

# The Voice of Saint Anthony

## March 2024

### Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church

Reverend Father Peter Stratos

778 S. Rosemead Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91107

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

Sunday of Prodigal Son	03 March
Judgement/Meatfare Sunday	10 March
Forgiveness/Cheesefare	17 March
Kathara Deftera/Clean Mon.	18 March
Sunday of Orthodoxy	24 March
Annunciation	25 March
Sun. of St. Gregory Palamas	31 March

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### Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos

**25 March**

**Deadline for April Newsletter is Monday, 25 March**  
**Please send to: [newsletter\\_church@aol.com](mailto:newsletter_church@aol.com)**

## Message from Father Peter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Great Fast or Lent is a period of preparation leading up to Holy Week and Easter (Pascha). The Lenten Triodion governs the divine services of Great Lent as well as those of the Weeks of Preparation preceding Great Lent. Lent is an old English word meaning “spring.” The Great Fast has come to be called Lent by association because it occurs during spring. It is also called “great” to distinguish it from the other fasts of the liturgical year.

Observance of Great Lent is characterized by abstention from many foods, intensified private and public prayer, personal improvement, and almsgiving. All of these disciplines are important, however I am challenging each of us to focus on one in particular. I am encouraging us all to focus on our personal prayer life during this upcoming Lenten season and Holy Week.

As Orthodox Christians we are expected, and in fact instructed, to pay closer attention to our private prayers to God. Yes, we should practice and follow all of the disciplines during Great Lent, including fasting. However, we must heed the warning of our Fathers of our Church: fasting without prayer is considered “the fast of the demons” since the demons do not eat according to their incorporeal nature, and they also do not pray.

When the faithful approach for Holy Confession, quite often the first thing that they utter during their confession is... “I have not been praying.” We all struggle with finding the time and the will to pray more, or even at all. That is why, this beautiful and peaceful time of the liturgical calendar is so important. God is inviting us back, waiting at the door as he waited for the Prodigal Son. We read in the Gospel of Matthew 7:7 *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”*

When asked about prayer and how much we should be praying, I often explain what works for me. Rather than pray the entire Vesper Service in the evening, I focus on a shorter rule of prayer. In my personal experience, I find that my mind wanders when praying a full and long service. Everyone is different, but during my evening prayers I feel more fulfilled when I focus on the “quality” of my prayer life rather than the “quantity.”

With this in mind, I want each of us, man, woman, and child, single person and families to commit once again to praying the short prayer attributed to St Ephraim the Syrian. Of all Lenten hymns and prayers, this short prayer can be termed the “Lenten Prayer.” It would be wonderful, if you could pray the “Lenten Prayer” twice a day: at the beginning of your day when you rise and at the conclusion of your day when you retire. ([See Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim on back page.](#))

As we recite the prayer, and after each petition we should make a prostration. These prostrations constitute one of the distinctive characteristics of the entire Lenten worship. As we all experience the difficult effort of spiritual recovery (returning to God), we understand that our Church does not consider our soul separate from our body. Our whole person has fallen away from God and must be restored. Our goal is to restore both body and soul, returning our entire person to God. For this reason the whole person, body and soul, repents. The body participates in the prayer of the soul just as the soul prays through and with the body. Prostrations are a sign of repentance, of humility, of adoration and obedience to God. Thus, this beautiful prayer is described as our “Lenten Prayer.” Make this short but fulfilling prayer an important part of your Lenten experience. Pray twice a day. Follow all of the Lenten disciplines. Make this Great Lent a most special time as we all commit to daily private prayers to God in our homes.

Have a fruitful and blessed Lenten season!

Καλη Σαρακοστή!

In Christ,

Fr. Peter





# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS		THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 25th</b>		<i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>MARCH 3rd</b>		<b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>MARCH 10th</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY		<b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 17th</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY		<b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 24th</b>		<i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 31st</b>		<b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 7th</b>		<b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHAI</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 14th</b>		<b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 21st</b>		<b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 28th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS		<i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>MAY 3rd</b>		<b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>MAY 5th</b> NO FASTING!		<i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> <b>HOLY PASCHAI (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!



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

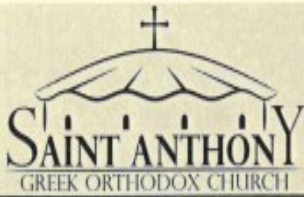
**Note:** Please make every effort to arrive for services a little early. If you happen to arrive late, please observe the following moments in the Divine Liturgy when you **should not enter** the Nave but wait quietly in the Narthex. You may enter after these moments have completed:

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

**SEEK CHRIST TODAY! OPEN YOUR HEART TO HIM TODAY! AND USE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY TODAY,  
BECAUSE THERE IS POWER IN WORDS AND JUST ONE WORD CAN MAKE OR BREAK SOMEONE.**



# 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](http://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

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

## Parish Events

_____ Palm Sunday Luncheon	_____ Resurrection Magiritsa	_____ Summer Family Picnic
_____ Pasadena Golf Classic	_____ Dinner	_____ Other
_____ Pasadena Greek Fest	_____ Saint Anthony Feast Day	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Seek Christ TODAY!**

**Open your heart to Him TODAY!**

**And use your words carefully today,**

**because there is power in words**

**and just one word**

**can make or break someone.**



Ministries



2024 PARISH COUNCIL

Perry Vidalakis	President
Pete Gallanis	1st Vice President
Joe Akrotirianakis	2nd Vice President
Tashia Vagenas	Secretary
Christian Balas	Treasurer
Tony Christopoulos	Assistant Treasurer

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, Jenni Nassos

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

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

Judith Din

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Jeanne Karaionnoglou

**2<sup>nd</sup> 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

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

Pana Gelt

**GOYA Volleyball**Anthia 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 School**Sophia Syrengelas  
Mary Udria**VIPs**

Irene Albeck





## **Parish Council Report**

### **FDF**

We were very proud of all of our dancers. Filarakia received the Founders award in their division. Pykagia won 1st place, and Panegyri won 3rd place. Asterakia (in the non-competitive division) were also wonderful on stage. We will honor all our groups next Sunday at coffee hour after church.

### **Philoptochos**

Philoptochos put on a wonderful "Pack Party" event after church this past Sunday. The project will assist foster children in our area by providing them with a brand new suitcase to replace the trash bags they use when moving from home to home. "Character Building" materials were included in each suitcase. We had a large turnout for this very meaningful event. Thank you to Philoptochos for all you do for our community.

