of your time, talents and treasure. [See pages 6-7](#)
We are afforded ample opportunities for stewardship in the life of our Church and parish community. Participation and cheerful giving are the hallmarks of Christian Stewardship.

Thank you all for your continued love, generosity, and full participation in the life of our Saint Anthony Community. We remain strong because of each and every one of you. Please continue to pray to our Lord for strength and peace as Christ teaches us,

"I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace...be of good cheer."
(John 16:33)


Fr. Peter Stratos
Proistamenos


Joseph Akrotirianakis
Parish Council President

HOLY SERVICES PROGRAM - CHRISTMAS, THEOPHANY, FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY

SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

778 S. ROSEMEAD BLVD. PASADENA, CA 91107 ~ 626-449-6943 ~ SAINT-ANTHONY.ORG

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday, Dec. 24	SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
Orthros	8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	10:00 a.m.
Monday, Dec. 25	THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
Orthros	9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil	10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Dec. 31	SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
Orthros	8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	10:00 a.m.

JANUARY 2024

Friday, Jan. 5	THE FOREFEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST AGHIASMOS (GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS) Vespertal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil	9:00 a.m.
Saturday, Jan. 6	THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST AGHIASMOS (GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS) Orthros	9:00 a.m.
	Divine Liturgy St. John Chrysostom	10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Jan. 7	SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Orthros	8:45 a.m.
	Divine Liturgy	10:00 a.m.
	VASILOPITA after Services hosted by Philoptochos.	
Tuesday, Jan. 16	EVE OF THE FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY Great Vesper Service w/ Artoklasia	6:00 p.m.
	Dinner will follow, hosted by Philoptochos.	
Wednesday, Jan. 17	FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY Orthros	9:00 a.m.
	Divine Liturgy	10:00 a.m.

ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΣ 2023

Κυριακή, Δεκ. 24	ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΡΟ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ Όρθρος	8:45 π.μ.
	Θεία Λειτουργία Ιωάννου του Χρυσοστόμου	10:00 π.μ.
Δευτέρα, Δεκ. 25	ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ Όρθρος	9:00 π.μ.
	Θεία Λειτουργία	10:00 π.μ.
Κυριακή, Δεκ. 31	ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΡΟ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ Όρθρος	8:45 π.μ.
	Θεία Λειτουργία	10:00 π.μ.

ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ 2024

Παρασκευή, Ιαν. 5	ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ (ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ) Θεία Λειτουργία Βασιλείου του Μεγάλου	9:00 π.μ.
Σάββατο, Ιαν. 6	ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ (ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ) Όρθρος	9:00 π.μ.
	Θεία Λειτουργία Βασιλείου του Μεγάλου	10:00 π.μ.
Κυριακή, Ιαν. 7	ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΟΥ Όρθρος	8:45 π.μ.
	Θεία Λειτουργία	10:00 π.μ.
Τρίτη, Ιαν. 16	ΠΑΡΑΜΟΝΗ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ ΑΓ. ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ Μέγας Έσπερινός / Αρτοκλασία	6:00 μ.μ.
Τετάρτη, Ιαν. 17	ΕΟΡΤΗ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ Όρθρος	9:00 π.μ.
	Θεία Λειτουργία	10:00 π.μ.

JOIN US IN PRAYER VIA LIVE-STREAM: [SAINT-ANTHONY.ORG/LIVESTREAM](https://saint-anthonys.org/livestream) ~ [FACEBOOK.COM/STANTHONYSPASADENA](https://facebook.com/stanthonyspasadena) ~**[YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UCXSG4uFWmElsOEIjx96pCA](https://youtube.com/channel/UCXSG4uFWmElsOEIjx96pCA)**

The Nativity Gospel According To St. Matthew The Evangelist

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi came from the East to Jerusalem saying, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him." But when King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and so was all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and Scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet. And you, Bethlehem, of the land of Judah are by no means least among the princes of Judah; for from you shall come forth a leader who shall shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod summoned the Magi secretly, and carefully ascertained from them the time when the star had appeared to them. And sending them to Bethlehem he said, "Go and make careful inquiry concerning the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and worship him." Now they, having heard the king, went their way. And behold, the star they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over the place where the child was. And when they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly. And entering the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they worshipped him. And opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another way.

Apolytikion of Christmas

Your nativity, O Christ our God, has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world. For therein the worshippers of the stars were by a star instructed to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You as Orient from on high. Glory to You, O Lord.

Ἡ Γέννησίς σου, Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἀνέτειλε τῷ κόσμῳ, τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως: ἐν αὐτῇ γὰρ οἱ τοῖς ἄστροις λατρεύοντες, ὑπὸ ἀστέρος ἐδιδάσκοντο, σὲ προσκυνεῖν τὸν Ἥλιον τῆς δικαιοσύνης, καὶ σὲ γινώσκειν ἐξ ὕψους Ἀνατολήν. Κύριε δόξα σοι.

Kontakion

On this day the Virgin gives birth to the Super-essential. To the Unapproachable, earth is providing the grotto. Angels sing and with the shepherds offer up glory. Following a star the Magi are still proceeding. He was born for our salvation, a newborn Child the pre-eternal God.

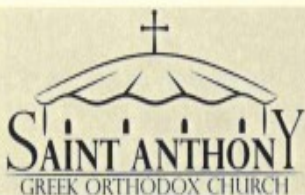
Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον, τὸν ὑπερούσιον τίκτει, καὶ ἡ γῆ τὸ Σπήλαιον, τῷ ἀπροσίτῳ προσάγει. Ἄγγελοι μετὰ Ποιμένων δοξολογοῦσι. Μάγοι δὲ μετὰ ἀστέρος ὁδοιποροῦσι. Δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγεννήθη, Παιδίον νέον, ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων Θεός.

CHURCH
should be the reason
you miss everything
else. Not everything
else the reason you
miss CHURCH.

Note: Please make every effort to arrive for services a little early. If you happen to arrive late, please observe the following moments in the Divine Liturgy when you **should not enter** the Nave but wait quietly in the Narthex. You may enter after these moments:

- The Priest censing
- The Small Entrance
- The Great Entrance
- Epistle Reading
- Gospel Reading
- The Homily
- Consecration of the Gifts
- The Lord's Prayer

Stewardship



2024 Stewardship Financial Commitment

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another,
as good stewards of God's grace." (1 Peter 4:10)*

2024

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME(S), PLEASE INCLUDE CHILDREN UNDER 18.

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PREFERRED PHONE

OTHER/SECOND PHONE

E-MAIL

SIGNATURE

DATE

[For office use only]

ST. ANTHONY GIVING LEVELS:**CONTRIBUTOR: \$499 & below**

\$9.60/week OR \$42/month & below

FRIEND: \$500 - \$999

\$9.60-\$19/week OR \$42-\$83/month

SUPPORTER: \$1,000 - \$1,999

\$19-\$38/week OR \$83-\$167/month

*** FAITHFUL: \$2,000 - \$3,999**

\$38-\$77/week OR \$167-\$333/month

*** DISCIPLE: \$4,000 - \$6,999**

\$77-\$135/week OR \$333-\$583/month

*** GUARDIAN: \$7,000 - \$9,999**

\$135-\$192/week OR \$583-\$833/month

*** ANGEL: \$10,000 - \$14,999**

\$192-\$288/week OR \$833-\$1,249/month

*** ARCHANGEL: \$15,000 and up**

\$288/week OR \$1,250/month & up

*Review your stewardship commitment prayerfully, consider what you offer to Christ's Church
in comparison to your monthly utility/ service payments.*

Please return your completed commitment card to church by January 31, 2024

Your card must be on file for you to be considered in 'Good Standing'

In response to God's blessings, I/we pledge a 2024 offering of:

My Total Commitment for 2024: \$_____

I will fulfill and pay my pledge: (CHECK ONE)

☐ Weekly at \$_____/week

☐ Monthly at \$_____/month ☐ Annually

Contact the Church office to set up easy recurring electronic payments
-OR- set up your own recurring giving at saint-anthonys.churchgiving.com

***To fully cover our operating expenses, our goal is to
have our average stewardship be \$2,000 per family or above**



Commitment of Time and Talents



Families should mark "H" for husband, "W" for wife, "C" for Children.

