

The Voice of Saint Anthony

December 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

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



**Christ is Born !
Glorify Him !**

**Nativity of our Lord
25 December**

Priest's Message	2
Stewardship	3
Ministries	5
Parish Council Report	7
Sunday School	8
Youth/Young Adults	11
Philoptochos	14
VIPs	20
Community News, etc.	22
Monthly Lesson	27
Saints of the Month	29
Orthodox Calendar	35

Deadline for January Newsletter is Friday, 27 December

Please send to: newsletter_church@aol.com

Message from Father Peter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Christmas season means preparations, buying gifts, decorating, family traditions, carols, baking, excitement and joy. The liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church anticipates Christmas for forty days. A Matin hymn sung for many weeks prior to Christmas continually reminds us with these joyful words that Christmas is for Christ.

Christ is born give Him glory!
Christ comes from heaven, go out to meet Him!
Christ is on earth, be exalted!
O all the earth, sing to the Lord!
O people, sing praises in gladness,
for He has been glorified!
(First Hymn from the Christmas Katavasias).

Another hymn sung during the Liturgy throughout these weeks strikes a similar theme:

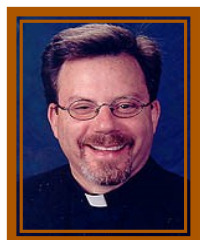
Today the Virgin is on her way
to give birth to the pre-eternal Logos.
Rejoice, O inhabited earth, when you hear the good news!
With angels and shepherds, glorify Him
Who chose to appear as a new born babe.
The pre-eternal God.

For many the Christmas season can, however, be a time of discouragement, anxiety, fatigue, and unhappiness. Psychiatrists report that more Americans consult them during the season between Thanksgiving and the New Year than at any other time. Even persons who normally experience high levels of love and friendship, social conviviality and personal joy in giving and receiving have periods of exhaustion, loneliness, irritability and depression. The Christmas season raises high expectations and for that reason it can be a season not of jolly but of melancholy.

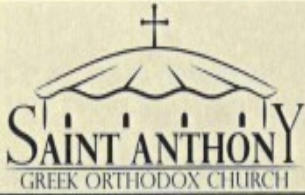
During the Christmas season God's love and His message of new hope come to us through the beauty and peace of the incarnate Christ. Yet the good news of God's love may be entirely missed, and Christmas may be an unfulfilled dream, amongst the hectic bustle of cleaning, shopping, writing, calling, decorating, baking and visiting. The basic reason for an unfulfilled Christmas is that we focus on ourselves, how to please each other, how to feel good and how to secure happiness with all the things we regard necessary. Yet only Christ can give us a true Christmas. Only His presence in our hearts can bring happiness, peace, joy, warmth and security. Cling to Christ even more closely during the Christmas season. Take time to pray and to establish your spiritual and practical priorities. Let Christ come with you from home to school, from kitchen to mall or shopping center, from Church to business office. Make Christ your priority during this Christmas season.

Merry Christmas,

Fr. Peter



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 Fellowship) | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Bible School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOYA/Jr. GOYA | <input type="checkbox"/> Office Volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> VIPs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> St. John Chrysostom | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball Tournament |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek Language School | <input type="checkbox"/> Oratorical Festival | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JOY/HOPE | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Parish Events

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

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

***Christ is Risen!
Truly He is Risen!***

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:
Krystina Vagenas

PK, TK, :
Irene Albeck, Larissa Maslen, Jenni Nassos

Kindergarten, First:
Elena Tsianos, Theoni Vagenas

Second, Third:
Sophia Syrengelas, Andrianna Lareau

Fourth, & Fifth:
Mary Udria & Athena Serban

Middle School:
Polly Vagenas & Chris Syrengelas

High School:
Presvytera Aida Stratos

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

Christiana Kontaxis
Michael Kontaxis

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

HOLY COMMUNION PROCEDURE

*For the benefit of our Sunday School students, their teachers and the TIMELY start of their Sunday School Classes, the children will be receiving Holy Communion first.

***The ushers will release the children by pew from Front to Back.**

*Only parents of the smallest, youngest Sunday School children, who need assistance, should receive Holy Communion with their children.

*If you are not seated when Holy Communion begins, please take a seat in the back rows, quietly. Your children will be released in turn.

*Please do not attempt to send your children down the side aisles to the front alone or down the center aisle.

*After all children have received, the ushers will release the adults, again from the front pews.