### **Real Estate**

The Real Estate Committee continues to meet with officials of Los Angeles County to determine what we can get approved for the new apartment building project. Given the challenges of the approval process, this phase of the project is likely to continue for some time. We want to make sure we get the best result for St. Anthony.

### **GOYA Basketball**

Our GOYA basketball played very well in the first games of the season against Saint Sophia. The Jr. Girls, and Sr. Girls both won in exciting games. The Jr. Boys played very well, but lost. The finale was a thrilling down to the wire victory by the Sr. Boys to finish the night. Please come out to support our teams.

### **Basketball T-Shirts**

We have been selling St Anthony Basketball T-Shirts to show our support for our teams. Sizes are available from Youth Small to XXL. Prices are \$12 per shirt (\$15 for XXL). Sales are closed for the first order, but there may be a second order placed due to high demand. Notify Alma in the church office if you'd like to place an order for shirts to be included in the second order. Make sure you indicate size and quantity of each.

Thank You,

Perry Vidalakis

Parish Council President



Our program continues to thrive with classrooms full of happy students who are ready to learn about their faith alongside their peers. We have excellent teachers who make a strong effort to foster a learning environment that is welcoming, fun, and informative.

Lessons are delivered in ways that are hands-on, relatable, and interesting. Our students and our community are blessed to have these loving, giving, and creative individuals!

The Saint Study projects are well underway and we are getting ready to present! It's been fun and interesting to explore the lives of saints and their importance in the Orthodox Church. It is our hope that projects like these will bring to life the meaning and beauty of Orthodox faith and traditions so that our students can better understand and feel closer to their faith.

As Great Lent approaches, we are also discussing the Triodion Sundays and preparing our journey through Lent with our classes. The Lenten season is always a special time during Sunday School, as we get to guide our students through Lent and help them be more prepared for Pascha.

Our High School classes are working on their iconography projects. This has been a tradition for this class over the past couple of years. It is really amazing to see what the students produce. It is hands-on activities like this one that help bring the learning to life and keep our students engaged and motivated about Sunday School and learning about their faith.

We look forward to sharing our saint study projects as well as our journey through Lent over the next couple of months!



## Youth & Young Adults



St. Anthony's GOYAnS last met on February 11. Everyone in attendance received a sweatshirt. If you have not received your sweatshirt, please see Maria Katsas on any Sunday of GOYA basketball games.

We are hoping to do a field day on Sat. March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11am-3pm. We will meet on the grass area of church. Details to follow.

GOYA basketball started on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> at St. Sophia! See our teams next 2 pages!

Check out our Instagram account: [@stanthonysgoya](https://www.instagram.com/stanthonysgoya)

Any questions, please email us: [goya@saint-anthonys.org](mailto:goya@saint-anthonys.org)

To sign up for GOYA, please hit this QR code:



GOYA Sign up

**Southern California GOYA**

# Lenten Retreat

SAN BERNADINO MOUNTAINS

EARLY BIRD: \$230  
After Feb 1: \$250

Grades 6-12  
Friday March 29- Sunday March 31

Questions? [ateodosiadis@hchc.edu](mailto:ateodosiadis@hchc.edu)

REGISTRATION & INFORMATION HERE!







**Junior Girls**



**Junior Boys**





**Senior Girls**



**Senior Boys**



## GOYA Basketball 2024

**Greek Orthodox Basketball League (GOBL)**  
is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year!

St. Anthony GOYA Basketball is under way.  
Our first game was played versus St. Sophia on Sunday, February 25.

Both St. Anthony Junior and Senior Girls were victorious, as well as St. Anthony Senior Boys who prevailed in a nail biter with a miraculous shot by Jack Fuerst, that was shot from behind the basket and crossed over the corner of the backboard and landed in the hoop.

With less than 2 seconds remaining, St. Sophia Senior boys were unable to score!  
St. Sophia Junior Boys defeated St Anthony.

All teams showed good sportsmanship to one another!

We look forward to a special 50th season of GOYA Basketball!



*See Basketball Schedule—Next Page*







## St. Anthony G.O.Y.A. Basketball Schedule 2024



### Sunday, February 25:

@ St. Sophia  
1324 S. Normandie Ave., LA  
Los Angeles  
2:00 Jr. Girls  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
4:00 Sr. Girls  
5:00 Sr. Boys

### Sunday, March 3:

St. Katherine @ St. Anthony  
Duarte High School  
1565 Central Avenue, Duarte  
2:00 Jr. Girls  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
4:00 Sr. Girls  
No Sr. Boys Game

### Sunday, March 10:

Assumption @ St. Anthony  
Duarte High School  
1565 Central Avenue, Duarte  
2:00 Jr. Girls  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
4:00 Sr. Girls  
5:00 Sr. Boys

### Sunday, March 17:

St. George @ St. Anthony  
Duarte High School  
1565 Central Avenue, Duarte  
2:00 Jr. Girls  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
No Sr. Games

### Sunday, March 24:

@ St. John  
Brookhurst Jr. High  
601 N. Brookhurst St., Anaheim  
2:00 Jr. Girls  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
4:00 Sr. Girls  
5:00 Sr. Boys

### Sunday, March 31:

St. Basil @ St. Anthony  
Duarte High School  
1565 Central Avenue, Duarte  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
4:00 Sr. Girls  
5:00 Sr. Boys  
No Jr. Girls Game

### Sunday, April 7:

@ St. Nicholas  
9501 Balboa Blvd., Northridge  
2:00 Jr. Girls  
3:00 Jr. Boys  
4:00 Sr. Girls  
5:00 Sr. Boys

### Saturday, April 13:

Quarter Finals - Cabrillo High  
2001 Santa Fe Ave., Long Beach

### Sunday, April 14:

Semi-Finals = Cabrillo High

### Sunday, April 21:

Finals/Banquet/Awards - St. Sophia

Questions contact:

Pana Gelt 626-278-2808

Anthia Drulias Lucas 626-274-6133

Go St. Anthony GOYA !!!

