

The Messenger

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church | 3450 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55408 | 612.825.9595 | www.stmarysgoc.org

February 2020

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St. Mary's

Mission Statement

To proclaim, celebrate, and share the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ in accordance with the Orthodox Tradition.

The Five Tasks of Our Parish Vision

- Hear
- Pray
- Grow
- Serve
- Share

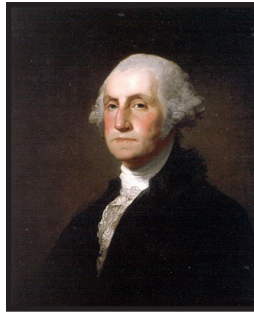


METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

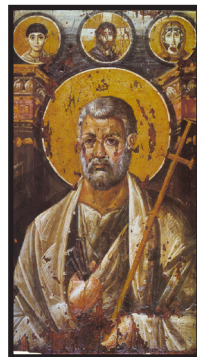
A Message from Father Jason

Father Jason Houck, Associate Priest

What does Presidents' Day, the Emperor Nero, and the Divine Liturgy have to do with each other?



George Washington by Gilbert Stuart (1797). The Corcoran Gallery of Art



St. Peter the Apostle. 6th c. icon. St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, Egypt

On February 17, we will observe Presidents' Day. Presidents' Day is set aside as a day to honor the leadership of past presidents. Although the commemoration varies slightly from state to state, in Minnesota we honor Washington and Lincoln for their great contributions to our nation. Despite whatever faults those leaders had, we still honor them and their memory.

But...what about today? American politics and this nation are very divided over the current leadership and potential future leadership. We may be for or against a leader or candidate. We might not even support any of them! But, we may ask, what are we to do when leaders'—or future leaders'—actions are Unchristian? What are we to do when our leaders' policies may be Unchristian? What are we to do as Orthodox Christians?

That question, of course, is not a new one for our Church. Since the earliest times, our Church has given us guidance about leaders. From the very earliest times—try 1 Peter 2:17—"honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor." Wait a second... "honor the emperor"??? The Roman emperor, at the time of the writing of 1 Peter, was a pagan. But not only that, the Roman emperors: Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and others in the early centuries of Christianity, were not only Unchristian in their behavior, but anti-Christian in their policies! Many of the Apostles themselves died under the Emperor Nero's persecution. Emperors and local rulers persecuted Christians on and off with their policies, but yet, 1 Peter 2:17 instructed early Christians to honor the pagan emperor. Not only that, we are instructed by St. Paul (Romans 13:1) to be "subject to the governing authorities." In First Timothy we are instructed, not only to honor the

—article continues on page 3.

Our Life Together

Chrismation

Patrick Carroll
January 5, 2020

Marriage

Joshua Richter to Ellen Pappas
December 27, 2019

Deaths

Katherine D'Ambriogio
December 12, 2019

Marios Zigomalas
December 17, 2019

Fr. Theodore Filandrinos
January 11, 2020

May their memories be eternal.

Memorial Prayers

Sunday, February 9

Katherine D'Ambrogio (40 days),
George Zarifis
Kathy, Chris, and Nick Pappas
Richard D'Ambrogio

Sunday, February 23

Helen Smith (6 months)
Art Smith (11 years)

Saint Mary's Visitation Ministry

Our Visitation Ministry is continually updating its list of parishioners who are homebound or in care facilities and would like to be on our Visitation List. If you or your loved one is a member of St. Mary's and physically unable to attend church and would enjoy a visit or a telephone call from either a member of our clergy and/or a member of our Visitation Committee, please notify the Church Office, 612.825.9595, or doria@stmarysgoc.org.

If you are interested in being trained as a member of our Visitation Team, please contact Doria.

Thank You

The clergy and staff of St. Mary's wish to thank everyone who remembered them with prayers, thoughts, cards, and gifts during this holiday season, as well as throughout the year. Your thoughtfulness is so much appreciated!

Share YourShelf

February's recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is Simpson Food Pantry.

