

The Voice of Saint Anthony

December 2025

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 !

Priest's Message	2
Stewardship	5
Ministries	7
Parish Council Report	9
Sunday School	10
Youth/Young Adults	11
Philoechochos	14
VIPs	24
Community News, etc.	25
Monthly Lesson	34
Saints of the Month	37
Orthodox Calendar	43



Καλά
Χριστούγεννα

Holy Nativity of our Lord
25 December

DEADLINE for JANUARY Newsletter is SATURDAY, 27 DECEMBER

Please send to: newsletter_church@aol.com

Message from Father Peter

SAINT ANTHONY
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCHRev. Protopresbyter Peter Stratos
Presiding Priest

November 30, 2025 - Andrew the First-Called Apostle

Beloved Parishioners,

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

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

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

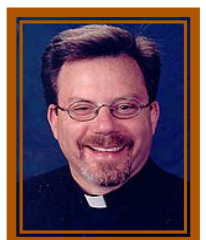
St. Paul teaches us that our attitude, when we give, is more important than the amount we give. Our means, our hearts, our faith together determine the amount. But God is concerned about "how" we give from the resources we have: our time, talents and treasure. We are stewards of every gift, using each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

We ask that you prayerfully complete your 2026 Stewardship Card for your household, indicating the contribution of your time, talents and treasure. We are afforded ample opportunities for stewardship in the life of our Church and parish community. Participation and cheerful giving are the hallmarks of Christian Stewardship.

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

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


Fr. Peter Stratos
Proistamenos



THE GOALS OF THE NATIVITY FAST & ADVENT

1. SEEING GOD. The first thing our church-traditions are helping us work on right now is our vision. More specifically, to behold or “see God” being born to us in Bethlehem. For this, my heart, mind, and body need a house-cleaning. The LORD said: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” The fasting-discipline, including extra attentiveness and tender-loving-care of my spiritual and physical health, helps me to re-focus on the presence of the tender-loving-and-caring of God in my life.

2. SPIRITUAL AWAKENING. I’m being awakened from my indifference and complacency to the Advent or coming of Christ into my world, and into my heart amidst the concerns and fears that creep into me when I lose focus, lose God-reliance, and get self-reliant and self-centered. This spiritual awakening to God, others, and myself is helped through:

3. HUNGER & THIRST. The kind of hunger and thirst that the Prophets had for the coming of the Messiah, is one I re-embrace when we celebrate the Prophets and immerse ourselves in their prophecies this season. I turn away from my not-healthy desires and aspirations, either physical or spiritual, which infect me with the “More” Disease: always demanding “more” and never satisfied. This season I let myself join the blessed, those who are satisfied: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

4. JOY & PEACE. Joy takes work. Peace takes work. Ultimately, the bit of daily, consistent “work” on my spiritual and physical health this season frees me to experience true joy and peace, coming to all of us from an unexpected, unassuming place, a little cave in Bethlehem. I need to begin in my own little “cave.” Let me take up this work today, as I clean house, that I may see more clearly the abundant Light pouring out on all of us from the most unexpected places: a cave in Bethlehem.



HOLY SERVICES PROGRAM – CHRISTMAS, THEOPHANY, FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY
SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

DECEMBER 2025

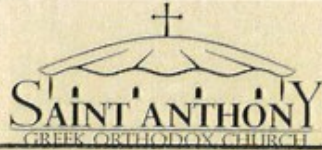
Wednesday, Dec. 24	THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil.....	9:00 a.m.
Thursday, Dec. 25	THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD Orthros Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Dec. 28	SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY Orthros Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m.

JANUARY 2026

Sunday, Jan. 4	SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY Orthros Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Monday, Jan. 5	THE FOREFEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST AGHIASMOS (GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS) Orthros..... Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	9:00a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 6	THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST AGHIASMOS (GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS) Orthros Divine Liturgy of St. Basil	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 7	SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Orthros Divine Liturgy	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Jan. 11	Orthros Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom VASILOPITA after Services hosted by Philoptochos.	8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
Friday, Jan. 16	EVE OF THE FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY Great Vesper Service w/ Artoklasia Dinner will follow, hosted by Philoptochos.	6:00 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 17	FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY Orthros Divine Liturgy	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.



Stewardship



2026 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)*

2026

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 December 31, 2025

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

In response to God's blessings, I/we pledge a 2026 offering of:

My Total Commitment for 2026: \$_____

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

_____ 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 _____

Stewardship Sunday on December 7, 2025.

Pledge cards will be mailed out the first week of December 2025.

Complete your pledge card for 2026 by December 31, 2025 to enter in a raffle to win 2 nights at the Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel!

Ministries



2025 PARISH COUNCIL

Perry Vidalakis	President
Pete Gallanis	1st Vice President
Joe Akrotirianakis	2nd Vice President
Kosta Papavasiliou	Secretary
Tashia Vagenas	Treasurer
Tony Christopoulos	AssiSaintTreasurer

Christian Balas
Tom Grafos
Louie Kades
Pete Katsafados
Jonathan Nassos
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

ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES

Executive Board

President

Nicolette Fuerst

1st Vice President

Liz Skandale

2nd Vice President

Carolina Kokoris

Sophia Syrengelas

Corresponding Secretary

Tanya Christodoulelis

Recording Secretary

Fontaine Malisos

Treasurer

Maria Kypreos

Assistant Treasurer

Mary Dewar

Philoptochos Advisor

Judith Din

Spiritual Advisor

Father Peter Stratos

Board of Directors

Beautification

Connie Becker

Andrea Patzakis

Community Outreach

Mary Dewar

Fellowship

Mary Udria

Noula Serban

Operation Classroom

Helen Skandale

Lisa Xanthos

Publicity

Christine Pappas

Scholarship

Presbytera Aida Statros

Sunshine and Visitation

Maria Hronas

Union Station

Maria Kokoris



Acolytes

Bible Study

Bookstore

Bowling

Golf Tournament

GOYA

GOYA Basketball

GOYA Volleyball

Greek Dance Groups

Greek Festival

Greek Language

JOY/HOPE

Myrrh Bearers

Oratorical Festival

Prayer Shawls

Psalter Group

Vacation Bible School

VIPs

Pres Aida Stratos

Fr. Peter Stratos

Christiana Kontaxis
Michael Kontaxis

Anthia Drulias Lucas

Jimmy Christos

Anthia Drulias Lucas
Maria Katsas Gittings
Polly Vagenas

Pana Gelt

Anthia Lucas
Pana Gelt

Nikole Zoumberakis

Christian Balas

Anastasia McClain

Irene Albeck

Irene Albeck

Pres Aida Stratos

Maria Kypreos

Fr. Peter Stratos

Sophia Syrengelas
Mary Udria

Irene Albeck



Parish Council

ENTERING CHURCH

Please make every effort to arrive for services a little early.
If you arrive late, it is important to observe the following moments in the Divine Liturgy when you should not enter the Nave but wait quietly in the Narthex:

During the Small Entrance
During the Epistle Reading
During the Gospel Reading
During the Homily
When the Priest is censuring just before the Great Entrance
During the Great Entrance
From the Creed until after the Consecration of the Gifts
During the Lord's Prayer

A Parish Council member will gladly assist you with any question about the appropriate times to enter the Nave.

HOLY COMMUNION PROCEDURE

For the benefit of our Sunday School students, their teachers and the **TIMELY** start of their Sunday School Classes please allow all the children to receive Holy Communion first.

- ♦ Please remain standing while following the directions of the ushers.
- ♦ 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 in a pew when Holy Communion begins, please quietly find a spot in the back rows. 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 to proceed ahead of others or enter the center aisle ahead of the pews in front of you.
- ♦ When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name) and naturally receive as if being fed.
- ♦ Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
- ♦ All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see your priest if you have any questions.



Christmas—The Birth of Christ our Savior

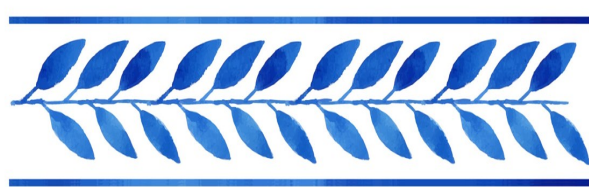


This holy and blessed Feast of the Birth of our Lord is a joyous day that brings us together in worship and praise of our Creator and Redeemer. Today the eternal Word of God enters our humanity for our deliverance from sin, evil and death. Today the infinite wisdom of God is revealed in the birth of the Savior, and the truth of His

divine will for our salvation is made known. Today an enduring promise of peace is established by a new-born infant who is the Prince of Peace and whose name Emmanuel means God is with us. On this day His great love for us is shown as the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is a revelation of truth. Today, the ancient promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to so many others is fulfilled. All that was foretold by the Prophets has come true. God has become human so that we can be redeemed and restored to blessed communion and abundant life with Him.

Christmas is a revelation of love. In offering Himself for our sakes, He becomes the greatest of all gifts. The light of grace reveals God's compassion and the power of grace visible in the Child affirms that healing has come. He has come to lead us from death to life. In the beauty of a Child, not by overwhelming force or temporal might, the power of God's love for us brings joy and unquenchable hope! Our worship and praise of the Incarnate Lord offers a vibrant witness of truth in a world filled with confusion and deception. Into the darkness and hopelessness by which many are bound, we proclaim the divine wisdom that guides us to the meaning of our existence and to the true life for which we have been created. As God has revealed His great love for us in the birth of our Lord, we reveal His divine grace in our lives through our faith, our acts of kindness and service, and our generosity to others especially those in need. Our compassion, gives glory to God and will lead others to the King of kings, to our Savior who is the Messianic King, Christ the Lord!

Youth & Young Adults

**GOYA NEWS**

Our GOYAns got together just before Thanksgiving for a night of games, hanging out, and lots of Thanksgiving food & sweets!

Save the Date: Our Christmas Party this year will take place on Friday, December 19 at the Church Hall. Bring your PJ's & a sleeping bag and get ready for a night filled with all things Christmas!

Our next GOYA meeting will be on the FIRST Sunday this month, December 7 @ 12:15 upstairs in the High School room. We'll see you there!





2025-2026 GOYA SIGN UP

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

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



Get ready, basketball fans!

The **GOYA Basketball** season is fast approaching, and we are excited to welcome new players to our teams!

We are actively seeking enthusiastic boys, aged 12 to 19, and girls, aged 12 to 21, who are passionate about playing basketball.

If you have a love for the game and want to be part of an amazing team, we encourage you to reach out.