Council of Ministries

<input type="checkbox"/> Acolytes	<input type="checkbox"/> Kouvouklion	<input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Little Lambs	<input type="checkbox"/> Studies in the Faith
<input type="checkbox"/> Bookstore	<input type="checkbox"/> Myrrh Bearers	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday School
<input type="checkbox"/> GOYA Basketball	<input type="checkbox"/> OCF (Orthodox Christian	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Bible School
<input type="checkbox"/> GOYA/Jr. GOYA	<input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship)	<input type="checkbox"/> VIPs
<input type="checkbox"/> Greek Dance	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball Tournament
<input type="checkbox"/> Greek Language School	<input type="checkbox"/> St. John Chrysostom	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> JOY/HOPE	<input type="checkbox"/> Oratorical Festival	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Parish Events

<input type="checkbox"/> Palm Sunday Luncheon	<input type="checkbox"/> Resurrection Magiritsa	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Family Picnic
<input type="checkbox"/> Pasadena Golf Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Pasadena Greek Fest	<input type="checkbox"/> Saint Anthony Feast Day	

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Ministries



2023 PARISH COUNCIL

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Joseph Akrotirianakis | President |
| Pete Gallanis | Co-Vice President |
| Perry Vidalakis | Co-Vice President |
| Tashia Vagenas | Secretary |
| Christian Balas | Treasurer |
- Tony Christopoulos
Tom Grafos
Louie Kades
Pete Katsafados
Liam McCann
Eleni Mitropoulos
Jim Pappas
Dino Vagenas
Vincent Zarian
Nikole Zoumberakis

OFFICE STAFF

Alma Vorgias – Office Administrator



CUSTODIAL STAFF

Carlos Sosa



CHANTERS

Michael Kontaxis
Liam McCann

READERS

Nicholas Kokoris
Rebecca Russo



SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF

Sophia Syrengelas – Director

Little Lambs:
Teresa Argueta

PK, TK, & Kindergarten:
Irene Albeck & Larissa Maslen

Kindergarten, First & Second:
Sophia Syrengelas & Andrianna Lareau

Third, Fourth, & Fifth:
Mary Udria & Athena Serban

Middle School:
Polly Vagenas & Chris Syrengelas

High School:
Presuytera Aida Stratos

Teacher assistant and substitute:
Jenni Nassos

PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY**Executive Board****President**

Judith Din

1st Vice President

Jeanne Karaionnoglou

2nd Vice President

Helen Skandale and Lisa Xanthos

Corresponding Secretary

Mary Udria and Irene Albeck

Recording Secretary

Mary Dewar

Treasurer

Connie Becker

Assistant Treasurer

Maria Grover

Advisor

Maria Kypreos

Spiritual Advisor

Father Peter Stratos

Board of Directors**Beautification**

Maria Kokoris

Maria Hronas

Community Outreach

Fontaine Malisos

Liz Skandale

Fellowship

Tanya Christodoulelis

Maria Kypreos

Publicity

Christine Pappas

Scholarship

Presbytera Aida Statros and Irene Albeck

Social Media/Webmaster

Sophia Syrengelas

Sunshine and Visitation

Fontaine Malisos

Liz Skandale

Union Station

Irene Albeck

Operation Classroom

Nicolette Fuerst and Jennifer Webster

**ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES****Acolytes**

Pres Aida Stratos

Bible Study

Fr. Peter Stratos

Bookstore

Noah Johnson

Golf Tournament

Jimmy Christos

GOYAAnthia Drulias Lucas
Maria Katsas Gittings
Polly Vagenas**GOYA Basketball**

Pana Gelt

GOYA VolleyballAnthia Lucas
Pana Gelt**Greek Dance Groups**

Nikole Zoumberakis

Greek Festival

Christian Balas

Greek Language

Anastasia McClain

JOY/HOPE

Irene Albeck

Myrrh Bearers

Irene Albeck

Oratorical Festival

Pres Aida Stratos

Prayer Shawls

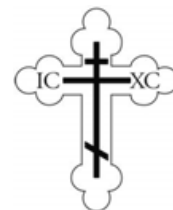
Maria Kypreos

Psalter Group

Fr. Peter Stratos

Vacation Bible SchoolSophia Syrengelas
Mary Udria**VIPs**

Irene Albeck



Parish Council

Members of the Community:

Καλά Χριστούγεννα!

The Christmas season is upon us and with it, another year is drawing to a close. As I mentioned in my remarks during the recent General Assembly, it has been a pleasure to serve as Parish Council President the past four years (2020-2023). This new year will bring with it a new leader for our board.

General Assembly

Thank you to all who attended the General Assembly on November 19. We held nominations for Parish Council and other community offices, heard a report from our Treasurer Christian Balas, and approved the 2024 budget.

Mortgage Loan

The mortgage loan has been secured by 3791 Locksley (corner of Locksley Dr. and Michigan Blvd.). As discussed during the General Assembly, the community's mortgage loan secured by the property located at 3791 Locksley Drive is due December 27, 2023. The current loan balance is \$356,485.75. The monthly payment is \$3600 with a variable rate of 8%. Mortgage interest rates are highly unfavorable at this time. At the November meeting, the Parish Council discussed at length whether to refinance the loan or to pay it off in part and refinance the remainder. Ultimately, the Parish Council determined that the community would pay off a minimum of \$125,000, plus whatever amount could be raised from the parish. If you are able to contribute, please contact me, Pete Gallanis, Perry Vidalakis, or Father Peter. We have raised approximately \$28,000 through the generous donations of two parish families. All gifts are of course tax-deductible.

Upcoming Parish Council Elections

Parish Council elections will be this Sunday, **December 3**. You will receive a sample ballot before the election. Please come and cast your vote.

Successful Festival

The financial results from the 2023 festival showed a profit of approximately \$98,000 in spite of the rain and only a two-day festival. Many thanks to all who contributed to a successful festival. The 2024 festival will be a three-day festival and is scheduled for **September 20-22**.

Facilities Repairs

In the near future, we will need to replace the roof of the church building. The Parish Council is presently obtaining bids for the new roof and is also obtaining bids for replacing the carpet in the Trinity Ballroom.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Joe Akrotirianakis



Our Sunday School Ministry continues to thrive and serve as an opportunity for our youth to come together and learn about their Orthodox faith. We have been busy learning about the Holy Sacraments of the Orthodox Church, Holy Scripture, stories from the Bible, and prayer through discussion, activities, crafts, and songs. It's always a pleasure for us teachers to see our children in our classrooms and we are grateful for each opportunity we get to spend with them. Thank you for supporting our program by bringing your children and grandchildren to Divine Liturgy and to Sunday School!

To reinforce their lesson on the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Athena and Mary made Prosphoron with their class, out of salt dough. This was such a fun and hands-on activity that brought the concept to life for the students. Because it was so fun, Sophia & Andrianna's class decided to join Chris and Polly's class to make salt dough Prosphoron as well! It was really neat to see our middle school students buddy up with younger students to work on the project together. These are the fun and meaningful memories that make our program so special for our students.