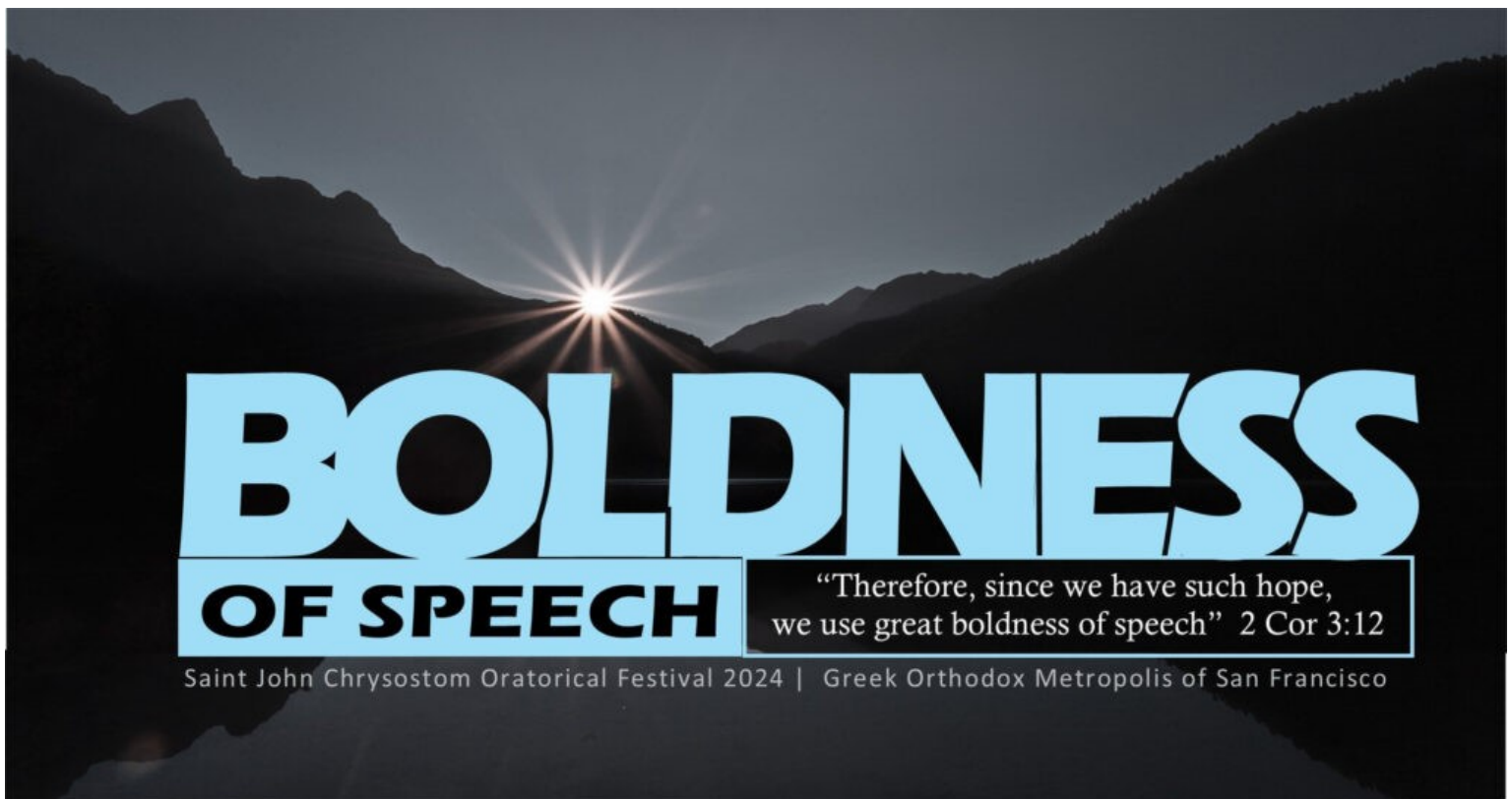
**ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:**

Philoptochos of Saint Anthony Scholarship Applications are now available. Please contact Presvytera Aida ([presaida7@gmail.com](mailto:presaida7@gmail.com)) or the Church Office for your application. Deadline for submission is **Friday, April 26, 2024**.

**ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL**

**NOON, SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2024**

All our students Grades 7-12 are encouraged to participate. We look forward to hearing our young people speak and share their Orthodox Faith.



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (DRE), GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

[oratorical@goarch.org](mailto:oratorical@goarch.org) | 800-566-1088 | [reilgioused.goarch.org](http://reilgioused.goarch.org) |   @goarchOratorical

## Participant Information

*Please reproduce this page for the participants.*

1. You must be of the Greek Orthodox Faith. To participate in the Junior Division you must be in grades 7-9. To participate in the Senior Division you must be in grades 10-12. **Your topic must be selected from the list of topics in the corresponding division.**
2. The speech must be original and delivered in English. Previously used material is not eligible. Quotations must be used effectively as supportive material, and sources must be identified.
3. No audio-visual material (slides, charts, etc.) may be used. The speech must be delivered from the lectern. The contents and/or delivery of the speech should not be dramatically presented.
4. A parent or teacher may serve as a "coach" in preparation and delivery, but the speech must reflect your own writing and speaking style.
5. A speaker can present his/her speech at only one parish oratorical festival.
6. Topics must be chosen from the official list compiled by the Department of Religious Education. The speech delivered at the parish level must be the same one given at the district, metropolis and national finals levels with only minor revisions (i.e., grammatical corrections, deleting a paragraph if speech is over time limit, correcting syntax).
7. Speech time limits for each division are:  
  
JUNIOR- minimum 3 minutes, maximum 4  
SENIOR - minimum 4 minutes, maximum 5

A 15-second grace period will be given to speakers whose talks run over or under time. Speeches that run over or under the 15-second grace period will lose 1 point for each additional five seconds.

8. A copy of the speech must be given to the chairperson before or during the orientation session. Your name, full address, phone number, email, and division (junior or senior) should appear in the upper right-hand corner, along with the name and location of your church. Place the title of your speech (taken from the official list of topics) right above the opening statement. Speakers who advance to the district, metropolis and national finals festivals must also present a copy to the chairperson at these events.
9. Speakers should dress in clothing that is professional and appropriate for Sunday church services.



# Suggestions for Writing Your Speech

*Please reproduce this page for the participants.*

## Writing Your Speech

As you begin to write, keep in mind that you are writing a speech and not a research paper. Your goal is to persuade your audience that your response to the question or topic is of high quality.

### Introduction

1. Consider using one of the following rhetorical devices to begin your speech:  
(a) restate the topic, (b) ask a question, or  
(c) begin with an anecdote.
2. In some situations, it is appropriate to leave your audience with a reflective comment or a call-to-action, either in the form of a question, statement or exclamatory remark.
2. The goal of the introduction is to alert your audience to the point that you would like to make.
3. You might consider introducing the two or three ways by which you will show that your thesis is an appropriate interpretation of the topic.