For any inquiries or to express your interest, please contact
Pana Gelt - pgelt3@gmail.com

We would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Here is the schedule for the 2026 season:

2/22	Saint Anthony @ Assumption
3/1	Saint Basil @ Saint Anthony
3/8	Saint Anthony @ Saint John
3/15	Saint Nick @ Saint Anthony
3/22	Saint Anthony @ Saint Sophia
3/29	Saint Anthony @ Saint Katherine
4/19	Saint George @ Saint Anthony
4/25	Quarter Finals
4/26	Semi Finals
5/3	Finals

Don't miss out!
Sign-ups will officially open in January,
so mark your calendars and get ready to join the fun!

Philoptochos

Good Works

EATON FIRE DISASTER RELIEF SUPPORT

Philoptochos has been working to provide support and assistance to those who have been affected by the Eaton Fire.

Recovery Relief Buckets are available to anyone who has been displaced or is recovering from the after-effects of the fire.

Buckets contain essential cleaning supplies to help you clean and neutralize the lingering ashes and residue of the fire.

Contact a Board member if you or someone you know needs a Disaster Relief Bucket.

Philoptochos is here to help those affected by the Eaton Fire.

If you need assistance or aid, please let us know.
The Army of Agape is here for you.

Questions: Judith Din (626) 676-1240 or jnda810@gmail.com

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
Maria Kokoris	nmkokoris@gmail.com
Christina Kades	christinekades@gmail.com

***"Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house;
If you see a naked man, cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh."***

Isaiah 58:7



"CHRISTMAS FOR THE KIDS"

PHILOPTOCHOS & FRIENDS IN DEED

Thank you for joining Philoptochos and Friends in Deed in supporting underprivileged children in our community through this special gift-giving drive.

Each child has provided a wish list of gifts but it is simply a guide. You are not expected to purchase everything listed and there is no minimum or maximum amount for gifts or gift cards.

- Select a tag with a child's name from the Christmas tree at the Philoptochos table located in the foyer of the Trinity Ballroom on Sunday, November 23th, November 30 and December 7.
- Please place the **unwrapped** gifts in a Christmas gift bag with the child's name attached (please use the tag provided) and return it to the church office by **Monday, December 8**. If possible, please include gift receipts.
- If you prefer, you may donate toward a particular child's gift and we will do the shopping for you. You can also give a general monetary donation to support the children.

If you have any questions, please call or text Judith Din at (626) 676-1240

We are grateful for your support – Thank you!

In November, Philopotochos donated turkeys & food.

Community Happenings



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

Thursday, December 4th 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.

Saint Anthony Philoptochos

VASILOPITA

PREPAID ORDER FORM

All Prepaid Orders must be received by
Sunday, December 14

PREPAID ORDERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PICKUP ONLY ON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 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
- ONLINE - <https://stanthonybenefit.square.site> (select Santa’s Kitchen Tab)

Name: _____ Cell/Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ E-mail: _____

ITEM	COST	QUANTITY	\$ TOTAL
<div></div> <div>Vasilopita (1 Loaf) Traditional sweet Greek New Year’s bread. <i>Pickup on Sunday, December 21 (12:00 pm-1:00 pm)</i></div>	\$20	_____	_____

ORDER TOTAL \$ _____

Upcoming Philoptochos Events

The 56th Annual Christmas Benefit, **A TIMELESS CHRISTMAS**, will be held on

Saturday, December 6, 2025 at The Sheraton San Gabriel in San Gabriel.

This year's benefit will include a fashion show, holiday entertainment, Christmas Boutique, Santa's Kitchen, and gift vendors. Doors open early at 10:30 AM and the luncheon will start at 12:00 PM.

Proceeds will benefit a very worthy local organization **SAN GABRIEL VALLEY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY** helping families rebuild homes affected by the Altadena fire as well as other Philoptochos charities in our community, Metropolis and National.

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

For **DONATIONS** to the Star Program, contact

Star Program Chair - Mary Dewar: philostarprogram@gmail.com

Or donate directly, using this link: [The Star Program](#)

Should you have any questions about the benefit, please contact

Nicole Schulman (626) 497-5368.

Upcoming Philoptochos Meetings

Philoptochos Annual Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Join us to celebrate the Christmas season with delicious food, wonderful fellowship and a ton of fun.

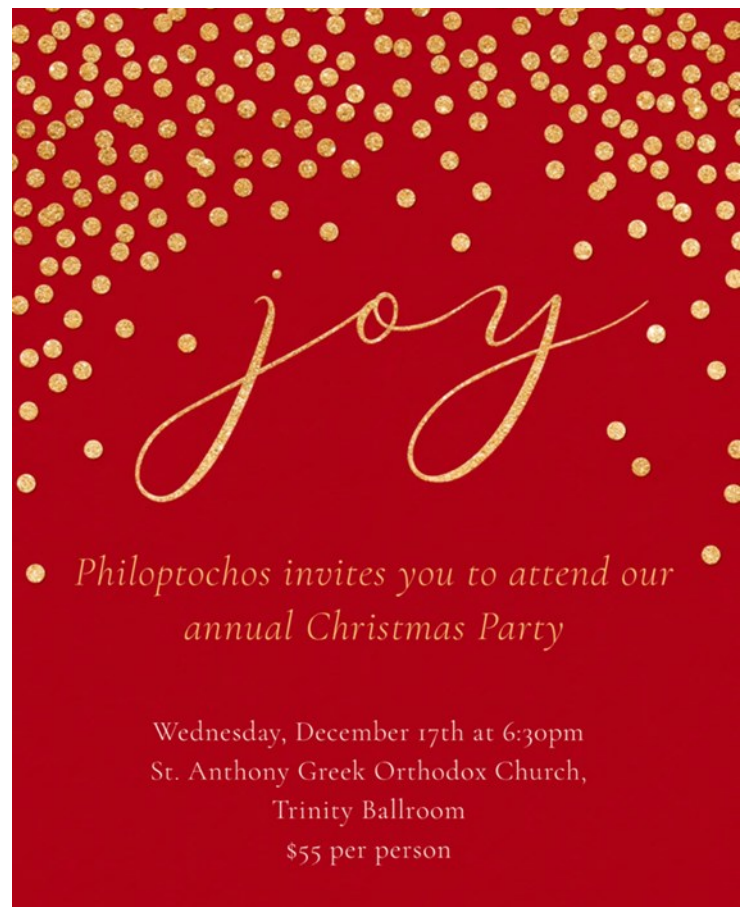
Bring a wrapped ornament for our annual ornament exchange which always elicits a lot of laughs.