Another memorable class session this past month was when we had weddings in our classrooms! Polly and Chris taught their middle school class about the Orthodox Sacrament of Holy Matrimony with a bride and groom, Alexis and John. In Sophia and Andrianna's class, "Father" Vasili officiated at Sia V. and Myles' wedding with their Koumbari, Sia M. and Zachary. This was definitely a Sunday School lesson that we will always remember! Oh- and we are saving the date for a wedding in Noula and Mary's class on Sunday, December 3rd! :)

This month, I'd like to highlight the littlest members of our ministry..

Our Little Lambs!

Little Lambs, taught by Mrs. Teresa Argueta, provides a fun, interactive, and creative environment for babies, toddlers, and preschool-aged children to come together and learn about God and our church. This class is especially important due to the fact that it is the very first interaction that young children have in a ministry at St. Anthony. Little Lambs opens the door for faith, fellowship, and fun for both children and parents/ caregivers alike.

Little Lambs is formerly known as Moms-n-Tots, which started at St. Anthony over 25 years ago. We are ever so grateful to Teresa for faithfully and enthusiastically leading this class. She is an amazing educator by profession and a lifelong member of our community who brings to class each week both her expertise in working with children as well as her passion for our church.

Under Teresa's guidance, our Little Lambs have been reading Bible stories about being thankful (specifically about Jonah and Noah) with crafts that her students take home as a reminder of the lesson. They have also been practicing how to receive communion as well as learning how to cross themselves, both very special and important practices in our Orthodox faith.

The age range for this class is for all babies, toddlers, and children who do not turn four years of age until after December 31st, 2023. Those who turn four years of age prior to this date can join Mrs. Albeck and Mrs. Larissa's PK/TK/K class.

Housekeeping Reminders:

-Please fill out a registration form for your student(s) if you have not yet done so. Your child's teacher can give you a copy of the form. We would like to make sure that we have everyone's information for communication and safety purposes.

-Class begins after Holy Communion and ends between 11:45 and 12:00. For the safety of our students, please do not enter the Parish Center or come to the classrooms prior to Holy Communion, as there is no supervision at this time.

-Parents are welcome to come upstairs to pick up their child/children upon dismissal, otherwise students grade 3 and older will be excused on their own and those in grade 2 and younger will be escorted to the hall by their teacher.

-For safety purposes, children should not be upstairs or in the classrooms unsupervised at any time.

We appreciate the cooperation of parents, grandparents, and caregivers as we work together as a community to ensure the safety of our children.

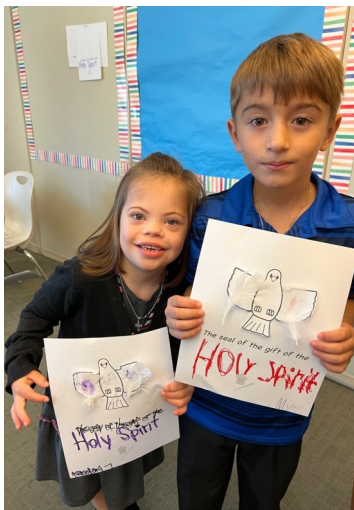
Christmas Sing-Along: Sunday, December 17th

Please join us in the Parish Center for our second annual Sunday School Christmas Sing Along! Each class will sing a special Christmas song and we will then sing a couple of songs together as a community. Our students are excited to share in this festive experience as we celebrate the season of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For more information regarding our Sunday School Fellowship Ministry, please contact Sophia Syrengelas: sundayschool@saint-anthonys.org

Thank you, Sophia Syrengelas







Youth & Young Adults



GOYA NEWS

THEME

Our theme this year is mazi (μαζί)! The GOYAns came up with their sweatshirt design and we will be ordering them soon!

FRIENDGIVING

Friendsgiving was a hit this year! Thank you to all those who participated, brought way too much food and shared in some quality GOYA time!



ST. ANTHONY PHILOPTOCHOS AND GOYA COMMUNITY OUTREACH

St. Anthony Philoptochos and GOYA will be partnering together to support Pasadena City College Lancer Pantry for the Thanksgiving Holiday. PCC Lancer Pantry supports students and their families who have food insecurity. We will be collecting canned food and non-perishable food items. Suggested food items: stuffing, collard greens, canned yams, sweet potatoes, canned cranberries, vegetables, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, gravy, broth, spam etc. You can still bring items on Sunday, Dec. 3rd. We will also have a collection box at the church office so you can drop off donations during the week.

Any questions please contact:

Nicolette Fuerst at nicolette.fuerst@gmail.com

Maria Katsas maria@caltech.edu.

IV ON-THE-GO

We are still accepting sign ups for IV on the go! Tell your friends!

IV On-the-Go is booked at St. Anthony for Dec. 8th and 9th! Lock in the night of Dec. 8th! It gives GOYAns a taste of Ionian Village without having to travel to Greece! The goal of every IV On-the-Go is to take the unlikely combination of creative energy, the exploration of Orthodox faith, and a love of Greece that is so uniquely Ionian Village and bring it to OUR youth to enjoy.

Come experience a fun, unique and interactive lock-in retreat run by members of the Ionian Village Staff. Just like the camp in Greece, participants encounter our Orthodox faith in an unforgettable, up-close and personal way.

Space is limited to 50 boys and 50 girls. First come-first served. Meals will be provided and this is a free event! Sign up using the QR code on the flyer or: <https://tinyurl.com/nrkfk3sb>



PASADENA, CA

ST. ANTHONY

Friday, December 8 at 6:00 pm to
Saturday, December 9 at 4:00 pm
SIGN UP HERE:



SCAN ME

For questions, please contact:
goya@saint-anthonys.org



Leadership 100



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

We would like to go Christmas caroling again this year. If any GOYA parent would like to graciously open up their home for the gathering place before and after, please email us at goya@saint-anthonys.org
Let us know which dates are best for you during Christmas break!

INSTAGRAM

Check out our new Instagram account at: @stanthonysgoya

NEXT MEETING

December 3rd

12:15pm

high school classroom

GOBL

Greek Orthodox Basketball League (GOBL) is celebrating its 50th year!
See logo design contest flyer on the next page!

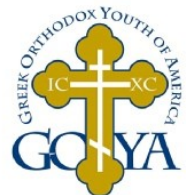
NEW MEMBERS

To sign up your child for GOYA, please hit the QR code below.

Any questions, please email us at: goya@saint-anthonys.org



GOYA Sign up



GOBL **50th** Anniversary logo contest

The Greek Orthodox Basketball League is turning 50 in 2024! To commemorate this occasion, the GOBL is hosting a logo design contest. This is open to all current Goyans ages 12-19. No purchase necessary!

Designs should include:

- GOBL
- 50th Anniversary
- 1974-2024
- A cross (preferably Greek)
- A basketball

Please send submissions to adljsl02@yahoo.com. Acceptable formats are .jpg or .png - please don't submit any other formats. Must be in black & white. When submitting, please include the designers full name, birthday, & any ministries they are involved with. Deadline to submit designs is December 10th, 2023.

1 winner & 2 runner ups will be selected by the GOBL board. They will each receive a prize during the basketball finals (April 2024).



Philoptochos

Good Works

Operation Classroom Community Outreach

Thank you to everyone for your food donations to the Lancer Food Pantry at Pasadena City College. Your Thanksgiving donations were a blessing in helping feed college students facing food insecurity. Thank you!

Union Station Homeless Service (USHS)

Philoptochos is continuing the monthly commitment to USHS by preparing a hardy, nutritious dinner made possible through the generosity of our donors. USHS has requested packaged dessert (cookies), single serve beverages (10 oz.), and single serve bottles of milk. You may continue to volunteer by donating towards the purchase of individual packaged items.

The estimated costs are: Chicken - \$75, Rolls - \$15, Dessert - \$17, and Beverages - \$40.

We are also in need of donations to help offset our costs of large aluminum pans with lids.