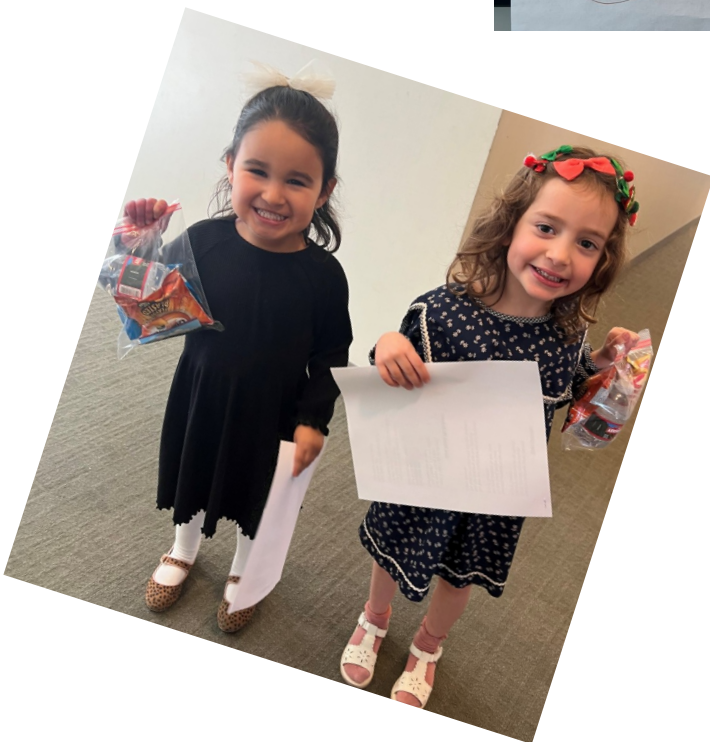
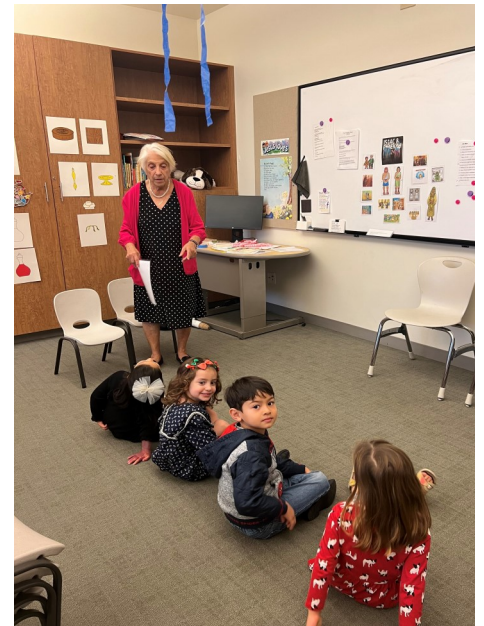
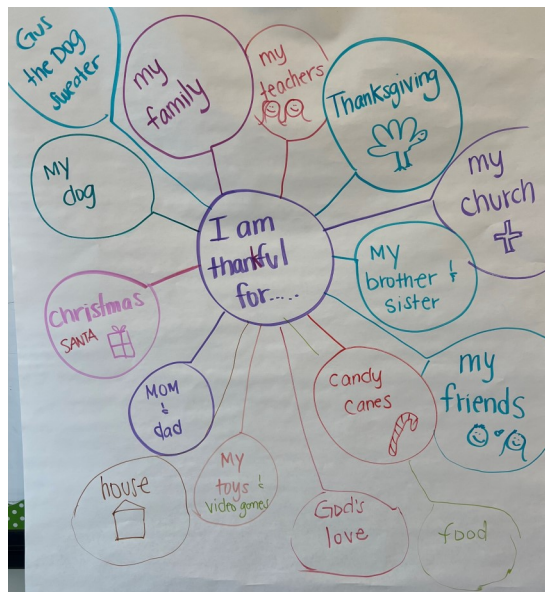
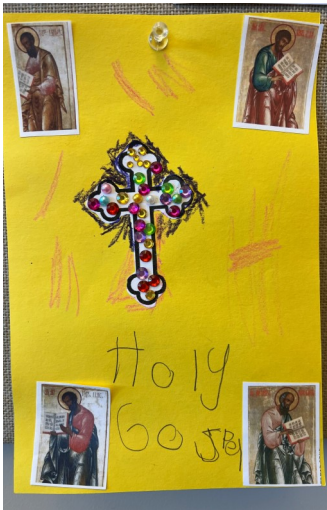
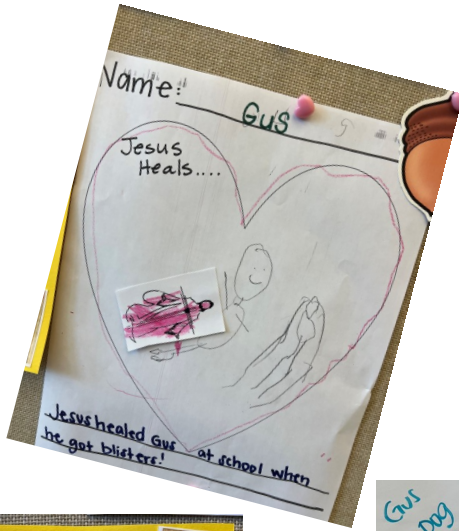
***Please cooperate with our ushers. Please do not ask to be allowed through ahead of others.**