Make your reservation by December 14.

Payment is cash or check at the door.

Reservations or Questions ?

Jeanne - 626-437-6078



Upcoming Scholarship Opportunities in 2026

Attention High School Seniors – Philoptochos of Saint Anthony Scholarship Applications will be available in Spring 2026. 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 in our Saint Anthony church community may apply.

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

Events in our Metropolis

2026 Saint Sophia Philoptochos 56th Debutante Presentation Ball

Sunday, January 18, 2026

Four Seasons Beverly Wilshire Hotel

6:00 PM Cocktail Reception

7:00 PM Presentation, Dinner and Dancing

Black Tie

Please join Saint Sophia and friends in celebrating the young women of our Metropolis by attending the Ball and recognizing their plentiful philanthropic, academic, and extracurricular accomplishments and by raising funds for Philoptochos charities via submitting a donation and message to the Presentation Album.

Our debutantes from Saint Anthony Church in Pasadena are:

Evangeline Bicos, Mariella Bicos, Valentina Bicos, Madeline Gallanis, Madison McNulty, Nancy McNulty, Sophia McNulty, and Maria Syrengelas

For more information on Reservations or Donations

presentation@saintsophia.org

Church office 323.737.2424



LIGHT THE PATH – The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos hosted Light the Path, a Christmas Luncheon, on Sunday, November 16, 2025 at The Olympic Club in San Francisco. Proceeds from this festive holiday event will benefit the Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund. Saint Anthony Philoptochos members attended this worthy event .



Judith Din and Maria Kypreos present our chapter's prize entry for 2025.



The Seminarians (*left to right*) - Konstantine Prevas, Joseph Bosl, Nicholas Prevas, and Demetrius Dogias.

Demetrius Dogias and his wife, Christina (pictured) will be joining our parish community after graduation in 2026.



Several Saint Anthony Philoptochos members serve on the Metropolis of SF Philoptochos Board.

Judie Christopoulos (seated left), Maria Kypreos and Lisa Xanthos (seated right).

Lisa Xanthos is also on the National Philoptochos Board.



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

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ 2025 Philoptochos Membership ☐ 2025 Associate Membership (Men / Non-Voting) Date _____

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 <input type="checkbox"/>			
St. Anthony's Philoptochos Stewardship (membership dues). Select amount below:			
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 <input type="checkbox"/> 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:			
___ Feeding the Hungry	___ Hosting Fellowship	___ Marketing	
___ Delivering Meals to Parishioners	___ Baking & Cooking	___ Website Designer	
___ Homebound Visitations	___ Fundraising	___ Other Talents	
___ Telephone Tree	___ Social Media	___ Specify	



2025 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

To register for membership online, click here:

<https://stanthonypiloptochos.square.site/product/become-a-philoptochos-member/58>



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 Coffee Hour, you are assisting in providing a delicious snack while we spend time with our church family. Your fellow parishioners will be grateful for the snack and fellowship.

Hosting is easy:

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 snack for 70 adults & 30 kids** – See reverse side for suggestions and quantities
3. **Bring snack items plated on serving trays/bowls ready to serve by 10:00AM on your chosen day.** (Serving tables and coffee/water station are set up by 10:00AM)
4. **Clean up snack tables and remove all personal items** – Our dedicated Parish caretaker, Carlos, will assist on the day of the event, as needed, but he is not responsible for the set up or clean up of the snack tables. Please remove any leftover food

Coffee, sugar, creamer, paper plates, plastic utensils, paper cups and napkins used for coffee hour are underwritten by Parish Council & Philoptochos. Please consider donating these items to help offset the cost.

All donations made during Coffee Hour go toward the Church Altar Fund to provide the liturgical needs for our St. Anthony Parish

Host a Coffee Hour

Food Suggestions & Quantities

100 people – 70 adults & 30 children

Costco, Smart & Final or Super King are recommended for most items. Specialty items can be found at any Greek or Armenian market

Please have all items brought to the Parish Hall ready-to-serve on platters/bowls by 10AM. preferably disposable. If not disposable, please remember to take them home

Tables, Tablecloths, Coffee, Cream, Sugar, Paper Plates, Napkins, Cups and Water will be set up by 10AM

Paper goods are underwritten by both Parish Council & Philoptochos. Please consider donating these items to help offset the cost

Our dedicated Parish caretaker, Carlos, is responsible only for the setup of water and coffee. He should not be expected to set-up the snack or cleanup any remaining food or serving pieces.