We invite you to help us feed the needy by making a contribution towards this work.

Thank you to all our donors for their support.

Please make checks out to: *Philoptochos of Saint Anthony.*

Please write USHS on the memo line.

Thank you for being a part of the solution to homelessness.

For further information, please contact:

Irene Albeck mcmg2a@aol.com

Vangie Dupas vangiedupas@sbcglobal.net

Christina Kades christinekades@gmail.com

***"You shall open wide your hand to your brother,
to the needy and to the poor, in your land."***

Deuteronomy 15:11



Christmas for the Kids In Conjunction with Friends-In-Deed

Once again, Philoptochos and the St. Anthony community will help Friends In Deed to provide Christmas presents for some of Pasadena's most vulnerable children. In some cases these gifts will be the only presents they will receive this Christmas.

Participation in this program is very easy. We will be set up in front of the hall on Sunday, November 26. Visit the table with the Christmas tree and select a tag with a child's name, age and potential gift ideas. The listed items are suggestions, the number of gifts you would like to donate is up to you. Gifts will be collected at church on Sundays prior to Monday, December 11. Please, make sure all gifts are unwrapped. If giving clothes or shoes, please include the gift receipt, in case the item needs to be exchanged. When giving a gift card, please include the amount somewhere on the card. Should you have any questions please contact Judith Din jinda@charter.net (626) 676-1240 (cell) OR Liz Skandale lizie22@aol.com (626) 695-3423 (cell)

Friends-In-Deed moto:

"Doing together what we cannot do alone"
... and we couldn't do it without you !

Community Happenings

St. Anthony's Coffee Hour is coordinated by St. Anthony Philoptochos

Host a Coffee Hour to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, name-day, graduation, Loved One, or for any reason. A sign-up on the poster in the foyer of the Parish Community Center or contact Tanya Christodoulelis at (626) 379-2304. Thank you for your support.

Please contact the Church office if you need to schedule a Memorial and if you wish to host the Social Hour on that Sunday.

Please Note: The Money collected in the Coffee Hour Basket is used to purchase items for the church, such as the chanter stands and reliquary. Please remember to contribute to the basket at Coffee Hour .

Annual Christmas Benefit 2023

The 54th Annual Benefit Luncheon, "**Christmas in Toyland**", will be held on Saturday, **December 2** at The Langham Huntington Hotel in Pasadena. This year's luncheon will include a fashion show, holiday entertainment, Christmas Boutique, Santa's Kitchen, and gift vendors. Doors open early at 10:00 AM, and the luncheon will start at 11:30 AM. Proceeds will benefit **Forever Kids' Case for Character program**. This program provides a suitcase and support for children entering the foster care system. Should you have any questions, please contact Nicole Schulman (626) 497-5368.

Santa's Kitchen

Don't forget to pick up your **Santa's Kitchen Prepaid Orders** of Greek pastries and holiday treats on **Sunday, December 3** from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM.

We are still taking orders for **Vasilopita** until Friday evening, December 8th. All Vasilopita orders will be ready for pick up on **December 17** from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM.

Place your orders for vasilopita at <https://stanthonybenefit.square.site>

It's back!

*Saint Anthony Philoptochos'
5th soup cook-off*

SOUPER SUNDAY

*To benefit our neighbors
the Pasadena Bad Weather Shelter*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024
following Divine Liturgy

For more information:

<https://tinyurl.com/SouperSunday2024>

SouperSundayPasadena@gmail.com

For more information, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/soupersunday2024>

Upcoming Meetings

Next Board Meeting – Thursday, **December 7**, at 7:00 PM.

General Meeting – Philoptochos Christmas Party Wednesday, **December 13** at 6:30pm.

If you have any questions or wish to make a reservation by December 8th, please call Jeanne Karaioannoglou: 626-437-6078 (cell).



National Events

19th Biennial Children's Medical Fund Luncheon

The luncheon was held on Saturday, November 11 at the Hilton Americas in Houston, Texas. The Panagia Chapter was represented by Lisa Xanthos, Judie Christopoulos, Maria Kypreos, Mary Dewar, and Christine Pappas.

The Metropolis of Denver hosted an extraordinary event. Over \$348,738 in grants, offering vital resources for various organizations working to improve the lives of children, were distributed during this year's luncheon. Additionally, we witnessed an impressive fundraising achievement, with a total of over \$550K raised for this ministry.

To read more about this event, go to:

<https://www.goarch.org/-/19th-biennial-philoptochos-children-s-medical-fund-luncheon-celebrates-unprecedented-success-in-philanthropy-for-children-s-health>



Photo: (left to right)

*Judie Christopoulos, Mary Dewar, Christine Pappas,
Presvytera Danae Pappas Magoulas (Annunciation Cathedral Houston),
Lisa Xanthos, Maria Kypreos, and Jimmy Kypreos*



COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP



Host a Coffee Hour and celebrate a Birthday, Anniversary, Name Day, Graduation, Loved One, as a Family Activity or for any reason!

Every Sunday following the Divine Liturgy, coffee hour in the Parish Hall provides an opportunity to visit with fellow parishioners and to greet new Parish members. By offering to host a Coffee Hour Fellowship, you are assisting in providing a delicious snack while we spend time with our church family.

Hosting is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. **Sign-up on the poster located in the Parish Hall or Church Office.** To be included in the bulletin, notify the Church Office by the Wednesday prior to the date chosen at 626.449.6943 or by email office@saint-anthonys.org

For Memorials, you must notify the Church Office by the Wednesday prior to the date chosen at 626.449.6943 or by email office@saint-anthonys.org

2. **Bring snacks for 75 adults and kids** – Suggestions include: assorted Bagels, Muffins, Cakes, Cookies, Mini Deli Sandwiches, Cheese & Crackers, Olives, Dolmades, Hummus, Tzatziki, Pita, Raw Vegetables, Fruit, Salads, Oatmeal or anything you prefer
3. **Bring food items plated on serving trays/bowls and ready to serve by 10:30am on your chosen day.** (Serving tables and coffee/water station are set up by 10:00am)

That's it! Your fellow parishioners will be grateful for the snack and fellowship.

Philoptochos provides the coffee, sugar, creamer, paper plates, plastic utensils and napkins or you may choose to donate these items to help offset the cost.

For questions, please call or email Tanya Christodoulelis at 626.379.2304 or tanyachristos@yahoo.com.

All cash donations made during Coffee Hour go toward the Church Altar Fund to provide the items needed throughout the year for the altar.

There is nothing like having a Thanksgiving feast to bring out a GREAT crowd at our VIP meeting. On Tuesday, November 14th, 50 individuals, including 7 guests from St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Downey, got together in the Community Center for our regular meeting. President Irene Albeck called the meeting to order at 10:45 AM and an opening prayer was offered by Staurula Kiotas.

After the various committee reports were given, a hearty rendition of "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" was sung by all to the November celebrants including Thean Grafos, Maria Hronas, Jim Hronas, Maria Kokoris and Aleka Pantazis.

Judie Christopoulos offered remarks on activity and excursion possibilities including a showing of the Greek film "George" at Saint Anthony and a picnic lunch and socialization opportunity to be held on A Sunday after church at Arlington Gardens in Pasadena.

In preparation for our outing to the Haugh Performing Arts Center in Glendora to attend a **December 10th** Holiday Program featuring the Citrus Singers, sign-ups were taken and monies were collected to secure tickets.

Additionally, monies and sign-ups were collected in anticipation of our December Breakfast Meeting to be held on Tuesday, **December 12th** at LeRoy's Restaurant in Monrovia.

It was announced that Julie and Dino Balas offered to open their home in Glendora for a VIPs holiday get-together to be held on Thursday, **December 14th** at 11:00 AM.