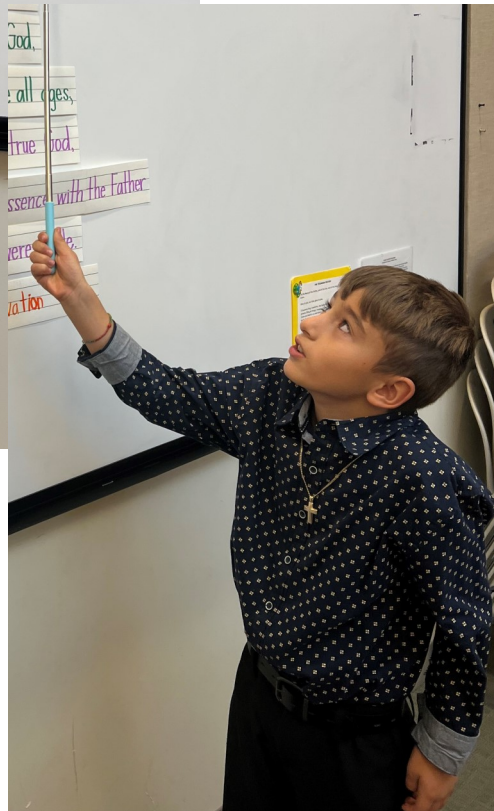
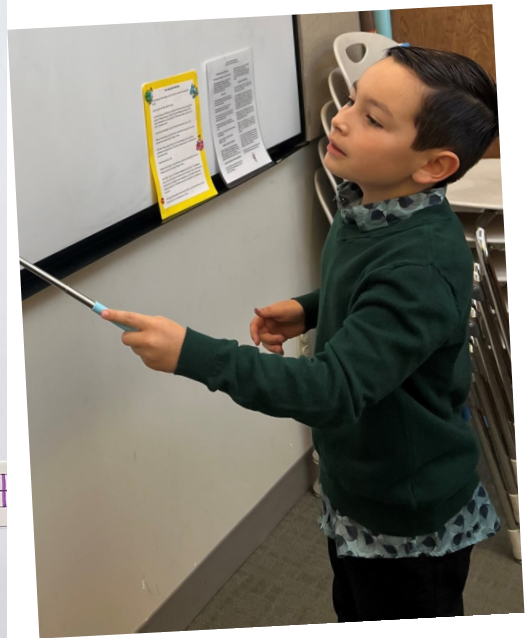
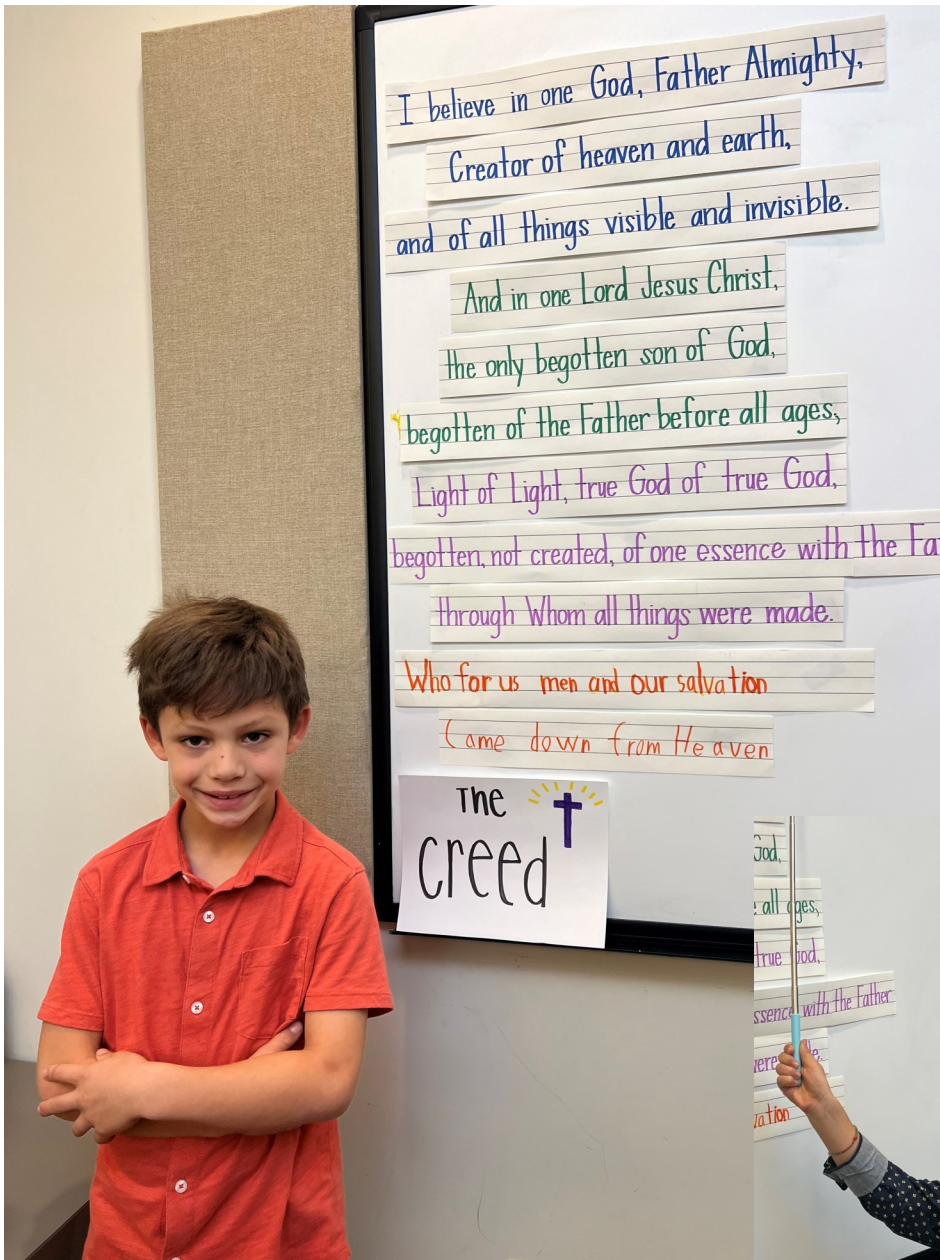
***Please remember this new procedure is for the benefit of our children and their Sunday School experience.**

Did You Know?