Any questions, please contact Tanya Mallis-Christodoulelis @ 626-379-2304

QTY	ITEM	COMMENTS
	Mini Bagels or Bagels	100 Mini whole or 6 bags of 12 Regular Sliced, cut in half
1 Jumbo Jar	Peanut Butter	Served in 4 paper/plastic bowls
1-48oz Jar	Jelly	Served in 2 paper/plastic bowls
1 Jumbo Jar	Nutella	Served in 2 paper/plastic bowls
	OR	
100	Mini Deli Sandwiches	Assorted Meats, Tuna, Veggie
	OR	
5lbs	Greek Cheese	Feta or Kefalotyri, sliced
4lbs	Greek Olives	1-4lb Tub or equivalent
	Hummus	Homemade (1 lg can chickpeas) or 3-34oz tubs Costco Hummus
4	Pita Bread Bags of 12	Pita - cut into quarters / Baguettes - sliced
	OR	
2-3	Assorted Salads	Potato Salad, Greek Salad, Tabouli
2	Assorted Vegetable Trays	
	AND (Choose 2)	
100	Cookies	Biscotti, Oreos, Assorted
4	Bundt Cakes or similar	Cut into thin slices
50-100	Muffins / Pastries / Donuts	50 Large, cut in half or 100 Small
6 containers	Seedless Grapes	Cleaned and cut into small bunches
3 – 5lb bags	Tangerines	
2	Assorted Fruit or Veggie Trays	



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
 Facebook: St. Anthony Philoptochos
 Instagram: stanthonypiloptochos

The November VIP meeting was called to order by president Irene Albeck with the opening prayer led by special guest Father Peter Stratos. As this meeting took place on Veterans Day as well as the occasion of our now-traditional Thanksgiving Feast, Irene kept her remarks brief to allow for a reprise of the special Veterans Day Program video presented by the Saint Anthony Philoptochos on Sunday, November 9, 2014.

A summary of upcoming events include:

A TIMELESS CHRISTMAS, the major philanthropic fund raiser of our Philoptochos chapter being held on Saturday **December 6th** at the Langham Hotel.

A NEW YEAR'S EVE EVENT, to support the Saint Anthony Dance Program to be held in the Trinity Ballroom.

Irene announced that the VIP Membership Dues would be increased to \$20.00 per member in 2026.

Judie Christopoulos reported on our upcoming outing to the Christmas Program presented by the Citrus College Fine Arts Department which will be held on **Sunday December 14th** at 2:00 PM. Judie secured tickets at a group rate of \$25.00 per person; but after December 2nd the price will increase to \$35.00 per ticket.

Finally, the VIPs are once again invited to the home of Julie and Dino Ballas on Tuesday **December 16th** at 11:00 AM for a mediterranean holiday luncheon and Christmas Cheer. As a "thank you" for this hospitality, the VIPs are encouraged to make contributions of money, food or gift cards to the Pasadena City College Lancer Pantry.

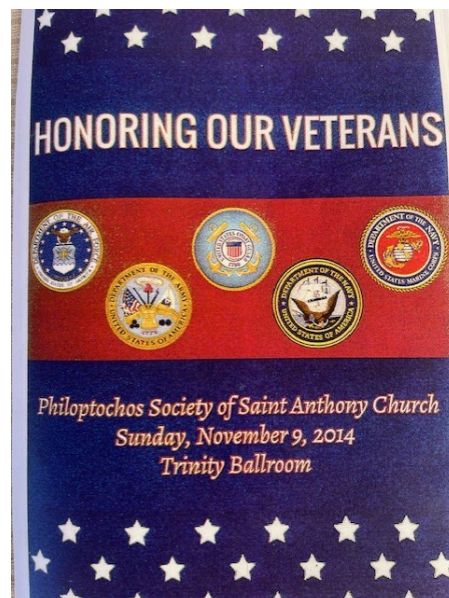
In remembrance of the Veterans Day Holiday, Irene began a presentation with the assistance of Jim Hronas to recount the story of how Veterans Day, originally Armistice Day, came to be; and how the poppy flower became the enduring symbol of remembrance of the First World War. At the conclusion of these remarks, Jim showed a video presented by the Philoptochos on November 9, 2014 honoring all of our parishioners and their family members who had served in the nation's armed forces. In this poignant remembrance, it was noted that many parishioners had departed this life since the original presentation back in 2014. **"Eternal be their memories!"**

At the conclusion of this Veterans Day Remembrance, birthday wishes were extended to the November celebrants, Thean Grafos, Maria and Jim Hronas, and Maria Kokoris.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS!!

Before sitting down to a sumptuous Thanksgiving feast of turkey, trimmings and a vast array of side dishes, acknowledgements were rendered to special guests, Father Peter and Presbyteria Aida Stratos, Fontaine Malisos, 2014 Philoptochos President, and Judith Din, Philoptochos Benefit Chairperson. Special thanks were extended to Anthia Lucas and her friend Kim for shopping and preparing the turkeys, Georgia and John Vagenas for carving the turkeys, Christine Kades for her delicious gravy, and all the VIPs for their amazing side dishes.

With Advent now under way, the VIPs extend their best wishes to the entire Saint Anthony Community for a Very Merry Christmas with fervent prayers that the New Year 2026 will hold all of the best for everyone!!



Community News & more...



Pasadena Rose Bowl AHEPA #373 2025 Christmas Party

Honoring **Irene Albeck** on her exemplary service to the Pasadena Greek community with her leadership in Christian education including Sunday School, and in the Philoptochos.



Friday, December 19, 2025
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.

Registration is OPEN for Saint Sophia Winter Camp!

December 27 - 30 at Camp Saint Nicholas in Frazer Park.