As part of our community outreach, a check was to be delivered to the Foothill Unity Center in Monrovia for the purchase of turkeys for needy families.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, all attendees were invited to enjoy a delicious luncheon featuring roast turkey and a vast assortment of side dishes provided by our members. Special thanks go to **Anthia Lucas** who came early to see that the turkeys were in the oven on time, and **John Vagenas** who volunteered to expertly carve those birds. IT TAKES A VILLAGE to make things go smoothly.

THE PICTURES ON THE NEXT PAGE SHOW THAT A WONDERFUL TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

THE VIPs WISH THE ENTIRE SAINT ANTHONY FAMILY A BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON AND THE BEST FOR ALL OF US IN THE NEW YEAR 2024!

Jim Hronas

VIP Communications



Community News & more...

Bowling League



After 11 weeks of strong competition a lots of good fellowship and fun, the St. Anthony Bowling league concluded its Fall 2023 Season. This season we were blessed with 24 bowlers comprising 8 teams.

Results for this season:

1 st Place 27 wins:	Lee Anton, Andrea Lappas, Rick Nassif
2 nd Place 24 wins:	Maria Conley, Syrus Mobayen, Parviz Mobayen
3 rd Place 22 wins:	Alice Jacquez, Anthia Lucas, Vincent Lappas
4 th Place 21 wins:	Cleo Kades, Elene Kalivas, Nick Paziouros
5 th Place 20 wins:	Joyce Nichols, Chris Conley, Ted Dupas
6 th Place 18 wins tie:	Nicoleta Masouris, Mihai Serban, Vlasi Masouris
6 th Place 18 wins tie:	Chrissa Mobayen, Peter Bissias, Kristen MacGregor
8 th Place 9 wins:	Jim Nichols, Sophia Angelos, Jim Horaites

Season High Scores were as follows:

Women's High Game Scratch:	Andrea Lappas	180
Women's High Series Scratch:	Anthia Lucas	433
Women's High Handicap Game:	Joyce Nichols	236
Women's High Handicap Series:	Maria Conley	689
Men's High Game Scratch:	Mihai Serban	218
Men's High Series Scratch:	Vlasi Masouris	562
Men's High Handicap Game:	Lee Anton	249
Men's High Handicap Series:	Nick Paziouros	671

Our 2024 Winter/Spring bowling Season will run for 12 weeks—**Thursday, January 18 thru Thursday, April 4**. We are encouraging all adults 18 and older to please reach out, if you would like a weekly 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, to 2 hours of fun and fellowship. We would love to have you.

For weekly bowlers who commit to the season, the fee is \$20.00 per week which includes, shoe rental, bowling alley line fees, and cash prize fund. Committed bowlers are responsible to pay each week even when absent!

The St. Anthony League bowls at **Bowlero Lanes in Pasadena** in the Hastings Ranch Center at Foothill and Rosemead Blvds.

Special thanks to all our teams, wishing you're a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Looking forward to seeing you all and any new bowlers after the new year.

Contact Anthia Lucas for additional information:

(626) 274-6133

ADLJSL02@yahoo.com



The poster features a light blue background with a subtle pattern of white snowflakes. At the top left is the logo of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, which consists of a cross with the letters 'A', 'R', 'C', 'H' and 'D', 'I', 'O', 'C', 'E' in the quadrants, surrounded by a circular border with the text 'ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO'. The main title 'FAMILY WINTER CAMP' is centered, with 'FAMILY' in a serif font and 'WINTER CAMP' in a large, stylized, rounded font. Below the title, the activities are listed: 'Snow Play | Campfires | Family Prayer | Monastery Visits | Arts & Crafts | Hikes & more!'. The dates 'December 27-30, 2023' and the location 'ST. NICHOLAS RANCH & RETREAT CENTER, DUNLAP, CALIFORNIA' are prominently displayed. At the bottom, there is a dark blue silhouette of a mountain range with a small red barn and evergreen trees on the right. The bottom left corner features the same Archdiocese of San Francisco logo. The bottom center has the text 'Registration Coming Soon' and the website 'www.gosfyouth.org'. The bottom right corner has a white box with the text 'YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES'.

ARCHDIOCESE OF
SAN FRANCISCO

FAMILY WINTER CAMP

Snow Play | Campfires | Family Prayer
Monastery Visits | Arts & Crafts | Hikes & more!

December 27-30, 2023

ST. NICHOLAS RANCH & RETREAT CENTER
DUNLAP, CALIFORNIA



ARCHDIOCESE OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Registration Coming Soon
www.gosfyouth.org

YOUTH &
YOUNG ADULT
MINISTRIES

Saint Sophia Camp Presents:

From December 27th- 30th

Winter Camp

**Cost per camper:
\$350, pay by check
\$365, pay online**

**Join us for an exclusive action-packed
winter extravaganza, featuring all
your favorite camp activities and
more!**



**Camp Saint Nicholas Christian
Orthodox Camp
11770 Frontier Road
Frazier Park, California, 93225**

**Register on our website:
www.saintsophiacamp.org**

METROPOLIS YOUNG ADULT WINTER RETREAT



METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO

LAKE TAHOE
MLK WEEKEND

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG

The Voice of Saint Anthony

January 2023

Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church

Reverend Father Peter Stratos
778 S. Rosemead Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91107
(626) 449-6943 Office (626) 449-6974 FAX
www.saint-anthonys.org

St. Basil	
Circumcision of Christ	Jan 1
Holy Epiphany	Jan 6
Synaxis - John the Baptist	Jan 7
St. Anthony the Great	Jan 17
Athanasios & Cyril	Jan 18
Euthymios the Great	Jan 20
Gregory the Theologian	Jan 25
Synaxis of Three Hierarchs	Jan 30

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Deadline for February Newsletter is Wednesday, 25 January
Please send to: newsletter_church@aol.com

*If you would like the monthly newsletter mailed to your home
each month, please contact the Church office.*

626.449.6943

Monthly Lesson from Father Stavros Akrotirianakis

The “**Nativity Story**” is amazing for many reasons. The first and most obvious is that it is the Incarnation of the Son of God in the flesh. The Creator became part of His own creation. The second, and perhaps less obvious is that the story involves a “cast” of unlikely characters who would welcome the Lord into the world. The Magi were astrologers, not conquering kings as they are often portrayed. The shepherds were so low on the social scale that they weren’t even counted in the census in Bethlehem. Joseph was an older man, who had been widowed and now was betrothed to Mary. And Mary was a teenager, probably 14-15 years old, and an orphan. And yet, these were the people who God chose to help bring His Son into the world.

Each of us has had the experience of asking ourselves “Why me?” and usually it involves something bad. All the people in the Nativity story probably asked themselves the same thing, “Why me?” but for good reasons.

God’s motivation in creating the world and the human beings who inhabit it is **love**. God is love, so God’s motivation in everything ultimately leads back to love. God’s purpose in creating us is to share in His love. We often speak of how the purpose of life is to glorify God, which, if you think about it, might make us think that we are slaves or servants of God. The purpose of life is to share in God’s love, and while we are to serve God, we are not His slaves, nor is He our cruel master. We are His children, and He is our Father. The purpose of this life is to share in God’s love on a “trial basis”, if you will. God gives each of us a span of life on earth and offers us an opportunity to share in His love. We share it in two ways—by sharing it directly with Him (loving God) and by sharing it with others (loving our neighbor, which means both serving our neighbor and sharing the Gospel with our neighbor). At the end of life, God will judge the totality of our lives at His awesome judgment seat and decide whether we are worthy to share in His love forever.