The “12 Days of Christmas” is the period from Christmas (Dec. 25) to Epiphany (Jan. 6) – not, as some mistakenly believe, the 12 days *before* Christmas. In traditional Christianity, this season is one great celebration of the appearance of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh.

SUNDAY SCHOOL







Youth & Young Adults



GOYA NEWS

We've had three meetings this year and enjoyed icebreakers, fun debates and playing imposter during our last meeting! Special thanks to the Lareau family for hosting lunch at our November meeting!

Friendsgiving Lock In was Tuesday, November 26th. Twenty GOYAnS were in attendance, playing games, Kos jeopardy, hide and go seek, decorating the trees in the hall, etc. They had a great time and also shared what they were thankful for. Special thanks to all of the parents who provided lots of yummy food for our Thanksgiving potluck and breakfast the next morning! Also a special thank you to our junior advisors, Andrianna, Kos and Stavros for attending and helping mentor our youth.





We've picked our theme for this year: **Neolea!** The GOYAnS will be designing the sweatshirts and sweatpants at the next meeting. Colors will be navy blue with white lettering.

GOYA meetings are every 2nd Sunday of the month from 12:15pm-1pm in the high school classroom.

Next meeting, **December 8th**! Lunch will be provided. Bring your \$25 dues! Cash or check made out to St. Anthony GOYA.

Save the date for our dinner out and ice skating in Pasadena on **December 27th**!

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

If your child has not been signed up for GOYA please hit this QR code to do so:



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

GOYA Sign up



St. Anthony G.O.Y.A. Basketball

The Greek Orthodox Basketball League will begin its 51st season **Sunday, February 23, 2025.**

St. Anthony is looking to sign up boys and girls in the following age divisions:

Junior Girls 12-15 Years of age

Junior Boys 12-15 Years of age

Senior Girls 16-21 Years of age

Senior Boys 16-19 Years of age

We are especially looking for Junior Boys. Anyone interested in participating please contact either Pana Gelt or Anthia Lucas. Practices will begin in January and will be held at Mayfield Senior School in Pasadena.

Pana Gelt: pgelt3@gmail.com

Anthia Lucas: adljsl02@yahoo.com

2025 GOYA Basketball Schedule

2/23/25	St. Anthony @ St. Nick
3/2/25	St. John @ St. Anthony
3/9/25	St. Anthony @ St. Basil
3/16/25	St. Sophia @ St. Anthony
3/23/25	St Katherine @ St. Anthony
3/29/25	Women's Alumni Games
3/30/25	St. Anthony @ St. George
4/5/25	Men's Alumni Games
4/6/25	Assumption @ St. Anthony
4/26/25	GOBL Quarter-Finals
4/27/25	GOBL Semi Finals
5/3/25	Alumni Finals and Skills Challenge
5/4/25	GOBL Finals
5/10/25	Volleyball Tournament

Philoptochos

Good Works

Union Station Homeless Service (USHS)

USHS is in need of sack lunch donations. The prepared lunches can be dropped off at the Adult Center (412 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena) from 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Please, email volunteer@unionstationhs.org to schedule delivery.

Philoptochos prepares a nutritious dinner, funded 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 welcome your donations to help offset our costs of large aluminum pans with lids. We invite you to consider helping us feed the needy by making a contribution towards this ministry. *We are most grateful for your generous 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



Good Works, continued

“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 receive this Christmas. Each child has provided a wish list of gifts. There is no minimum or maximum amount of gifts or gift cards required. It is only a guide.

Your participation in this program is very easy:

- ♦ Philoptochos will set up a Christmas Wish List Tree in the foyer of the Trinity Ballroom on Sunday, December 1 and Sunday, December 8.
- ♦ Select a tag with a child’s name from the Christmas Wish List Tree. The listed items are suggestions; the number of gifts you would like to donate is up to the you.
- ♦ Place the unwrapped gifts in a Christmas gift bag with the child’s name attached (please use the tag provided).
- ♦ Return the filled gift bag to the church office by Tuesday, December 10. If possible, please include gift receipt. When giving a gift card, please include the amount somewhere on the card.

Should you have any questions please call or text Liz Skandale at (626) 695-3423

Upcoming Philoptochos Events

The 55th Annual Christmas Benefit **Candy Cane Wishes** will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2024 at The Langham Huntington Hotel in Pasadena. This year’s benefit 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 a very worthy local organization, **GIVE-MENTOR-LOVE**, as well as other Philoptochos charities in our community, Metropolis and National.