Sunday, February 2

Canned meals
(e.g. chili; pork and beans)

Sunday, February 9

Potatoes
(boxed, instant, or canned)

Sunday, February 16

Pancake mix and syrup

Sunday, February 23

Hygiene items
(e.g. toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors)

Please consider making a monetary donation. Through a partnership with the Food Group, the food shelves we support are able purchase staple food items at a marked reduction in price. This means that your donated dollars go farther – almost doubling the money you give to purchase much needed food items.

"When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed." –Maya Angelou

St. Mary's Church Staff

Priest

Fr. George Dokos

Associate Priest

Fr. Jason Houck

Attached Priest

Fr. John Kostas

Emeriti

Fr. Anthony Coniaris
Fr. Theodore Filandrinos

Deacon

Deacon Paul Kalina

Administrator

Julie Moricz

Parishioner Support Communications

David Mertesdorf

Ministry Support

Doria Saros

Youth Director

Jonathan Klein

Facilities Coordinator

Bob Yang

Music Director

Thespina Macres

Organist

Mark Macres

St. Mary's Parish Council

President

Dean Murdakes

Vice President

John Beauchamp

Secretary

Paul Hastings

Treasurer

Michael Rakes

Assistant Treasurer

Naira Istephanous

Members

Joseph DiGiovanni
Thomas Hainlin
William M. Hoelt
Nicholas Legeros
Dean Psychogios
Andrew Theodotou
Randy Twito

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Koinonia

Edina Koinonia

Thursday, February 27, 7:00 p.m.
Fireside Room
952.944.9397 (Joan Calott, contact)

Lake Calhoun Koinonia

Sunday, February 23, 5:00 p.m.
Fr. George & Presbyteria Christa's
home
612.825.1067

Northeast Metro Koinonia

Date and time to be announced.

Western Koinonia

Sunday, February 19, 5:00 p.m.
Gus & Cristina Nicklow's home
952.476.7624

Fellowship and Study Groups

Adult Senior Bible Study

On winter break

Intercessory Prayer

Wednesdays, February 5 and 19
10:30 a.m., Nave Chapel

Men's Fellowship

Friday, February 7
7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Saturday Bible Study

Every Saturday
9:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Senior Citizens

Tuesday, February 11
Valentine's Party
12:00 noon, Terrace Room

Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays, February 5 and 19
11:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Sunday Schedule

Saturday Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule

Thursday, February 6

Saint Photios

Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Monday, February 10

Saint Haralambos

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 22

First Saturday of Souls

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 29

Second Saturday of Souls

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Bible Study for Young Women in their 20-30s

This Bible study meets twice a year: a 6-week session in the fall and a 6-week session in the spring. Our next study begins Tuesday, March 10 and ends Tuesday, May 19. The topic of study is the biblical basis of the twelve articles of the Nicene Creed. Our sources are primarily Holy Scripture and the book, "Orthodoxy: A Creed for Today" by Anthony M. Coniaris. One article is covered each session. On, March 10 we will study Article 7. We meet every other Tuesday evening at 7:15 p.m. and conclude by 8:45 at the Christopulos home: 5312 Highwood Drive West, Edina 55436.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Patty Christopulos at patty@light-n-life.com or 952.200.9566

Bible Study for Young Men of the same age group

The same study for young men is also held within similar dates at the Christopulos home. The men meet on a different evening, typically Thursday evenings. Young men interested in learning more and/or attending, please contact Dan Christopulos at dchristopulos@ioccc.org or 612.308.5407.

—Fr. Jason's article, continued from page 1

emperor or to be subject to the authorities, but also to pray for them (1 Timothy 2:1-2). But why? First, we pray that we have peace, in order to more easily live out a Christian life... "so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Tim 2:2). These same words are echoed in the Divine Liturgy, after the consecration, when the priest says quietly as we kneel: "For civil authorities and our armed forces, grant that they may govern in peace, Lord, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." We read in First Timothy a second reason to pray for our rulers, "This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

So, this Presidents' Day, and every Presidents' Day, and at every Divine Liturgy, let us pray for our leaders, whether their policies are agreeable to our Christian sensibilities or not.