Check out the camp website saintsophiacamp.org for more information and to register.

Saint Sophia Camp presents

Winter Camp

December 27- 30

Camp Saint Nicholas in Frazer Park

\$350 per camper

For More Information & Registration visit
www.saintsophiacamp.org



Saint Anthony Bowling League



Saint Anthony Bowling Ministry completed their 2025 Fall season on Thursday, November 20. Once again bowlers competed enthusiastically and enjoyed each other's company. The Winter-Spring season will begin after the holidays on Thursday, September 15, 7:00 P.M., at Bowlero Lanes in Pasadena.

Results from the fall season is a follows:

1 st Team 8	Pete Bissias, Randy Soewers, Virginia Lappas	28.5 wins
2 nd Team 4	Hail Mary: Mary & Andrew Dewar, John Caire	28 wins
3 rd Team 2	Bowl Tide: Chrissa, Syrus and Parviz Mobayen	27 wins
4 th Team 1	Holy Rollers: Katherine Boukidis, Georgia Tripodes, Bryan Gittings:	23.5 wins Tie
4 th Team 12	Livin' on a Spare: Joyce Nichols, Ted Dupas, Chris Conley	23.5 wins Tie
5 th Team 6	Cleo Kades, Elene Kalivas, Nick Paziouros	22 wins Tie
5 th Team 9	Bowl Movements: Alice Jacquez, Anthia Lucas, Jim Nichols	22 wins Tie
6 th Team 3	Maria, Max, and Dina Ibrahimzade	19 wins
7 th Team 5	Maria and Kosta Papavasiliou, Elleni Conley	17 wins
8 th Team 10	Seven: Maria Conley, Lee Anton, Rick Nassif	12.5 wins
9 th Team 11	SJV: Sophia Angelos, Jim Horaites, Vincent Lappas	12 wins

We invite you to join the Saint Anthony Bowling League. If you are interested contact Anthia Lucas.

Each season lasts 12 weeks and concludes before the holidays.

League fees are \$22.00 a week and include prizes at the end of the season.

Contact info: Anthia Drulias-Lucas: ADLJSL02@yahoo.com (626)274-6133

Enjoy our team photos next 3 pages...









Acolyte Bowling Outing Tradition Continues

On Sunday, Nov 23 after Divine Liturgy and Sunday School, the Acolytes and Father Peter gathered at Bowlero, Pasadena for an afternoon of bowling, lunch, arcade games and great fellowship.

We now have a roster of 23 acolytes who regularly participate in the Holy Altar. 18 of the 23 acolytes were able to participate in the bowling outing!

A special thank you to two generous sponsors, who donated half the cost for this wonderful afternoon of fun, friendship and fellowship for our acolytes.



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



sample

The Voice of Saint Anthony

January 2025

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	2
Stewardship	4
Ministries	6
Parish Council Report	8
Sunday School	9
Youth/Young Adults	10
Philoptochos	13
VIPs	19
Community News, etc.	21
Monthly Lesson	26
Saints of the Month	29
Orthodox Calendar	35



Saint Anthony the Great
17 January

**Christ is Born !
 Glorify Him !**

*Deadline for February Newsletter is Saturday, 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

Yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:16-20

How, exactly are we “saved”? Is it in one finite moment? Are we judged based on our whole life, or just how we are at the end? Is there a moment where we can say our salvation is guaranteed?

These are questions that many Christians ask, and even try to answer. The answers are found in various places in Scripture, so that we don't have to guess, we can go right to the Scriptures.

In his letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul tells us that we “*know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.*” (Galatians 2:16) And in the Epistle of St. James, he writes to us that “*faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.*” (James 2:17) We know then that our salvation is based on both faith and works. Ultimately, salvation is an act of God's grace and mercy. For no amount of faith or works can make us worthy of salvation. No one can approach the Judgment Seat of Christ and proclaim themselves worthy to enter the Kingdom of God. Ultimately, our entrance into the Kingdom of God is an act of mercy on the part of the Lord, which will be affected by both our faith and our works.

There are some churches that espouse the notion of “once saved, always saved,” the idea that one is “saved” in a finite moment in time. This notion doesn't account for works, nor does it account for spiritual struggle that defines each Christian life. If I was “saved” years ago, then what is the incentive to struggle today?

One way to look at the salvation equation is to take a cup, rocks and water. The cup represents faith. It is the structure of what we believe. The rocks represent our works. If we have faith with no works, our faith is as empty as the empty cup. For faith without works is dead. On the other hand, if we have works without faith, it's like pouring a bunch of rocks on a table. They have no order, no structure, and ultimately no purpose.

So we combine faith and works. We fill the cup with rocks. A close look at the cup, even when filled with rocks, indicates that there are still some empty spaces. This is where grace comes in. Grace is the God-like quality that completes what is lacking in each life. Because no matter how hard we try to follow after Christ, something will be lacking in each of us.

How do we get grace? One spoonful of Communion at a time is the best way to get it. One prayer at a time. One confession at a time. And over time, these “spoonfuls” of grace begin to truly fill the cup. The ultimate expression of grace, however, is God granting us His Kingdom at the end of our lives. And His judgment of our lives will be based on the “cup” we present Him. Will we have a large cup of faith? Will we have an empty cup, meaning we did no works to support the faith we claim to have? Will we have an impressive amount of rocks but no cup in which to keep them, meaning we did lots of good things but not in His name. The problem with works that are not in His name is, in whose name are they in? Ultimately good works not done for God end up being done for ourselves. Finally, how much grace did we seek out through prayer and the sacraments?