GIVE-MENTOR-LOVE works diligently to improve the lives of LA County’s most vulnerable youths and young adults in-crisis, at risk, homeless or in foster care, and victims of sex trafficking.

Please become a Star Donor to help support our good works with these charities.

For donations to the Star Program, contact chairwoman, Mary Dewar by emailing:

philostarprogram@gmail.com or make your donations online to The Star Program:
<https://stanthonybenefit.square.site/product/be-a-star-donor/2>

Should you have any questions about the benefit, please contact Nicole Schulman (626) 497-5368.

Upcoming Scholarship Opportunities in 2025

Attention High School Seniors

Philoptochos of Saint Anthony Scholarship Applications will be available in Spring 2025. Applications will be open for graduating seniors who are active members of our parish.

Patzakis Scholarships for Nursing and Medical Studies. Applications will be available next year in March and due in May. Any student pursuing a degree in nursing, medicine, healthcare profession, or dentistry and is a member of our St. Anthony church community may apply.

Philoptochos wishes to support our young people in their academic advancement.

Look for more announcements in the future Voice newsletters.

Upcoming Philoptochos Meetings

2024 Christmas Benefit Planning Meeting - Monday, December 2, 2024, at 7:00 PM in Trinity Hall.

Board Meeting - Tuesday, December 10 at 7:00 PM.

General Meeting - Philoptochos Christmas party will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the Trinity Ballroom. We will have cocktails, dinner, ornament gift exchange, and dessert. \$50 per person. An Euite is coming soon.

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

Please note:

if you RSVP "yes" and for some reason you are not able to attend, we still have to pay for your dinner.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: St. Anthony Philoptochos

Instagram: stanthonlyphiloptochos

Saint Anthony Philoptochos

VASILOPITA

PREPAID ORDER FORM

**All Prepaid Orders must be received by
Sunday, December 15**

**PREPAID ORDERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PICKUP ONLY ON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22 from 12:00 PM TO 1:00 PM**


St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church, Trinity Ballroom
778 South Rosemead Blvd., Pasadena

To place prepaid orders:

- CALL or Text: Lisa – (626) 222-4374 or Helen (818) 618 -4963
or
- ONLINE - <https://stanthonybenefit.square.site> (select Santa's Kitchen Tab)

Name: _____ Cell/Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ E-mail: _____

ITEM	COST	QUANTITY	\$ TOTAL
 Vasilopita (1 Loaf) Traditional sweet Greek New Year's bread. <i>Pickup on Sunday, December 22 (12:00 pm-1:00 pm)</i>	\$20	_____	_____

ORDER TOTAL \$ _____



Santa's Kitchen

*We would appreciate donations of Christmas
baked goods such as:*

*Candies
Biscotti
Fudge
Cookies
Bark
English Toffee
Caramels*

Or any other special holiday item that you enjoy making.

*Items can be brought to church on
Wednesday, December 4th between 10 am and 4 pm or
Thursday, December 5th between 11 am and 1 pm.*

*Another way to support Santa's Kitchen is to donate a
monetary donation that will help cover our baking and
wrapping expenses. These donations can be sent to church.*

We thank you for your help and support.

Helen Skandale and Lisa Xanthos



COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP



Host a Coffee Hour

Celebrate a Name Day, Birthday, Anniversary, Loved One or as a Family Activity!

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.** If you would like your name or event included in the weekly bulletin, notify the Church Office by the Wednesday prior to the date chosen at 626.449.6943 or by email at office@saint-anthonys.org

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

2. **Bring snacks for 75 adults and kids** – Suggestions include: Pastries, Bagels, Muffins, Cakes, Cookies, Mini Deli Sandwiches, Cheese & Crackers, Olives, Dolmades, Hummus, Tzatziki, Pita, Raw Vegetables, Fruit, Salads or anything you would enjoy!
3. **Bring food items plated on serving trays/bowls and ready to serve by 10:00am 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.

With an impressive 44 members and 5 guests in attendance, the November VIP meeting was called to order by President Irene Albeck on Tuesday, November 12th with an agenda designed for expedience in anticipation of the now traditional Thanksgiving Feast to follow.

After an opening prayer, the November birthday celebrants were recognized:

Thean Grafos, Maria and Jim Hronas, Maria Kokoris, and Aleka Pantazis (see photos next page). They were honored with a rendition of "HAPPY BIRTHDAY." Stan Pegadiotes, who also celebrates a birthday in November, was camera shy and opted to keep his happy day "under wraps." So we November celebrants say:

Stan.....

You better watch out,

You better not cry,

You better not pout, we're tellin' you why,

Next year you'll be sung to with us!!

Judie Christopoulos reported on her efforts to procure tickets for our members to attend this year's Christmas Pageant featuring the Citrus Singers and performing arts students of Citrus College in Azusa. It was decided that we would attend the 2:00pm performance on December 14th. Fees for the performance were collected at this meeting so any members not in attendance are encouraged to contact Judie at (626) 840-7508 to see if she has any tickets remaining.

On December 17th, our final meeting of the year will be a meeting and breakfast outing at 10:30 am at LeRoy's Restaurant in Monrovia. A fee of \$10.00 per member was collected with the balance of the cost to be subsidized by the VIP treasury. Anyone not at the November meeting who would like to attend should contact Jim Hronas at jhronas@aol.com so that the restaurant can prepare for our numbers appropriately.