### Body

1. The body of the speech is where you will provide both the evidence of your research and your analysis of that research.
2. Some topics, more than others, lend themselves to an emphasis on personal reflections or experience. You should consider what the topic means to you and why.
3. Some topics, more than others, lend themselves to a comparison between ancient times and the present. You should consider how such a comparison is made most effectively.
1. Decide on a topic.
2. Read the suggested research material for your selected topic and takes notes where appropriate.
3. Consider other avenues for research, including Scripture and Church History, using whatever tools are available to you.
4. Develop a thesis. What do you think about this topic? The entire speech should be structured around your particular (and unique) answer to the prompt.
5. After you have a thesis, develop an outline that will effectively communicate that thesis—individual paragraphs should reflect the individual points of the outline.

### Conclusion

1. A strong conclusion will simultaneously lead your audience to believe that they now understand the topic more completely and that you have convinced them that your thesis was an appropriate one.
6. Write your first draft. Practice it in front of others, ask for their feedback so that you can revise the draft.
7. Make sure that the time of your delivery fits within the allotted time for your division.



## ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL 2024 Topics

### JUNIOR DIVISION (GRADES 7-9)

#### TOPIC 1

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has earned the title of the Green Patriarch, and was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World, for His teachings about humanity's spiritual responsibility for taking care of God's creation — planet earth. His All-Holiness stands on the shoulders of Saints, who taught that the world is a gift from God, and that taking care of His creation is a way to connect with God. Explore and discuss the teachings of His All-Holiness and the Saints on the creation of the world. What are some of our practical responsibilities as stewards of our planet, and how does that enrich our lives as Christians?

#### TOPIC 2

Many of us have heroes to whom we look up. It may be an older brother or sister, an athlete, or a musician. We have heroes in our religious life, as well as people who inspire us to practice our faith. They teach us, usually by example, how we ought to live as Orthodox Christians. Select a Saint or person who has been the most influential in your spiritual life. Describe the particular and practical ways that influence has taken place.

#### TOPIC 3

On the Day of Theophany (January 6), we chant, "All those who were baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Discuss the meaning of this hymn and the obligations it places upon us as Orthodox Christians.

#### TOPIC 4

When reading the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32), we learn about the various stages of repentance. What are they? How do they relate to the reversal of the son's journey away from the father? What does the father's reaction upon seeing his son teach us about our relationship to our Father in Heaven?

#### TOPIC 5

The Orthodox Church has a rich heritage of sacred hymns that "contribute radiant and poetic splendor to Orthodox worship," thus, opening the way to God. Select your favorite Church hymn and talk about how it strengthens your faith.



## ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL 2024 Topics

### SENIOR DIVISION (GRADES 10-12)

#### TOPIC 1

Slandered without cause, convicted without a trial, exiled unjustly — this was the life endured by one of the greatest saints of our times — Saint Nektarios of Aegina. Forgiving others who hurt us that deeply and unjustly seems almost impossible. What can we learn from Saint Nektarios, whose life was about forgiving what some might call the impossible?

#### TOPIC 2

Apostle Paul refers to Adam as the first man, and Christ as the Second Adam. The Fathers of the Church, especially Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, refer to Christ and Panagia as the Second Adam and the Second Eve. Why is the Most Holy Theotokos called the "Second Eve"? And why is Christ called the "Second Adam?" How do Christ and Panagia fulfill and go beyond their prototypes?

#### TOPIC 3

Christ says, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:1). He also says, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). Explore the Orthodox teaching on the Eucharist by reading the prayers of the Divine Liturgy the writings of one or more Church Fathers.

#### TOPIC 4

The number of natural disasters worldwide continues to increase, resulting in more communities destroyed and more lives lost. How would you respond to someone who questions why God allows natural disasters to happen when we know God can intervene at any moment? If God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving, how can He allow evil things to happen?

#### TOPIC 5

During the Divine Liturgy, before the Consecration of the Holy Gifts, we hear the priest say the following: "Your own of Your own we offer to You, in all and for all." What does this petition mean to you as an Orthodox Christian? Why is it important for us to focus on giving back out of the gifts we have been given by God?



# METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO YOUNG ADULT LENTEN RETREAT

“DISCOVERING OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE -  
THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE”  
WITH ARCHON GEORGE PSEFTEAS



METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

MARCH 22 - 24, 2024  
SAINT NICHOLAS RANCH & RETREAT CENTER  
DUNLAP, CALIFORNIA  
[WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG](http://WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG)



# Philoptochos

## Good Works

### ***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, 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	<a href="mailto:mcmg2a@aol.com">mcmg2a@aol.com</a>
Vangie Dupas	<a href="mailto:vangiedupas@sbcglobal.net">vangiedupas@sbcglobal.net</a>
Christina Kades	<a href="mailto:christinekades@gmail.com">christinekades@gmail.com</a>

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

Deuteronomy 15:11





### *Friends In Deed*

In February, Philoptochos helped the Friends In Deed food pantry by delivering cereal boxes, pasta, and ground beef and chicken.

## Community Happenings

### **Souper Sunday Fundraiser**

After liturgy on Sunday, February 4, Philoptochos hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> Souper Sunday, a tasty soup cook-off. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped raise \$4,200 for the Friends In Deed "Extreme Weather Shelter". Congratulations to the Chefs: Irene Albeck, Tashia Vagenas, Terree Bowers & Family, Judith Din, Katsas Family, Kokoris Family, Maria Kypreos, Christine Pappas, Sia Soris, Fotiny Varvitsiotis. Kudos to the Bowers Family for their delicious Texas Chili that was selected as the winner by the attendees. Over 550 cups of soup were enjoyed on the wet and chilly afternoon.





*The Soup Chefs and their soups*



***Lentil***



***Pink Soup***



***Red Lentil***



***Chicken Tortilla***



***Mushroom Leek***



***Texas Chili (\*winner\*)***



***Vegetarian Chili***



***Navy Bean Spinach Lenten***



***Clam Chowder***



## Church Community Service Project – “Pack Party”

During coffee hour on Sunday, February 25, Philoptochos hosted the Forever Kids “Case Program”. Forever Kids, through its “The Case for Character” program, assists foster kids by providing them a brand-new suitcase to replace their trash bags when moving from home to home. The St. Anthony church community under the guidance of Philoptochos filled 180 suitcases with essential materials for Foster Care children.

Forever Kids is one of our charity recipients from our 54<sup>th</sup> Benefit Luncheon held in December 2023. This service project was the culmination of our efforts to support children entering Foster Care in our area through support of the Case Program. Thank you to everyone who participated and supported this meaningful hands-on packing experience.