There is a finite equation for salvation—It is faith plus works plus grace. The challenge is that faith, works and grace are things that cannot be quantified. There isn't a certain amount of each one that guarantees salvation. So we work each day to deepen our experience of each so that we can make our “case” before His Judgment Seat and ultimately leave it to God's Providence to judge us worthy of Paradise.

Saint Paul tells us that we should “*live to God*” (Galatians 2:19). And that the best way to live our lives is to not live for ourselves but for Him. He says in Galatians 2:20 “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*” and consequently our lives are not lived for ourselves, but as St. Paul says “*the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave Himself for me.*” (2:20)

Faith plus works plus grace equals salvation.

A life lived in Christ and for Christ bolsters **faith, works and grace.**

SERMON FROM FATHER ANDREAS VITHOULKAS
Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church & National Shrine
World Trade Center, New York, NY
www.stnicholaswtc.org

Wisdom is the ability to see our lives, the world, and reality from the perspective of the Kingdom of God. It is the ability to see beyond this temporal world. Wisdom helps us understand the greater meaning of our lives, our actions, our desires, and our destiny. To be wise is to be humble and thankful for all God has given us. It is to realize that the past, the present, and the future all exist as a preparation for eternal life, an anticipation for the eternal Kingdom of God. In this parable, the Lord Jesus teaches us about a rich man who owned a profitable land. In that society at the time, the wealthy were the ones who owned cattle and land. This man, however, possessed riches but did not possess wisdom. He was rich in this world, but he was not rich towards God, because he could neither see his riches nor his life in the broader context of the Kingdom of God. He did not understand that his riches were a gift from God. He wanted to keep it all for himself, without considering the poor and the needy, and without realizing that his own life would one day end, and he would not be able to carry any wealth into the next life. The Apostle Paul tells us that those rich in this present age should not be arrogant nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. He says, "Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19). The rich man in the passage was not unwise because he was rich, since there is nothing wrong with riches in and of themselves. His lack of wisdom relates precisely to what the Apostle Paul teaches. The rich man was not only prideful, but he also did not trust in God, instead trusting in his riches. He was not ready to give and unwilling to share because he wanted to always accumulate for this life instead of laying a foundation for eternal life. The Greek word for "sin" (αμαρτία) means missing the target. If we make the things of this world our ultimate target, we chase after the wind. To worry about selfishly accumulating things in this world is like trying to store water in a leaking pool. We will not be able to take anything material with us from this life. We will not carry material riches into the Kingdom of God. Everything we have is a provision from God, given for our sustenance, enjoyment, and sharing with those in need. The rich man in this parable speaks to his own soul. We read this in different passages of Scripture, for example, the famous lines from the beginning of Psalm 102: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards." In this parable, however, the rich man is not speaking to his soul, that is, to his own heart, to bless God and thank Him for all the gifts He has given him. On the contrary, he speaks to himself to plan how to accumulate wealth and live selfishly in this life. His crops yielded much, and the rich man became even richer. He now plans to build a bigger barn to keep it all for himself. He thinks, "I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.'" His heart was grounded only in this life, as he loved and hoped for the accumulation of riches and the enjoyment of earthly pleasure. Arrogance can destroy souls & make our spiritual growth & salvation unnecessarily difficult. It distances us from God.

He wants us to live a humble life on earth, working for our daily needs, but caring above all about our spiritual life. The Lord Jesus calls the rich man out of his selfish dream, pointing out his foolishness and telling him that his time in this life is over. He would not be able to enjoy riches and pleasure anymore, and he would not be able to take a penny into the next life. His barn would stay behind, but the soul he sought to comfort with worldly riches would move on and find itself poor towards God. In the end, instead of being rich he became poor, because true wealth is wisdom and love, not selfishness. The Lord reminds the man that in his selfishness, he did not even accumulate things for his loved ones. He wanted it all for himself, but now that he was departing this life, the riches would be left for someone else. The Lord says the man's problem was that he laid up treasures for himself but was not rich toward God. It is important to notice that the problem was not the riches themselves because one can have riches and use them for the glory of God. The problem was that he was not rich towards God. The selfish desire for riches can afflict the rich and the poor. The problem is that wealth does not endure eternally, but we do. Saint Gregory Palamas states that the rich man did not imitate God because he did not share his possessions with the needy, whereas God freely shares His blessings with everyone. He says, "We must share what we have with those who are poor for His sake and so be saved through them. Let us acquire merciful hearts and give positive proof of brotherly love and devotion to the Father and Master of all." To be rich towards God is to be rich in love and generosity. When we are spiritually rich, we teach others with our Christlike life, and we can lead and guide them towards salvation. The most incredible riches in this world are communion with God, peace, and love. These only come by trusting God above all else and desiring Him over everything this world offers. Saint Porphyrios says, "Complete trust in God – that's what holy humility is." By sharing what God gives us with those in need, we demonstrate our love for God and our neighbor. In this way, our wealth of peace and joy increases, laying a foundation for eternal life. God is the creator of all things, and all things belong to Him. He gives us generously and provides for all our needs because He loves us as a Father who provides for His children. When we receive His gifts with thankful hearts, we become rich towards God. When we use the riches we have to provide for the needy, the Church, and our loved ones, we become spiritually rich. Selflessness and generosity bring joy and peace from God. It makes us rich with God. The more we give, the more blessings we receive from Him, even eternal life. No one can outgive God. Let us always trust our Father, Who provides us with every good gift from above, and let us imitate Him in using riches with love and generosity, for the benefit of others, as a means towards the Kingdom of God. Amen.