With these matters taken care of, the meeting was adjourned and the members sat down to a delicious Thanksgiving feast featuring roast turkey and an amazing array of side dishes and desserts provided by our members.

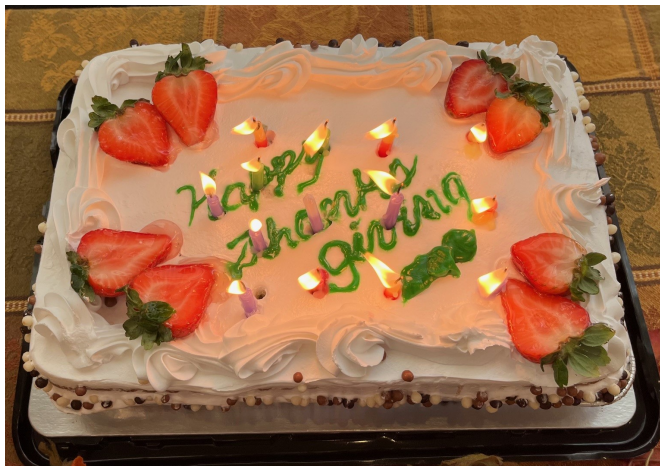
A special thank you is extended to Anthia Lucas, who came to the hall early to roast the turkeys, to John Vagenas who skillfully carved those birds, to Eleni Kaliivas who assisted in the kitchen, and to Georgia Vagenas who took some excellent photographs. It does take a village to make these events successful.

With this being the final installment of VIP NEWS for the year 2024, we wish the entire Saint Anthony Community a blessed and joyous Christmas holiday season, and may the New Year 2025 hold the best for all of us!!

Jim Hronas

VIP Communications





Community News & more...

Saint Anthony Bowling League



Lee Anton, Alexandra Conley, Rick Nassif



Katherine Boukidis, Georgia Trípodos, Adoni Dimopoulos



Parviz Mobayen, Syrus Mobywn, Jim Horaites



Jim Nichols, Virginia Lappas, Andrea Lappas



**Rick McGregor,
Kristen McGregor,
Chrissa Mobayen**



**Kosta Papavasiliou,
Elene Kaliivas, Maria Conley**



**Labrini Makredes,
Chris Makredes,
Peter Petropoulos**



**Andrew Dewer, Mary Dewer,
Peter Bissias**



**Joyce Nichols, Chris Conley,
Elleni Conley**

Not photographed: Ted Dupas, Maggie Iskander



**Vincent Lappas,
Anthia Lucas,
Alice Jacquez**

Bowlers have been on a two-week hiatus. The Fall season will conclude on Thursday, December 12. Anyone interested in joining for the Winter-Spring season please contact: Anthia Drulias-Lucas adljsl02@yahoo.com (626) 274-6133

St. Anthony Bowling League will be hosting the coffee hour after Liturgy on **Sunday, February 9, 2025**



Pasadena Rose Bowl AHEPA #373 2024 Christmas Party

Honoring **Lisa Xanthos** on her exemplary service to the Pasadena Greek community with her leadership on the Metropolitan Committee for IOCC and in Philoptochos on the Chapter, Metropolis, and National level.



Friday, December 20, 2024
North Woods Inn

7247 Rosemead Blvd, San Gabriel, CA 91775 (at Huntington Drive & Rosemead Boulevard)
7:00 p.m. no host cocktails, 7:30 p.m. dinner — free parking

Choice of Filet Mignon Steak, New York Steak, Icelandic Filet of Cod, or Broiled Mahi Mahi
Two Salads, Cheese Bread, and Rice Pilaf
Baked Potato with Butter, Chives and Cheese, plus dessert!

\$70 each, limited to 50 persons, paid reservations required

Virginia Lappas will lead us in an optional \$15—\$20 Gift Exchange after dinner. Neutral gift suitable for either men or women, wrapped, with no names. Anyone who brings a gift will receive a gift. The community is invited.

Please make checks payable to: Pasadena AHEPA
Send to: Dean Tripodes, Post Office Box 486, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0486
Or pay by Zelle on your bank's app or website, enter ahepa373@gmail.com as the recipient.

Church Etiquette

When are we NOT to enter the Nave of the Church?

As we are entering God's Home, we must always keep in mind that during the following times, we should NOT enter the Nave of the Church nor come to the front of the Church to light a votive candle:

During the Small Entrance (when the procession with the Gospel takes place)

During the Epistle Reading

During the Gospel Reading

When the priest is censuring and is facing the Congregation

During the Great Entrance (when the procession of the Holy Gifts takes place)

When the priest is blessing the Congregation

During the recitation of the Nicene Creed ("I believe...")

During the Consecration of the Holy Gifts

During the recitation of the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father...")

During the Priest's sermon

Also, during these times, we should avoid leaving the Nave unless it is for family needs, medical or some other necessary reason. If you are unsure when to enter or leave the church, ask a Parish Council member in the Narthex.

While in the Church, remember to...