Tony Salerno, founder of Forever Kids, spoke about the mission and work of this organization.



Judith Din, Philoptochos President, presents a check to Forever Kids to support their work with foster care children



Packing stations



Volunteers receiving detailed packing instructions before breaking out to a packing station





### ***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.*



## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.**

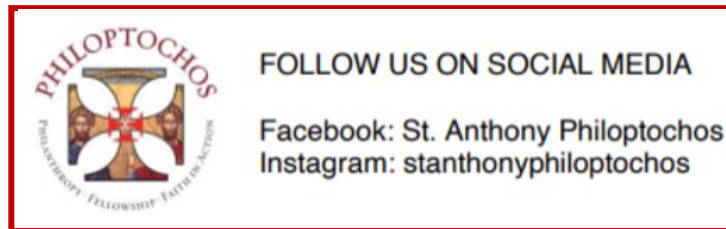
## Upcoming Meetings

**2024 Christmas Benefit Planning Meeting** – Monday, March 4 at 7:00 PM in the church hall.

We invite you to help us plan our largest fundraiser of the year. This year's event will be held on **Saturday, December 7, 2024** at The Langham Huntington Hotel.

**March Board Meeting** – Wednesday, March 13 at 7:00 PM

**March General Assembly Meeting** – Date To Be Determined. Further details to come.



## **ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:**

Philoptochos of Saint Anthony Scholarship Applications are now available. Please contact Presbytera Aida ([presaida7@gmail.com](mailto:presaida7@gmail.com)) or the Church Office for your application.

Deadline for submission is **Friday, April 26, 2024.**

## 2024 Philoptochos Membership

We encourage all women, 18 and over to join Philoptochos, a ministry that promotes charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic outreach. Men and non-Orthodox women may also join as associate members. Your participation in this ministry can make a difference in so many lives.

To renew or join by mail – send a check, payable to St. Anthony Philoptochos Society, to:

St. Anthony Philoptochos Society  
778 South Rosemead Blvd  
Pasadena, CA 91107

or pay online: <https://stanthonypiloptochos.square.site>

Each \$50 stewardship supports the National Philoptochos, the San Francisco Metropolis and St. Anthony Philoptochos obligations and projects.



*The following charities are supported by St. Anthony Philoptochos:*

***Chapter Charities***

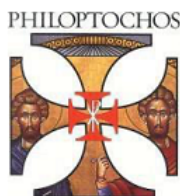
CAST, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking  
 City of Hope  
 Forever Kids  
 Friends in Deed  
 Foothill Unity Center  
 Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology Seminarians  
 Kids 'n' Cancer/Camp Agape  
 Operation Classroom  
 Pasadena City College Lancer Pantry  
 Pasadena Unified School District/Foster Care Children  
 Project Mexico Orphanage  
 Social Services/Emergency assistance to individuals within our community  
 Scholarships for College Bound Students  
 Ukraine Relief Fund of the International Orthodox Christian Charities  
 Union Station Homeless Services

***San Francisco Metropolis Philoptochos Programs & Charities***

Bishop Anthony Student Aid Endowment Fund [BAPSAEF]  
 Emergency Relief Fund/Social Welfare  
 Kids n' Cancer/Camp Agape  
 Saint Nicholas Ranch  
 Support a Seminarian  
 Women's Health & Wellness

***National Philoptochos Programs & Charities***

Academy of Saint Basil  
 Autism Assistance Fund  
 Cancer Fund  
 Children Medical Fund  
 Ecumenical Patriarchate  
 Emergency Fund  
 General Medical Fund  
 Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology  
 International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC]  
 National Sisterhood of Presbyteres Benevolent Fund  
 Operation Classroom  
 Orthodox Christian Fellowship  
 Orthodox Christian Mission Center & Support a Mission Priest  
 Retired Clergy & Widowed Presbyteres Benevolent Fund  
 Saint Photios Shrine  
 Saint Nicholas Shrine  
 Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Founders Fund  
 Social Services  
 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF]



**PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY OF  
SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
PANAGIA CHAPTER**

**PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP FORM**

☐ 2024 Philoptochos Membership      ☐ 2024 Associate Membership      Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Men / Non-Voting)

Last Name      First Name      Spouse Name      M.I.

Street Address

City      State      Zip

Home Phone      Cell Phone

Email

Notices will be sent via email. If you prefer your notices mailed, please, let us know by checking here ☐

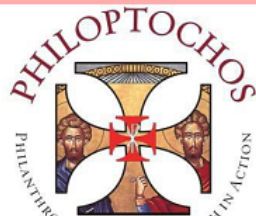
St. Anthony's Philoptochos Stewardship (membership dues). Select amount below:

☐ \$50      ☐ \$75      ☐ \$100      ☐ \$125      ☐ Other

Each \$50 stewardship supports National Philoptochos (\$15), San Francisco Metropolis (\$15) and St. Anthony Philoptochos obligations and projects (\$20).      \_\_\_ Check      \_\_\_ Credit Card      \_\_\_ Cash

I am interested in helping with the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Feeding the Hungry	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosting Fellowship	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing
<input type="checkbox"/> Delivering Meals to Parishioners	<input type="checkbox"/> Baking & Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/> Website Designer
<input type="checkbox"/> Homebound Visitations	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Talents
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Tree	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Specify



**2024 PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

Your continued generosity allows Philoptochos to provide financial assistance and outreach to those in need. We invite you to renew your membership or become a new member as we endeavor to do our philanthropic work. Join us as we strive to fulfill the word of Christ.

*".. whatever you did for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did for me" - Matthew 25:30*

**PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN BY MAIL (Check payable to: Saint Anthony Philoptochos Society)**

Mail your check along with this form to:

Saint Anthony Philoptochos Society, Attention: Membership  
778 South Rosemead Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91107

or pay online at <https://stanthonypiloptochos.square.site>

Scroll down to "Annual Membership Dues"

For more information or questions, please contact Lisa Xanthos (626) 222-4374 or Helen Skandale (818) 618-4963



The February VIP meeting was 'lovingly' held one day before Valentine's Day on Tuesday, February 13th. Due to the absence of President Irene Albeck, the meeting was called to order by Judie Christopoulos at 11:00 am. The opening prayer was led by Staurula Kiotas.

Maria Hronas proposed an outing opportunity for the VIPs to attend: a production of *12 Dancing Princesses*, by the Pasadena Civic Ballet Company, under the direction of our own Tania Grafos and Zoe Vidalakis. A number of members wish to attend so plans were made to obtain tickets for the February 24th performance.