Before the Fall, humanity shared Paradise with God, and the human beings lived in a permanent and blissful state of love. The Fall severed that state of bliss and perfection. Sin entered the world because of a choice that we made, not a choice that God made. Yes, it was a choice that He allowed because He gave us the gift of free will. When sin entered the world, the state of perfect love with God was distorted. And Paradise was destroyed because it was now tainted with sin, with action that didn’t reflect the perfect love of God. So, God expelled man from Paradise, and we now live a life in a fallen and imperfect world where we can still experience God’s love, but it is experienced in a state of constant tension and temptation. Hopefully, we’ve all each had a moment where we’ve experienced God’s perfect love. I know I have. But I also have moments where I turn my back on God and His love—that’s when we sin and fall prey to temptation.

God does not want us to live like this. He wants to restore that relationship that we once had with Him, in Paradise. He wants us to live in that permanent and blissful state of perfection that humanity once enjoyed. But how to bridge that gap?

Remember that before Christ, there was no expectation of heaven. To the contrary, there was an understanding that when life on earth ended, everyone went to Hades, a place where God was absent. This was confirmed, and commanded by God, in Genesis 3, where God speaks to Adam and Eve saying, *“In the seat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”* (Genesis 3:19)

God didn’t immediately provide a path back after the Fall. Humanity was too new to its state of sin to fully comprehend repentance and return. We read in the New Testament how the Incarnation happened in the “fulness of time.” In Ephesians 1:9-10, St. Paul writes *“For He has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.”* The only way to right the Fall was for God to send His Son into the world as a “new Adam,” to show humanity how to live in the face of temptation and how to stay loyal to God and abide in God’s love in a world filled with sinful enticements. This is why Christ experienced all kinds of temptations, even the temptation to make a deal to avoid death, so that He could pay our debt of sin, which is death, and could show us that it is possible to stay faithful to God, which is the path one needs to follow to get back to Paradise.

Galatians 4:4-5 reads: *"But when the time had fully come, God sent for His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."* God chose a time at which the Incarnation would happen. But He also made a logical plan for how this would happen. Jesus didn't suddenly appear, no one does that. Everyone has a mother, a hometown, a family. In God's plan, Jesus would have all these things. First, God needed a woman to entrust to carry Christ and to be His mother. He chose a virgin named Mary, who was visited by an angel who made the biggest and grandest request ever, for Mary to carry in her womb, the Son of God, and that her conception would be by the Holy Spirit. The Archangel Gabriel, who delivered the message, prefaced it with the words *"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."* (Luke 1:30)

The Virgin Mary was born to elderly parents, Joachim and Anna. They were righteous people, who stayed close to God, even though they did not have children. Back in Biblical times, to not have children was a sign that one did not have the favor of God. This is not our understanding now. Joachim and Anna lived very faithful lives, but under the "dark cloud" of not having a child of their own. They were told by God that they would bear a child, and in their very old age, they conceived the Virgin Mary. When she was three years old, she was taken to the temple and left there to be raised by the priests of the temple. Shortly thereafter, both Joachim and Anna passed away. They had fulfilled their role, giving birth to the one who would give birth to the Christ. As an aside, one probably looks at the life of Joachim and Anna as if they got the short end of the stick, so to speak. Their faithfulness had been rewarded with a child they only enjoyed for three years. And yet, when we look at the Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Church, in the dismissal prayer, they are two of the five people that are always mentioned—The Lord, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist and *"the holy and righteous ancestors of the Lord Joachim and Anna."* This is how important, in the eyes of God and of the Church, was the role that Joachim and Anna played in the story of salvation. Imagine the trust that they had!

At age fourteen, the Virgin Mary emerged from the Temple where she had lived and was educated for over ten years. She had no parents by this time. Immediately, she was betrothed to an older man named Joseph. Many marriages two thousand years ago were arranged. A man and woman were brought together and betrothed. Then they "dated" for a year and then the marriage was consummated, in both spiritual terms with a formal prayer and in sexual terms. Sex before marriage and children outside of marriage would have been unacceptable, unlike today where we practically expect it. So when Mary was told by the angel that she would bear a child, by the Holy Spirit, imagine the thoughts that would have been running through her head: How will I explain this to Joseph, that I'm pregnant with a child and it's not his? Will he still marry me? How will I explain this to family and friends, that I am pregnant and not married? How will I explain how I spent ten-plus years being raised in the temple and having left the temple, in short order I have done something that goes against the commandments of God? How will I ever show myself in the temple again? What will this do to Joseph's reputation? LOTS of questions must have gone through her head.

As the angel gave her the message from God, the overwhelming response was not one of fear or doubt or confusion or even inadequacy at the request. It was a yes. However, it was not only a yes to the angel and his request, it was a yes to trust in God, to abide in His love, and to sacrifice everything for Him—her future, her reputation, whatever she had to lose, she was willing to lose in order to serve and glorify God.

Mary's response in Luke 1:46-48 is chanted in almost every Orthros service in the Orthodox Church:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

Rather than fearing the Lord, Mary's yes was one of purpose, humility and joy. There was humility in recognizing her "low estate" when compared to the magnificence of the Lord. There was humility in saying that her soul would magnify the Lord, not her own accomplishment of carrying Christ. There was joy, as she said her spirit would rejoice in God. And there was a sense of purpose.

The “*henceforth all generations will call me blessed*” was not an arrogant, “look at me, I’ve made it to the hall of fame of human beings who will be remembered forever.” Rather it was an acknowledgement of a holy and humanity-changing responsibility that she knew would affect every human being to come after her.

This is why we might say that her answer to God’s call and her trust in the unknown was the greatest YES ever to be offered. Her yes changed the course of humanity. None of us will ever be called to this level of responsibility. However, we will be presented with opportunities to change our corner of the world. We will be presented with opportunities to magnify the Lord, and at the same time we will have temptations to sin against Him. We will have opportunities to affect the generations that come after us. If we raise our children poorly, then they will raise their children poorly, and a vicious cycle will ensue.

It takes great trust to listen for the call of the Lord and even greater trust to answer it. When we say “Trust like Mary,” we are talking about listening to God’s call and answering it. We are talking about trusting in God even if that call seems difficult or even impossible. We are talking about trusting God and playing the role HE has called us to, which may or may not be a role we would have chosen for ourselves. Imagine how different the world would be if Mary had said “no.” We know how it is affected because she said “yes.”

Imagine how the world can be changed for the better if we listen for and follow God’s call for our own lives, if we seek to magnify the Lord as Mary did.



Saints & Feasts

Saint Barbara

4 December

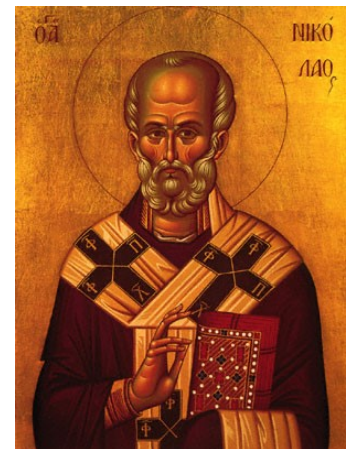
Saint Barbara was from Heliopolis of Phoenicia and lived during the reign of Maximian. She was the daughter of a certain idolater named Dioscorus. When Barbara came of age, she was enlightened in her pure heart and secretly believed in the Holy Trinity. About this time Dioscorus began building a bath-house; before it was finished he was required to go away to attend to certain matters and in his absence Barbara directed the workmen to build a third window in addition to the two her Father had commanded. She also inscribed the sign of the Cross with her finger upon the marble of the bath-house, leaving the saving sign cut as deeply into the marble as if it had been done with an iron tool. (When the Synaxarion of Saint Barbara was written, the marble of the bath-house and the cross inscribed by Saint Barbara were still preserved and many healings were worked there.) When Dioscorus returned, he asked why the third window had been added; Barbara began to declare to him the mystery of the Trinity. Because she refused to renounce her faith, Dioscorus tortured Barbara inhumanely and after subjecting her to many sufferings he beheaded her with his own hands, in the year 290.