Wear appropriate attire to enter God's House

Silence your mobile devices

Refrain from chewing gum, mints, or candy

Remove lipstick when receiving Holy Communion & when venerating & kissing the icons

Follow the direction of the Priest for standing & sitting

Maintain quiet in the Sanctuary

Enter God's House with reverence and respect



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



Saint Anthony the Great
17 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

Deadline for February Newsletter is Thursday, 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

And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6: 31-36

There are two unhealthy things that, if we could let go of them as a society, we'd be much better off. The first is receiving credit, and the second is holding grudges.

We are obsessed with credit. I can think of many examples from contemporary life, but here are two examples in the Orthodox Church I frequently experience that I believe are spiritually unhealthy. First, our churches (and many other things) only get built because someone's name goes on them. When someone truly gives, there is no credit needed. To exchange money to have one's name put on a wall or an icon is an exchange of money for credit, not a true gift. I won't belabor this because it is like swimming uphill against the current. This is a practice that I don't see stopping. However, if we have abundance, we should be giving, out of sense of gratitude, not because we are going to get credit. A gift is something that comes from the heart. A gift to the church is between you and God, and God will reward the secret things He sees us doing.

In Matthew 6: 1-4, we read:

Jesus said "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the street, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Another thing I've been asked to do repeatedly is to sign required "community service" hours for high school students who either serve in the altar or sing in the choir. These are things that they should be doing automatically, not for any sort of credit. Community service as relates to the church might be participating in a church cleanup day, or going to visit a nursing home - something that is beyond normally expected behavior.

Today's Gospel passage begins with the "Golden Rule," *"as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them."* In other words, treat others as you wish to be treated. But then the passage takes the Golden Rule to an even greater level. It tells us to treat others as God would treat them. In other words we are supposed to not only love those who love us, but love those who hate us. We are not only supposed to do good to those who do good to us, but even to those who do bad to us. And we are not only supposed to lend to those from whom we hope to receive back, but even to those who are not going to return our loan.

In the words of Christ, what *"credit"* is it to love people who love us? What *"credit"* is it to do good to those who are doing good to us? And what *"credit"* is it to lend to those from whom we hope to receive back. Anyone can love someone who loves him back, or do good to someone who does good back or lend to someone from whom he will receive back. The blessed thing, the Godly thing, is to love those who hate us, do good to those who are unkind to us, and to lend to those who will not return our gifts. Christ tells us that our reward will be great, we will be credited by Him as *"sons of the Most High."*

Are there times we all fail to love? Yes.
 Are there times we all fail to do good? Yes.
 Are there times we all fail to lend a hand? Yes.

Then how should God treat us? Well, if we add up the number of times we have failed to love, do good, or lend, it's probably a lot of times and we probably don't deserve for the Lord to treat us well. Yet, He is merciful and forgives us, even when we've been unkind and selfish. Therefore, if we expect His forgiveness, we ought to forgive one another. If we expect Him to still love us even when we don't love one another, we ought to show love even to those who don't love us. If we expect Him to still do good to us, then we should do good even to those who aren't good to us. And if we expect Him to still lend His mercy and kindness to us, then we should lend to one another expecting nothing in return.

The ultimate expressions of Christian love are to be kind *"to the ungrateful and the selfish"* and to *"be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."* Is it easy to do these things? No, of course it is not. This is part of the human struggle. However, we struggle, trusting in the heavenly reward, not relishing in the earthly credit. At least that is how it should be. Every gesture of giving shouldn't be with an expectation of anything. There is intrinsic joy in loving, giving, and forgiving. And there is Godly reward for these things as well.

Show love, kindness, generosity and mercy today, not expecting anything in return.
 God will give you credit, and in the end, that's the only credit that matters!

A Question: Why do we fast before Christmas?

Question: *Why do Orthodox Christians fast before Christmas? Other Christians don't. Also, what foods do we normally fast from during the Christmas fast?*

<p style="color: red; margin: 0;">The Christmas Fast (Advent) began on Sunday evening, November 15th! As you are preparing for Christmas, please note the following guidelines for fasting:</p>		
Days	The Tradition of the Church specifies the following	
Sunday Monday Tuesday Thursday Saturday	Abstinence of: Meat & Meat Products, Dairy Products	No Abstinence of: Fish, Shellfish, Vegetables & Vegetable Products, Olive Oil, Fruit, Wine
Wednesday Friday	Abstinence of: Meat & Meat Products, Dairy Products, Fish, Olive Oil, Wine	No Abstinence of: Shellfish, Vegetables & Vegetable Products, Fruit
NOTE: During the Christmas Fast, from Dec. 18 to Dec. 24 inclusive, the Fast becomes stricter with no meat, dairy products <u>or fish</u> . We may eat olive oil and wine this week except on Wednesday and Friday and December 24 (but if December 24 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, wine and oil are eaten).		
Dairy Products: eggs, butter, milk, cheese, etc. Shellfish: oysters, shrimp, scallops, etc. Fish: sardines, tuna, trout, salmon, bass, etc. Wine: fermented, brewed, distilled or any other form of alcoholic beverages.		