With Lent approaching, the VIP meeting for the month of March will be held on Clean Monday (Kathara Dheftera), March 18th, instead of the usual second Tuesday of the month. A lenten luncheon of lentils, laghana bread, halva and tarama will be on the menu for the day.

At the conclusion of business, a delightful pizza luncheon including salad and birthday cake was provided by our February birthday celebrants pictured below from left to right:

Sapfo Ananiades, Carolyn Kolokotronis, Alma Vorgias, and Helen Treantafelles

MANY HAPPY RETURNS LADIES!!



On Saturday evening, February 24th, a number of VIPs plus guests and grandchildren, totalling 20 in all, attended the amazing production of *12 Dancing Princesses* at the beautiful and historic San Gabriel Mission Playhouse.

This original ballet based on the classic Grimm Brother's fairytale of good, evil, and the power of love was magnificently performed by the Pasadena Civic Ballet and featured remarkable choreography, coordination of 87 cast members and an amazing array of beautiful costumes. The performance left all of us thoroughly impressed and well-pleased with our evening's entertainment. **BRAVO TANIA, ZOE AND YOUR ENTIRE COMPANY!**

We hope to see many of you on March 18th for our next meeting marking the beginning of our Lenten Journey.

Jim Hronas

VIP Communications

Community News & more...

# Saint Sophia EASTER PICNIC

**SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2024 1PM - 7PM**

\*Please Note: Entrance gate to picnic will not open until 1 pm\*

- ✓ Fabulous Foods and Desserts will be available for purchase
- ✓ Souvlaki, gyros, feta fries, Greek salad and more
- ✓ Baklava, Galatoboureko, Karidopita, Kourambiedes, Melomakarona, Koulourakia and Tsourekia
- ✓ Beer, Wine, Soft Drinks, Coffee, Water
- ✓ Credit and Debit Cards ONLY
- ✓ Free Parking and Picnic Tables.
- ✓ For health and safety, NO PETS are allowed in the park

CELEBRATING THE 112TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE FIRST FORMAL GREEK ORTHODOX  
EASTER PICNIC IN LOS ANGELES



## ENTRY FEE

Adults (13 & older) \$15  
Children 12 & under FREE

## EASTER BUNNY!

The Easter Bunny will be there from 2 pm to 3 pm with toys for the kids!

## BROOKSIDE PARK PASADENA

360 N Arroyo Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91103

## MORE INFORMATION

Stephanie Caiopoulos Lubian  
easterpicnic@aol.com

*Celebrate the Resurrection!*



**Save the Dates**

**2024**

**PASADENA GOLF CLASSIC**  
**BROOKSIDE GOLF COURSE**

**June 7th**

## Festival Flashback



**PASADENA**  
**GREEKFEST**

**2024**  
**Save the Date**  
**9/20-9/22**

Email Vicki @ [vkades@gmail.com](mailto:vkades@gmail.com) to be part of the committee and make 2024 better than ever!!

WE'RE HIRING

# JOIN OUR 2024 SUMMER CAMP STAFF!

CABIN COUNSELORS - PROGRAM STAFF - LEADERSHIP TEAM

LIFEGUARDS - MEDICAL STAFF - PHOTOGRAPHERS - VIDEOGRAPHERS

[WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG](http://WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG)











## 2024 SUMMER CAMP DATES:

SESSION 1: JULY 7 - 13

SESSION 2: JULY 14 - 20

SESSION 3: JULY 21 - 27

[WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG](http://WWW.GOSFYOUTH.ORG)

METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO  
**SUMMERCAMP**  
AT SAINT NICHOLAS RANCH



## METROPOLIS SUMMER CAMP 2024

All Youth ages 8-18 from across our Metropolis are invited to attend our Metropolis Summer Camp this July at St. Nicholas Ranch & Retreat Center in Dunlap, CA. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet new friends, reunite with old friends, and learn more about our faith. Online camper registration is open, and spots are quickly filling up. The Metropolis is also looking for dynamic and faithful young adults, ages 19 or older, to serve as part of the camp staff. They are also in need of medical and lifeguard staff, so please encourage anyone to apply who you know would be an outstanding addition to the Metropolis Staff.

### 2024 SUMMER CAMP DATES

Session 1: July 7 - 13

Session 2: July 14 - 20

Session 3: July 21 - 27

### CAMPER AGES

The youngest campers are 8 years old (or entering 3rd grade in Fall 2024) and the oldest are 18 years old (or will be graduating High School in Spring 2024).

### SESSION 1 - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BUS

If you are from Southern California and will be attending Session 1, there will be a bus that will be stopping at 3 parishes along the way to St. Nicholas Ranch.

More information: <<https://gosfyouth.org/summer-camp#/socalbusession1>>

### SUMMER CAMP STAFF

We cannot put on summer camp without our incredible staff! We are looking for young adults who are 19 years of age or older. Applications are open until March 10. Please encourage young adults to apply by using this link: <<https://gosfyouth.org/summer-camp#/staff-applications>>

### MEDICAL STAFF

We are always in need of medical staff while at camp. If you are a licensed medical professional or know someone who is, please encourage them to contact me directly at this email or apply on our website: <<https://gosfyouth.org/summer-camp#/medical-staff-application>>. We especially love having MD's, NP's, and RN's!

### AMAZON WISH LIST

Help us keep down the cost of camp by making a donation from our Amazon Wish List using this link: <<https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/3KIOBRA2F95R8>>.

With Love in Christ,

Johanna Duterte Carter  
Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries  
Metropolis Camp Director  
Metropolis Youth Safety Administrator (MYSA)

Cell: (408) 712-7658<<tel:%28408%29%20712-7658>>  
Email: [JDuterte@sanfran.goarch.org](mailto:JDuterte@sanfran.goarch.org)<<mailto:JDuterte@sanfran.goarch.org>>  
Website: [www.gosfyouth.org](http://www.gosfyouth.org)<<http://www.gosfyouth.org>>  
Youth Safety Link: [youthsafetyplatform.goarch.org](http://youthsafetyplatform.goarch.org)

# The Voice of Saint Anthony

## January 2024

### Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church

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

Circumcision of Christ/ Saint Basil	1 January
Holy Theophany/ Epiphany	6 January
Saint John the Baptist	7 January
St. Anthony the Great	17 January
Gregory the Theologian	25 January
Three Hierarchs	30 January

Priest's Message  
Stewardship  
Ministries  
Parish Council  
Sunday School  
Youth/Young Adults  
Philoptochos  
VIPs  
Community News, etc.  
Monthly Lesson  
Saints of the Month  
Orthodox Calendar



**Saint Anthony the Great**  
**17 January**

Deadline for February Newsletter is Thursday, 25 January  
Please send to: [newsletter\\_church@aol.com](mailto: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 Road to the Cross and Resurrection has Begun !

*Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* 2 Timothy 3:10-15 (Epistle – Publican and the Pharisee)

The Orthodox Church year contains feast days that have fixed dates—the Nativity is December 25, Theophany is January 6, etc. All of these feasts are celebrated on the same date each year. There are also feasts that are movable. Every year they fall on a different date, moving according to when Pascha (Easter) is celebrated. In 2024, Pascha is on May 5. Palm Sunday is April 28. Great Lent begins on March 18. And on February 25, ten Sundays before Pascha, we begin what is called the Triodion, a four-Sunday period which we could call “Pre-Lent.” In total, there are 19 Sundays per year that revolve around Pascha:

Four Sundays of Triodion	Palm Sunday	Five Sundays of the Paschal season	Pentecost
Five Sundays in Great Lent	PASCHA	Sunday of the Holy Fathers	All Saints

In 2024, this cycle begins February 25 and will end with All Saints on June 30.

In modern Christianity, Lent has become about deprivation. Pre-Lent is when you dread of what you will deprive yourself. Lent is when you suffer deprivation. Easter is when you celebrate the end of deprivation. And the rest of the year, you regress to what you were before Lent, happy that the experience is over.

This is not how the Lenten journey is set up in the Orthodox Church, at least ideally. The period of the Triodion is supposed to be a period of planning the changes we hope to make during Great Lent. Great Lent is the time when we enact these changes. Pascha is the time we celebrate the changes we’ve made. And the rest of the year is a time to maintain our spiritual changes. The cycle then should repeat each year, so that as the years pass, we see marked spiritual growth.

The Epistle lesson from 2nd Timothy brings several thoughts to my mind. In his letter Saint Paul mentions how *“you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness.”* (2 Timothy 3:10) As we begin our journey to the Resurrection, look at each of these things and give yourself a rating on the scale of 1-10 (1 being poor, 10 being excellent):

How are you doing on teaching? (Both learning about the faith and teaching others)

Is your conduct in line with Christian moral principles?

What is your top aim in life—is it salvation or something else?

How strong is your faith?

How would you rate yourself on patience?

How would you rate yourself on Love?

Are you steadfast (faithful) in your Christian walk?

These are some great questions (albeit challenging ones) to consider as we begin our journey to renewal for Great Lent.

A second point that Paul makes is that *“all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* (2 Timothy 3:12) Have you felt “persecuted” over your faith in the past year? If the answer is no, ask yourself why? Do others know about your faith? Does everyone approve? Have you ever told someone you couldn’t do something because it wasn’t Christian? What was their response?

In 2 Timothy 3:14, he reminds us to *“continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.”* Great Lent is not a time to throw out everything we know, but to build upon what we have learned. Finally, in 3:15, he reminds us that *“from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”* Yes, many of us have been acquainted with Christ since childhood. Great Lent, beginning with the Triodion, is a call to deepen our understanding and grow our relationship with Christ. Spend a few minutes evaluating yourself. How did you answer the questions in this lesson?

## Humility – Recognizing the Need for God's Mercy

*“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Luke 18:10-14 (Gospel— Publican and the Pharisee)

**The goal of the Christian life is to reach salvation.** Salvation is not something to be purchased or even earned, but something that is granted through the mercies of God. In order to receive God's mercies, one not only has to believe in God, but believe that one has the need of God's mercies. Because mercy also is not something that can be purchased or demanded, but a grace of God that is given.

In the Gospel above, we encounter two men who went to pray in the temple. One was a Pharisee, a Jewish religious leader. He was someone who was looked up to in the society of the day. He was respected, even revered. The other man was a tax collector (in some translations of the Bible, he is called a Publican). The tax collector was the town pariah. Tax collectors were generally dishonest thieves, and reviled by all for the lack of virtue.

When the Pharisee prayed, Jesus tells us that he *“prayed thus with HIMSELF.”* His prayer was one of self-congratulations. He lauded his virtues while at the same time condemning the tax collector.

The tax collector stood in the back of the church, unable to approach the Holy of Holies, unable to even lift up his eyes, but prayed *“God be merciful to me a sinner!”* Jesus tells us that it was the tax collector who went away justified, rather than the Pharisee. It was the prayer of the tax collector that God heard, and not the prayer of the Pharisee. It is the humble that God exalts, and the exalted that He humbles.

You might be wondering why. Weren't the good deeds of the Pharisee honorable in the eyes of God and in the eyes of others? Isn't it a good thing to fast and give tithes and to live a moral life? The answer is YES, those are all good things. However, even good things done not under the umbrella of God become self-serving things. We can't pray “with ourselves” Prayer is offered only to God. Prayer to God is offered with an understanding that God is so much greater than us. He doesn't need our good deeds or our self-congratulations. He doesn't want to merely congratulate us. He wants to shower us with His love and mercy. The key to receiving love and mercy is the humility to receive them, an awareness that there are empty spaces in us that can only be filled by His love and mercy.

This doesn't mean that we should seek to live out a dishonest life. We shouldn't be a thief like the tax collector and tell ourselves, “well, I'll just ask for mercy from God and that will take care of everything.” That is not correct either. We ARE like the tax collector, in that we sin, all the time, and are in need of God's mercies. We should seek to emulate the virtue of the Pharisee without the self-congratulations, and with the realization that many times, our lives will resemble the life of the tax collector. We are to emulate the virtue of the Pharisee but do so under the umbrella of God. We are to emulate the humility of the tax collector in our prayers.

I have to realize that no matter how good my deeds are, no matter how virtuous I am, no matter how Godly I try to be, there is a gap between me and God. That gap is there because of sin and because of the pride which leads me to sin. That gap is closed through repentance (my understanding that I am sinful and a desire to put aside sinful things) and through God's mercies, which forgive my sins and which strengthen me to not succumb to sin. This was the mistake of the Pharisee. For him, there was no gap, no understanding of his need for repentance, no room for him to accept God's mercies. We can each work to lessen the gap between us and God through being virtuous, but a gap will still be there. It can only be closed through His mercies and our repentance.

Live with virtue today but not with pride. Ask God daily for His mercies on your shortcomings.