Parish News & Events

House Blessings

During January and February, Fr. George and Fr. Jason will be dedicating time each week for house blessings. They look forward to seeing as many parishioners as will allow them to visit! To schedule a blessing, please send an e-mail request to: stmarysgoc@stmarysgoc.org or call the Office, 612.825.9595.

Pan-Orthodox Ethnic Dance Party

Saturday, February 1

It's time again for a great night of dancing and meeting our Orthodox brothers and sisters. This year all the parish priests in our community are sponsoring this pan-Orthodox event through MEOCCA. The youth are planning for it and hoping more parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles come and learn new dances. Arabic, Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian, Russian and Serbian instruction will be given. Save the date: Saturday, February 1, 7:00 p.m. If possible, bring an ethnic appetizer or dessert to share. Drinks will be provided. This free event is for all ages. No reservations required this year but please sign in at the event so we know you came. Spread the word and reach out and invite your Orthodox friends, especially from other heritages!

Senior Citizens' Valentine Social

Tuesday, February 11

The Senior Citizens Club is having a Valentine Social on Tuesday, February 11, at 12:00 noon, in the Terrace Room. Please join us for fun, conversation, and food. Feel free to bring an appetizer to share. If you don't bring an appetizer - come anyway. We will also play Bingo. Looking forward to seeing everyone!

Greek Independence Day Program

Plans are underway for a Greek Independence Day Program and luncheon sponsored by AHEPA on Sunday, March 22, 2020, in the Great Hall after Liturgy. We are looking for children to participate with Greek poems/short stories or a song referencing Greek Independence Day or inspired by Greek culture. To sign your child up for this event or for further information, please contact *Nicole Brilakis* by February 15 at Nicole.brilakis@gmail.com or 707.803.1902.

Winter General Assembly

Sunday, February 23

The Winter General Assembly, Budget Approval, will take place on Sunday, February 23, 11:30 a.m., in the Great Hall. Copies of the budget and the agenda will be available soon.

Wednesday Lenten Dinners

Great Lent begins Monday, March 2, and our first Lenten Wednesday is March 4. We are seeking dinner hosts for two of the Wednesday evenings: March 18 and 25. March 25 is the Feast of the Annunciation and fish is allowed. If you or your organization would like to host the dinner on one of these evenings, please contact David in the Church Office, david@stmarysgoc.org.

The Ministry of Iconography

Iconographer Debra Korluka will be offering iconography classes again this winter. Two sessions will be offered:

Session 1

Thursdays, February 23, 30, February 6, and 13
5:30-9:30 p.m.

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

Tuition cost is \$135.00 plus materials.

Session 1 will concentrate on the prototype of "The Holy Face." All sessions concentrate on technique along with a spiritual and theological study on the prototype.

Session 2

Thursdays, February 20, 27, March 12, 19, and 26
5:30-9:30 p.m.

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

Tuition cost is \$165.00 plus materials.

Session 2 will study the icon "Myrrhbearing Women at the Empty Tomb of Christ."

Please register by sending a deposit of \$75.00 to Icon Art Studios, 13921 - 127th Street North, Stillwater, MN, 55082. All inquiries can be sent via e-mail atakorluka@aol.com or by calling 612.889.5868.

2020 Parish Council Installed

The 2020 Parish Council was installed on Sunday, January 5. The following is a list of current officers and members:

President: Dean Murdakes; Vice President: John Beauchamp; Secretary: Paul Hastings; Treasurer: Michael Rakes; Assistant Treasurer: Naira Istephanous
Members: Joseph DiGiovanni, Thomas Hainlin, William M. Hoeft, Nicholas Legeros, Dean Psychogios, Andrew Theodotou, Randy Twito

OCF Meals

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) at the University of Minnesota is in need of parents or families to offer to cook and bring dinner for the meetings. The meetings are every other Thursday at Bruininks Hall on the U of M East Bank Campus. We are happy to say that we usually have 20-30 students at our meetings. An OCF member will communicate more information once you sign up. The sign up link is: www.z.umn.edu/ocf-food.