From “Our Thoughts Determine our Lives:
The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitounica” (1914-2003)

God is Love. And if we call upon God in our life as the Holy Fathers teach us, then we are calling upon Love. If we know and believe that He is present everywhere at all times and if we are with Him in our hearts, He will teach us how to love our neighbor. For we do not know how to love either the Lord or our neighbor. The evil spirits often so interfere with the Divine love given us by God that they often lure us away from the path of real and true love. Their suggestions are full of the physical and emotional aspects of this world: enjoyment and lust, which is nothing but enslavement.

It often happens that a person, either young or old, falls in love with another person or even an object. Some people fall in love with gold and cannot bear to be separated from it or from their wealth, house, and possessions, and they become enslaved. If someone were to take this from them, they would become desperate. Many times the powers of evil bring such people to the brink of self-destruction.

Is this love? The spirits of evil often come and meddle with the Divine love that God has planted in us. That kind of love [corrupted by the evil spirits] is without discernment. But the love of God is boundless... Love is perfection, says the Apostle (cf. Romans 13:10). God is perfect, He is faultless. And so, when Divine love becomes manifest in us in the fullness of Grace, we radiate this love not only on the earth, but throughout the entire universe as well. So God is in us, and He is present everywhere. It is God's all-encompassing love that manifests itself in us. When this happens we see no difference between people, – everyone is good, everyone is our brother, and we consider ourselves to be the worst of men, servants of every created thing.

In this kind of love we are humbled; our soul is at peace and in humility. And humility is the perfection of the Christian life. It is not in the raising of the dead or in working miracles that Christian perfection lies, but in extreme humility. When we are illumined by the Grace of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of Divine love, then we want to serve everyone and to help everyone. Even when we see a little ant struggling, we want to help him. So, love is sacrifice. Love sacrifices itself for its neighbor.

The Lord is always waiting for us to unite ourselves with Him in love, but instead we drift further and further away from Him. We know that there can be no life without love. This means that there is no life without God, for God is Love. But His love is not according to the understanding of this world. The love that the world gives us consists of suffering and enslavement because the spirits of evil interfere with it. There is a little bit of love, but mostly it is just enslavement. The spirits of evil try to enslave us so that we become tied to certain people or things, in order to prevent our hearts from going out to God, the Source of life and love. For they know that if our hearts unite with Him, then they cannot come close to us. The man who is given Grace and who is united with God's love is also protected by this Divine love, and the evil spirits cannot come close to him.

Love is the most powerful means of defense there is.

There are no weapons and no power that can measure themselves against love.

Everything is defeated before love.



Saints & Feasts

Saint Barbara

4 December

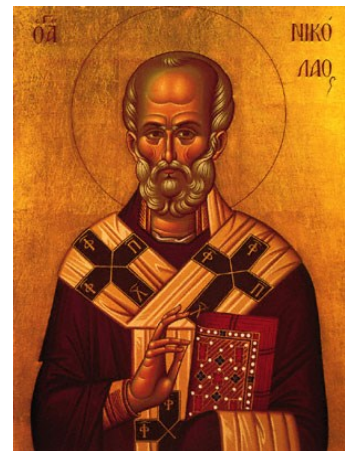
Saint Barbara was from Heliopolis of Phoenicia and lived during the reign of Maximian. She was the daughter of a certain idolater named Dioscorus. When Barbara came of age, she was enlightened in her pure heart and secretly believed in the Holy Trinity. About this time Dioscorus began building a bath-house;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

Prophet Daniel continued

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" (Esaia 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:

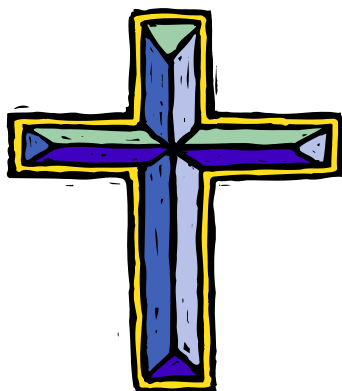
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

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 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1  4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	2 	3  7pm Philoptochos Board Meeting Philoptochos Union Station	4  Saint Barbara 4:30 Greek School	5 	6  Saint Nicholas 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy ROSE HILLS
Nativity Fast						
7  10th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy PC elections/Stewardship 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	8  4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	9  Conception of the Virgin Mary 10:30 am VIP Meeting	10 	11  4:30 Greek School	12  Saint Spyridon	13 
Nativity Fast						
14  11th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	15  4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	16  7pm Parish Council Mtg	17  Saint Prophet Daniel 6:30 Philoptochos Christmas Party	18  4:30 Greek School 5:30pm Greek School Christmas Party	19  GOYA Christmas Party	20 
Nativity Fast						
21  Sunday before Nativity 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy Sun. Sch Christmas Prog. 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	22  Anastasia the Great Martyr 4:30 NO Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	23 	24 	25 Christmas Day 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 	26 	27 Saint Stephen
Nativity Fast						
28 9th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	29 4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice 6:30pm Studies in the Faith	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 All foods allowed No Symbol

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

December 2025

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.

**Grace is when God gives
us good things that
we don't deserve.
Mercy is when He spares us
from bad things we deserve.
Blessings are when He is
generous with both.
Truly, we can never run out
of reasons to thank Him.
God is Good All The Time!**