## Saints & Feasts

### Triodion – Sunday of the Prodigal Son

#### 03 March

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Savior has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man.

The foregoing two parables -- especially that of the Prodigal Son -- have presented to us God's extreme goodness and love for man. But lest certain persons, putting their confidence in this alone, live carelessly, squandering upon sin the time given them to work out their salvation and death suddenly snatch them away, the most divine Fathers have appointed this day's feast commemorating Christ's impartial Second Coming, through which we bring to mind that God is not only the Friend of man, but also the most righteous Judge, Who recompenses to each according to his deeds.

It is the aim of the holy Fathers, through bringing to mind that fearful day, to rouse us from the slumber of carelessness unto the work of virtue and to move us to love and compassion for our brethren. Besides this, even as on the coming Sunday of Cheese-fare we commemorate Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight -- which exile is the beginning of life as we know it now -- it is clear that today's is reckoned the last of all feasts, because on the last day of judgment, truly, everything of this world will come to an end.

All foods, except meat and meat products, are allowed during the week that follows this Sunday.



**Triodion – Judgment Sunday – Meatfare Sunday****10 March**

The foregoing two parables -- especially that of the Prodigal Son -- have presented to us God's extreme goodness and love for man. But lest certain persons, putting their confidence in this alone, live carelessly, squandering upon sin the time given them to work out their salvation and death suddenly snatch them away, the most divine Fathers have appointed this day's feast commemorating Christ's impartial Second Coming, through which we bring to mind that God is not only the Friend of man, but also the most righteous Judge, Who recompenses to each according to his deeds.

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All foods, except meat and meat products, are allowed during the week that follows this Sunday.

**Triodion – Forgiveness Sunday – Cheesefare Sunday****17 March**

The Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight, here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments.

For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind.

The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiation and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands.

Taking occasion from the Gospel of Matthew 6:14-21 to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.





## Clean Monday / Kathara Deftera

18 March

Today we begin the 40-day Lenten Fast with a strict fast from meat, fish, oil, wine, dairy, and eggs.

## Sunday of Orthodoxy

24 March

For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of evil belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated February 11), together with the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words: "If anyone does not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let him be anathema." Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them. This is the holy deed that all we the Orthodox commemorate today, and we call this radiant and venerable day the Sunday of Orthodoxy, that is, the triumph of true doctrine over heresy.



## Annunciation of the Theotokos

25 March

Six months after John the Forerunner's conception, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, a town of Galilee, unto Mary the Virgin, who had come forth from the Temple a mature maiden (see Nov. 21). According to the tradition handed down by the Fathers, she had been betrothed to Joseph four months.

On coming to Joseph's house, the Archangel declared: *"Rejoice, thou Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."* After some consideration, and turmoil of soul, and fear because of this greeting, the Virgin, when she had finally obtained full assurance concerning God's unsearchable condescension and the ineffable dispensation that was to take place through her, and believing that all things are possible to the Most High, answered in humility: *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy Word."*



## Annunciation of the Theotokos (continued)

And at this, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her all-blameless womb, and the Son and Word of God, Who existed before the ages, was conceived and became flesh in her immaculate body (Luke 1:26-38).

Bearing in her womb the Uncontainable One, the blessed Virgin went with haste from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, where Zacharias had his dwelling; for she desired to find Elizabeth her kinswoman and rejoice together with her, because, as she had learned from the Archangel, Elizabeth had conceived in her old age. Furthermore, she wished to tell her of the great things that the Mighty One had been well-pleased to bring to pass in her, and she greeted Elizabeth and drew nigh to her. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she felt her six-month-old babe, jump in her womb.

Saint John the Baptist, prophesied of the dawning of the spiritual Son. Immediately, the aged Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognized her as the Mother of her Lord. The Virgin also, moved by a supernatural rejoicing in the spirit, glorified her God and Savior, saying: *"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior,"* Luke 1:39-55

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## Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

### 12 March

This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica.

He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.

His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessalonica. A full service was composed for his feast day by the Patriarch Philotheus in 1368, when it was established that his feast be celebrated on this day. Since works without right faith avail nothing, we set Orthodoxy of faith as the foundation of all that we accomplish during the Fast, by celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy the Sunday before, and the great defender of the teachings of the Holy Fathers on this day.





# Orthodox Calendar

## March 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Greek Dance Pizza Party	2
3 <b>Sunday of the Prodigal Son</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Greek Dancer Recog. Indoor & Live-stream	4 4:30 Greek School	5	6 7pm Philoptochos Union Station	7 4:30 Greek School	8	9 <b>Saturday of the Souls</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy
10 <b>Judgement Sunday Meatfare</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Hope/Joy Meeting 12:15 GOYA Meeting Indoor & Live-stream	11 4:30 Greek School	12 10:30 VIPs 7pm Parish Concl	13 7pm Philoptochos Board Mtg	14 4:30 Greek School	15	16 <b>Saturday of the Souls</b>
17 <b>Forgiveness Sunday Cheesefare</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Oratorical Sunday Indoor & Live-stream	18 <b>Clean Monday</b> Καθαρά Δευτέρα 4:30 Greek School	19	20 6pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	21 4:30 Greek School	22 6pm Salutations to the Holy Theotokos	23 <b>St. Theodore the Tyro</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy
24 <b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12pm Greek Independence Day 6pm Great Vespers of Annunciation Indoor & Live-stream	25 <b>Annunciation</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Lit. 4:30 Greek School	26 7pm Philoptochos General Mtg	27 6pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	28 4:30 Greek School	29 6pm Salutations to the Holy Theotokos	30
31 <b>Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy IOCC Speaker Indoor & Live-stream		<b>Strict Fast</b> Refrain from Meat, Fish, Wine, Oil, Dairy & Eggs	<b>Fish, Wine &amp; Oil Allowed</b>	<b>Wine and Oil Allowed</b>	<b>Dairy, Eggs, &amp; Fish Allowed; Refrain from Meat</b>	<b>Fast Free</b>

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March 2024

POSTAGE  
STAMP

TIME SENSITIVE

*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.*

## LENTEN PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM

O Lord and Master of my life!  
Take from me the spirit of sloth,  
faintheartedness, lust of power,  
and idle talk.  
(prostration and +)

But give rather the spirit of  
purity, humility, patience and  
love to Your servant.  
(prostration and +)

Yes, O Lord and King! Grant me  
to see my own errors and not to  
judge my brothers and sisters.  
For You are blessed to ages of  
ages. Amen.  
(prostration and +)