Answer: We fast before the Great Feast of Christmas in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent before Easter, the Christmas Fast is about preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and acts of charity towards others. **By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to Christ.** We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things that we sometimes allow to control us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor in their lives. A symptom of this is that we now live in a society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food! However, while fasting from food is important, we must also remember that **fasting is about developing purity of heart.** During the Christmas Fast we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from all those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to dominate us and our relationships.

Saints & Feasts

Saint Barbara

4 December

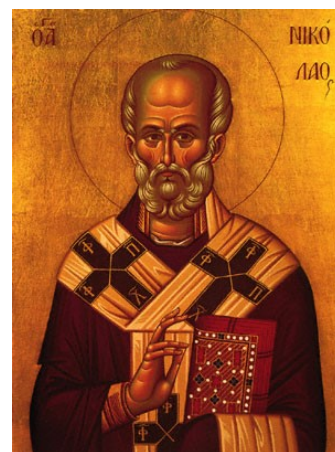
Saint Barbara was from Heliopolis of Phoenicia and lived during the reign of Maximian. She was the daughter of a certain idolater named Dioscorus. When Barbara came of age, she was enlightened in her pure heart and secretly believed in the Holy Trinity. About this time Dioscorus began building a bath-house; 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.

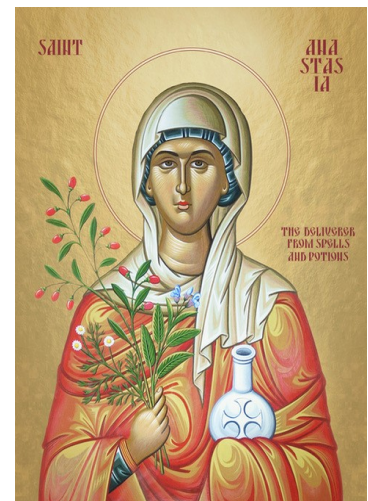
Therefore the Church celebrates the Three Children and Daniel on this day, on the Sunday of the Forefathers, and on the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, since they prefigured and proclaimed His Incarnation. Furthermore, they were of the tribe of Judah, wherefrom, Christ sprang forth according to 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.

Saint 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:

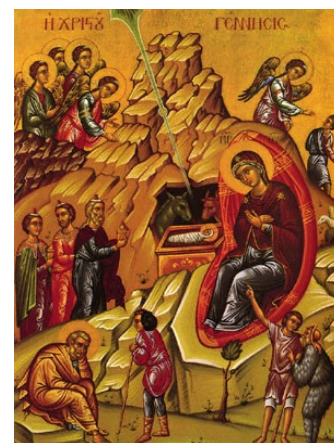
"Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2).

"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".

(Luke 2:8-14)



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 hard-heartedness. 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:

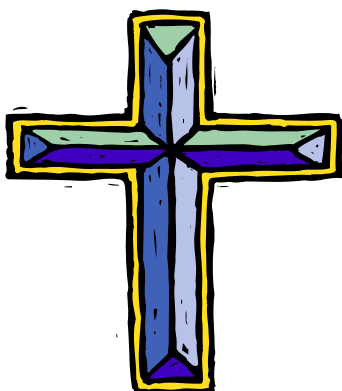
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

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 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1  14th Sunday of Luke Nativity Fast 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12pm Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	2  Philoptochos Santa's Kitchen 5pm Dance Practice 6:30 pm Dance Practice 7pm Benefit Mtg.	3 	4  7pm Philoptochos Union Station	5 	6  Saint Nicholas 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 7pm Dance Practice	7  Philoptochos Christmas Benefit 3:30 Santa's Kitchen set-up
Nativity Fast						
8  10th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Sun. Sch. Christmas Prty 11:30 Santa's Kitchen 12pm Dance Practice 12:15 GOYA Mtg. Indoor & Live-stream	9  5pm Dance Practice 6:30pm Dance Practice	10  7pm Philoptochos Board Mtg. 7pm Par. Council	11  VIP Christmas Party	12 	13  7pm Dance Practice	14 
Nativity Fast						
15  11th Sunday of Luke Nativity Fast 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 11:30 Philoptochos Toy Collection 12pm Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	16  5pm Dance Practice 6:30pm Dance Practice	17  10:30am VIPs Breakfast Meeting	18  6pm Philoptochos Christmas Party	19 	20  7pm Dance Practice	21 
Nativity Fast						
22  Sunday Before Nativity 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12pm Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	23  5pm Dance Practice 6:30pm Dance Practice	24  Forefeast of the Nativity 9am Orthros 10am Divine Lit.	25 Feast of the Nativity 9am Orthros 10am Divine Lit.	26	27 7pm Dance Practice	28 GOYA Christmas Party
Nativity Fast						
29 13th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Indoor & Live-stream	30	31				
		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

Saint Anthony
Greek Orthodox Community
778 South Rosemead Blvd
Pasadena, California 91107



Phone
626.449.6943
Fax
626.449.6974
E-mail
alma@saint-anthonys.org

We're on the Web!

www.saint-anthonys.org

TIME SENSITIVE

POSTAGE
STAMP

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.

Want to keep Christ in Christmas?

Feed the hungry, clothe the
naked, forgive the guilty,
welcome the unwanted, care
for the ill, love your enemies,
and do unto others as you
would have done unto you.