Available dates are Thursdays, March 5, March 19, April 2, and April 30

A Virtual Conference on Parenting

Saturday, February 8, 2020

11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Central Time

The conference will take place in a Facebook Group. The link to the group will be made available soon.

This conference is hosted by the St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology.

The schedule of presentations is as follows:

- 11:00 a.m. - Evangelizing Our Children
by Fr. Patrick Cardine
- 11:30 a.m. - Difficult Conversations
by Dr. Philip Mamalakis
- 12:00 noon - Spare The Rod... by Fr. John Finley
- 12:30 p.m. - Motherhood Expectations
by Elissa Bjeletich
- 1:00 p.m. - Screen-time & Technology by Jamil Samara
- 1:30 p.m. - Family-Based Youth Ministry
by Steve Christoforou
- 2:00 p.m. - Overcoming Boredom by Fr. David Smith
- 2:30 p.m. - Parenting Adult Children
by Bishop John of Worcester

Sign up here to receive updates:

<https://mailchi.mp/4307db791a32/orthodoxparenting>

Membership in St. Mary's

We are beginning an occasional column in "The Messenger" to help our parishioners understand what it means to be a member of St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church. We continue to lovingly welcome everyone who worships with us, attends Bible study, participates in an activity, but as a church we are responsible to the Metropolis of Chicago and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Archdiocesan Regulations as amended December 2017

Article 18 – Sections 1 and 2

*Every person who is baptized and chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church is a **parishioner**. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith; faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the Faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church's sacred mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox Faith and Traditions to all people.*

*A **parishioner in good standing** practices all the religious and moral duties as described (above). At a minimum, a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; be current in his or her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish, abide by all the regulations herein stated and the Parish Bylaws; and cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish. (Stewardship is recommended to be ten percent (10%) of one's annual income as stated in Holy Scripture to help meet the financial obligations of the Parish, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese.)*

As we embark on a new year, we encourage all of our parishioners to become parishioners in good standing by following the Uniform Parish Regulations outlined above. It is this document which governs our parish, our clergy, our council, and all of us.

Pastoral Guidelines: Weddings

For the union of a man and woman to be recognized as sacramentally valid by the Orthodox Church, the following conditions must be met:

1. The Sacrament of Matrimony must be celebrated by an Orthodox Priest of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, according to the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, in a canonical Orthodox Church, & with the authorization of the Archbishop or Metropolitan.
2. Before requesting permission from the Archbishop or his Metropolitan to perform the marriage, a Priest must verify that: a) neither of the parties in question is already married to another person, either in this country or elsewhere; b) the parties in question are not related to each other to a degree that would constitute an impediment; c) if either or both parties are widowed, they have presented the death certificate(s) of the deceased spouse(s); d) if either or both of the parties have been previously married in the Orthodox Church, they have obtained ecclesiastical as well as civil divorce(s); e) the party or parties who are members of a parish other than the one in which the marriage is to be performed have provided a certificate declaring them to be members in good standing with that parish for the current year; and f) a civil marriage license has been obtained from civil authorities.
3. The Synod decided that the letter for "Freedom to Marry" (*Pistopitiko Elefthrogramia*), is necessary in cases where the wedding sacrament takes place in another Metropolis besides the one where the candidates reside. It is also necessary in cases where the priest performing the ceremony does not know the candidates.
4. No person may marry more than three times in the Church, with permission for a third marriage granted only with extreme *oikonomia*.
5. In cases involving the marriage of Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians, the latter must have been baptized, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church cannot

bless the marriage of an Orthodox Christian to a non-Christian.

6. The Sponsor (*koumbaros or koumbara*) must provide a current certificate of membership proving him or her to be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church. A person who does not belong to a parish, or who belongs to a parish under the jurisdiction of a bishop who is not in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, or who, if married, has not had his or her marriage blessed by the Orthodox Church, or, if divorced, has not received an ecclesiastical divorce, cannot be a sponsor. Non-Orthodox persons may be members of the wedding party, but may not exchange the rings or crowns.