Saint Nicholas

6 December

This Saint lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330. As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of 318 and in 325 at Nicaea; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity as to what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night, our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, *The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ...* was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travelers and of sea-farers in particular. He is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.



The Conception of the Holy Theotokos

9 December

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, since Saint Anna, the Ancestor of God, was barren, she and her husband Joachim remained without children until old age. Therefore, sorrowing over their childlessness, they besought God with a promise that, if He were to grant them the fruit of the womb, they would offer their offspring to Him as a gift. And God, hearkening to their supplication, informed them through an Angel concerning the birth of the Virgin. And thus, through God's promise, Anna conceived according to the laws of nature, and was deemed worthy to become the mother of the Mother of our Lord .



Saint Spyridon

12 December

Spyridon, the God-bearing Father of the Church, the great defender of Corfu and the boast of all the Orthodox, had Cyprus as his homeland. He was simple in manner and humble of heart, and was a shepherd of sheep. When he was joined to a wife, he begat of her a daughter whom they named Irene. After his wife's departure from this life, he was appointed Bishop of Trimythus and thus became also a shepherd of rational sheep. When the First Ecumenical Council was assembled in Nicaea, he also was present and by means of his most simple words stopped the mouths of the Arians who were wise in their own conceit. By the divine grace which dwelt in him, he wrought such great wonders that he received the surname "Wonderworker." So it is that, having tended his flock piously and in a manner pleasing to God, he reposed in the Lord in the year 350, leaving his country his sacred relics as a consolation and source of healing for the faithful.

About the middle of the seventh century, because of the incursions made by the barbarians at that time, his sacred relics were taken to Constantinople, where they remained, being honored by the emperors themselves. But before the fall of Constantinople, which took place on May 29, 1453, a certain priest named George Kalokhairetes, the parish priest of the church where the Saint's sacred relics, as well as those of Saint Theodora the Empress, were kept, took them away due to the impending peril. Travelling by way of Serbia, he came as far as Arta in Epirus, a region in Western Greece opposite to the isle of Corfu. From there, while the misfortunes of the Christian people were increasing with every day, he passed over to Corfu in the year 1460. The relics of Saint Theodora were given to the people of Corfu but those of Saint Spyridon remain, according to the rights of inheritance, the most precious treasure of the priest's own descendants and they continue to be a staff for the faithful in Orthodoxy and a supernatural wonder for those who behold him; for even after the passage of 1,500 years, they have remained incorrupt, and even the flexibility of his flesh has been preserved. Truly wondrous is God in His Saints!



Prophet Daniel

17 December

The Prophet Daniel and the Three Children were all descended from the royal tribe of Judah. In the year 599 before Christ, in the reign of Joachim, these righteous children were led away as captives into Babylon together with the other Jews by Nabuchodonosor. He singled them out from among the other captives to serve him, and renamed them thus: Daniel was named Baltazar; Ananias was named Sedrach; Misail was named Misach; and Azarias was named Abednago. They were reared in the royal court and taught the wisdom of the Chaldeans; after the passage of three years, they surpassed all the Chaldean sages (Daniel 1).

Thereafter, Daniel, being still a lad, interpreted a mysterious image seen by Nabuchodonosor in a dream. It was an image that was composed of different metals, but was shattered and ground to dust by a certain stone which had been hewn out of a mountain without the hand of man. This vision clearly portrayed through the mountain the height of the Virgin's holiness and the power of the Holy Spirit which overshadowed her. Through the image of the Stone, Christ was portrayed, Who was seedlessly born of her, and Who by His coming as the God-man would shatter and destroy all the kingdoms of the world, which were portrayed through the image; and He would raise them who believe in Him, into His Heavenly Kingdom, which is eternal and everlasting., thereupon, signifying the prophecy.



Daniel (whose name means "God is judge") was called "man of desires" by the Angels that appeared, because he courageously disdained every desire of the body, even the very bread that is necessary for nourishment. He also received this name because, in his longing for the freedom of those of his tribe and his desire to know their future condition, he ceased not supplicating God, fasting and bending the knee three times a day. Because of this prayer, he was cast into the den of lions, after he had been accused by his enemies as a transgressor of the decree issued through the proclamation of the king, that no one should worship or ask for anything from God or from men for thirty days, but only from the king. But having stopped the mouths of the lions by divine might and appearing among them as though he were a shepherd of sheep, Daniel showed the impious, the might of godliness.

As for the Three Children, Ananias ("Yah is gracious"), Misail ("Who is what God is?") and Azarias ("Yah is keeper").. since they refused to offer adoration to Nabuchodonosor's image, they were cast into the furnace of fire. They were preserved unharmed amidst the flames, even their hair was untouched, by the descent of the Angel of the Lord, that is, the Son of God.

Walking about in the furnace, as though in the midst of dew, they sang the universal hymn of praise to God, which is found in the Seventh and Eighth Odes of the Holy Psalter. And coming forth there from, without even the smell of the fire on their clothes (Daniel 3), they prefigured in themselves the Virgin's incorrupt giving of birth; for she, on receiving the Fire of the Godhead within her womb, was not burned, but remained virgin, even as she was before giving birth.

Therefore the Church celebrates the Three Children and Daniel on this day, on the Sunday of the Forefathers, and on the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, since they prefigured and proclaimed His Incarnation. Furthermore, they were of the tribe of Judah, wherefrom, Christ sprang forth according to the flesh. The holy Three Children completed their lives full of days. As for the Prophet Daniel, he lived until the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, whom he also petitioned that his nation be allowed to return to Jerusalem and that the Temple be raised up again. His request was granted. He reposed in Peace, having lived about eighty-eight years. His prophetic book, which is divided into twelve chapters, is ranked fourth among the greater Prophets.

Anastasia

22 December

This Saint, the daughter of Praepextatus and Fausta, was from Rome and was a most comely, wealthy and virtuous maiden. It was her mother who instructed her in the Faith of Christ. The Saint was joined to a man named Publius Patricius, who was prodigal in life and impious in disposition, but she was widowed after a short time. Henceforth, she went about secretly to the dwellings of the poor and the prisons where the Martyrs of Christ were, and brought them whatever was needed for their daily subsistence. She washed their wounds, loosed them from their fetters and consoled them in their anguish.

Because the Saint, through her intercessions, has healed many from the ill effects of spells, potions, poisons, and other harmful substances, she has received the name "Deliverer from Potions." Since the fame of her deeds had spread about, she was arrested by Diocletian's minions and after enduring many torments she was put to death by fire in the year 290.



Nativity of Christ

25 December

The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before:

"A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him and he is the expectation of the nations" (Genesis 49:10).

Thus, our Savior was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea. Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child. According to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they must be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between an ox and ass, that words of the Prophets might be fulfilled:

"Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2).

"The ox knoweth his owner & the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Savior such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem, to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men".



Saint Stephen

27 December

Saint Stephen was a Jew by race and, as some say, a disciple of Gamaliel, the teacher of the Law mentioned in Acts 5:34 and 22:3. He was the first of the seven deacons whom the Apostles established in Jerusalem to care for the poor and to distribute alms to them. Being a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, he performed great signs and wonders among the people.

While disputing with the Jews concerning Jesus and wisely refuting their every contradiction, so that no one was able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit whereby he spoke, he was slandered as a blasphemer and was dragged off to the Sanhedrin of the elders. There with boldness he proved from the divine Scriptures the coming of the Just One (Jesus), of Whom they had become the betrayers and murderers and he reproved their faithless and hardheartedness. And finally, gazing into Heaven and beholding the divine glory, he said:

"Lo, I see the Heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God."

But when they heard this, they stopped up their ears, and with anger cast him out of the city and stoned him, while he was calling out and saying:

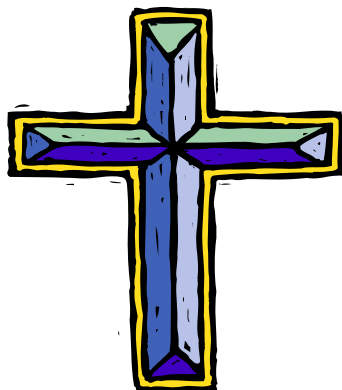
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Then, imitating the long-suffering of the Master, he bent his knees and prayed in a loud voice for them that were stoning him, and he said,

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,"





























And saying this, he fell asleep, thus becoming the first among the Martyrs of the Church of Christ.

(Acts 6 & 7)



Orthodox Calendar

December 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					 1 Nativity Fast	 2 <i>Philoptochos Christmas Benefit</i> Nativity Fast
 3 14th Sunday of Matthew 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Greek Dance Prac Indoor & Live-stream Nativity Fast	 4 Saint Barbara the Great Martyr 4:30 Greek School 5:30 Dance Prac. Nativity Fast	 5 7pm Dance Prac. Nativity Fast	 6 Saint Nicholas Wonderworker 9am Orthros 10am Divine Lit. Rose Hills Chapel 7pm Philoptochos Union Station Nativity Fast	 7 4:30 Greek School Nativity Fast	 8 GOYA Presentation— Ionian Village Nativity Fast	 9 Conception of Holy Theotokos St. Anna Prophetess 5pm Icarian Christmas Party GOYA Presentation— Ionian Village Nativity Fast
 10 10th Sunday of Matthew 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Greek Dance Prac 12:15 GOYA Meeting Indoor & Live-stream Nativity Fast	 11 4:30 Greek School 5:30 Dance Prac. Nativity Fast	 12 Saint Spyridon 10:30am VIP Breakfast Mtg. 7pm Dance Prac. 7pm Parish Coun'l Nativity Fast	 13 7pm Philoptochos Board Mtg Nativity Fast	 14 4:30 Greek School Nativity Fast	 15 Nativity Fast	 16 Nativity Fast
 17 11th Sunday of Matthew Daniel & 3 Youths 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 1pm Greek Dance Prac Indoor & Live-stream Nativity Fast	 18 4:30 Greek School 5:30 Dance Prac. Nativity Fast	 19 7pm Dance Prac. Nativity Fast	 20 <i>Philoptochos Christmas Party</i> Nativity Fast	 21 Nativity Fast	 22 Saint Anastasia Great Martyr Nativity Fast	 23 Nativity Fast
 24 Sunday before Nativity 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Indoor & Live-stream Nativity Fast	25 Holy Nativity 9am Orthros 10am Divine Lit	26 7pm Dance Prac.	27 Saint Stephen First Martyr	28	29	30
31 Sunday before Epiphany 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Indoor & Live-stream		Strict Fast Refrain from Meat, Fish, Wine, Oil, Dairy & Eggs 	Fish, Wine & Oil Allowed 	Wine and Oil Allowed 	Dairy, Eggs, & Fish Allowed; Refrain from Meat 	Fast Free

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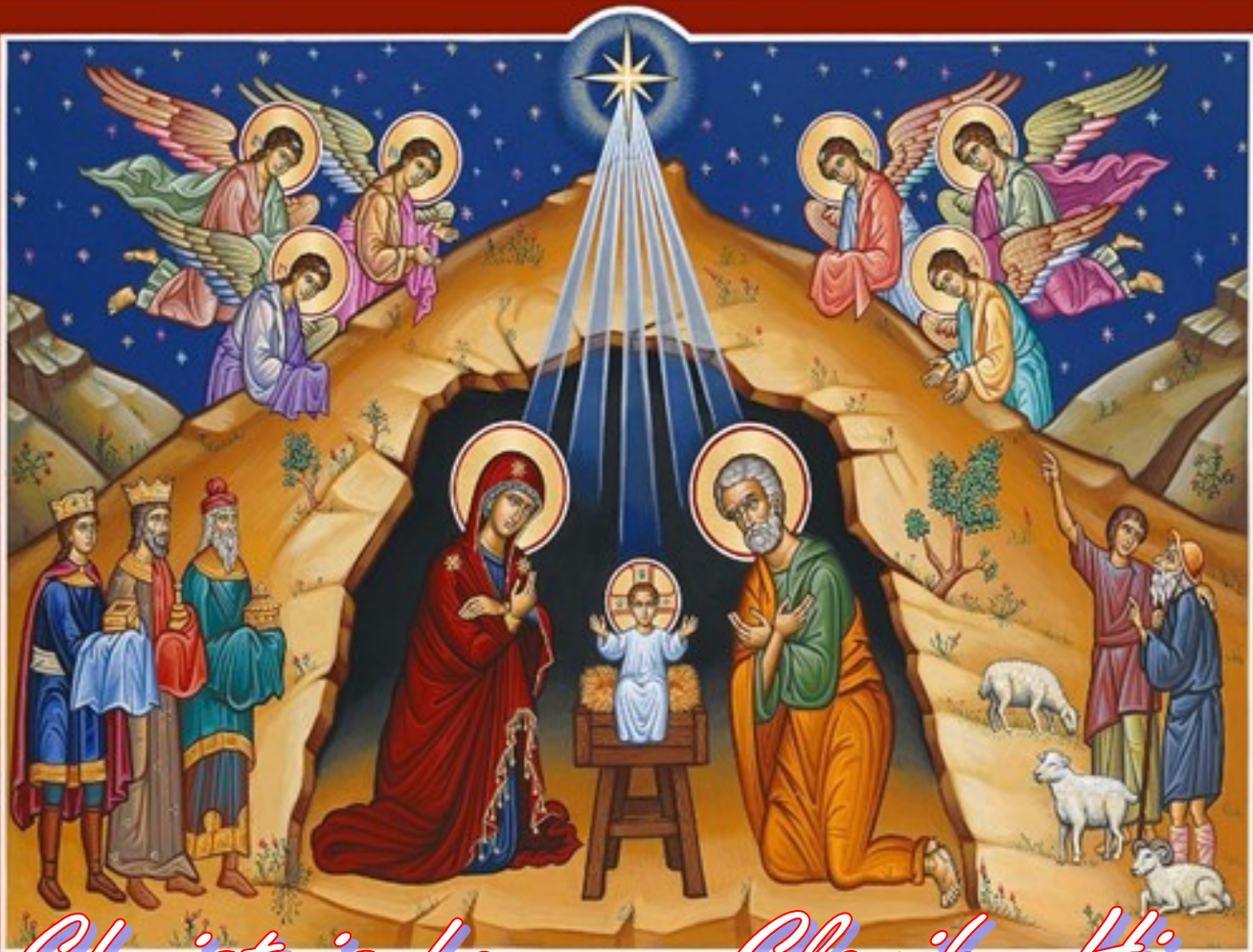
TIME SENSITIVE

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To generations of our descendants yet unknown to you, who some day in the dim and distant future will read this account of the dramatic history of the Hellenic community, we who have written this account not only on paper, but in the blood, sweat and tears of our daily lives make this statement:

We have built this community with its hopes and its fears, and its land and its buildings because we believe, as did our forefathers, in the soul's immortality, and its eventual union with God.

We believe that whether or not we have amassed a great deal of personal wealth or fame, it matters little, since we could not take that with us. What does matter is how we have discharged our obligation to pass on to you the faith and ideals that have sustained us through our lives... and we venture the hope that as you read these lines, you may breathe a prayer that what we have done here may have found favor in the eyes of God.



Christ is born.. Glorify Him..