Days When Marriage Is Not Permitted

Marriages are not performed on fast days specifically:

September 14 (Exaltation of the Holy Cross)

December 13-24 (Nativity)

January 5 (Eve of Theophany)

Great Lent and Holy Week

August 1-14 (Dormition Fast)

August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Baptist).

Exceptions can only be made with the permission of the respective hierarch.

The Holy Synod decided that the restriction of weddings taking place on Major Feastdays is no longer valid based on canonical grounds. It is believed that the restriction might have been placed in the past for pastoral considerations.

Reprinted from the 2020 Yearbook of the Archdiocese of America.

Philoptochos



February finds us in the midst of the month of love and the Philoptochos membership drive! All women are invited to join as a member and support our philanthropic work through dues (you determine the

amount) and volunteerism, if your schedule allows. Got questions? Please stop by our table any Sunday this month!

Membership Drive Kick-Off and Sweet Sunday Sunday, February 2

After Sunday Liturgy, come to the Great Hall for two special events! First, it's the Philoptochos Membership Drive Kick-off, and we're accepting all women 18+ years old who are members of the church. Stop by our table with the form you received in the mail (we'll have extras, too!) and make your membership official!

Second, Philoptochos is hosting the social hour and **Sweet Sunday!** Enjoy a beautiful array of goodies and share your love (and free will offering) with a great cause. Your donations will be given to a worthy cause – details coming soon.

Women's Book Club Discussion

Tuesday, February 25

The Women's Book Club is reading "The Screwtape Letters" by C. S. Lewis this month. Pick up a copy at the church bookstore and block out the evening of Tuesday, February 25 for the discussion. Watch for location details. Chair: Angela Koumontzis.

FOCUS House

2019 was a year of transition as FOCUS House worked to develop and grow programs. Thanks to God, the word is spreading. The need in this new neighborhood is great and so is the need for volunteers. The following are the program hours and needs.

► The Clothes Closet is open on Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., and Thursdays, 4:00-7:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed during these hours to assist shoppers. Volunteers are also needed and on Mondays and Thursdays between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for sorting donations.

► The Food Shelf operates from 10:00-11:30 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month. Volunteers are needed to assist shoppers and sort and shelve donations between the hours of 9:15 a.m. and noon. Volunteers are also needed to help divide larger items such as flour, sugar, and rice into smaller bags for distribution. This can be done at a time that is convenient for the volunteer.

► Volunteers are needed to make sandwiches and assemble bag lunches for children on Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Volunteers need only commit once a week or whenever their time is available. Volunteers need not stay for the total time slot, any amount of time helps.

For further information, call *Kathy* for the Clothes Closet, 651.343.4183; and *Judy* for the Food Shelf, 612.490.8611.

Philoptochos Meeting

Sunday, February 16, 11:30 a.m.

Come together with your church sisters for fellowship and our February meeting in the Terrace Room. Following a short program, we will discuss our activities in the spring, including our Lenten events.

Coming in March...

- TBA – Sacred Baking Workshops
- Monday, March 2 – Lent Begins
- Friday-Saturday, March 6-7 – Parish Lenten Retreat
- Sunday, March 8 – Spring Fillo Sale Begins
- Wednesday, March 11 – Host Lenten Meal
- Sunday, March 15 – Board Meeting
- Sunday, March 29 – Philoptochos Meeting

Thank You

...to Diane Achterling for hosting the Christmas Day reception after Liturgy.

...to Presvytera Christa for hosting the January Book Club discussion.

...to all who helped make Vasilopita Sunday a success, including our bakers, donation collectors, bread slicers, and sales people.

...to the Budget Committee for creating our 2020 Philoptochos budget.

...to the team working on our Membership Drive, including our writers, envelope stuffers, office staff, and table workers.

Stewardship

by Athena Mihas

Happy New Year from the Stewardship Committee!

Final 2019 Stewardship Results

We raised \$1,053,184 in 2019 through Stewardship contributions. Although short of our 2019 goal by \$14,956, this was an increase of \$74,784 compared to 2018, which is amazing! We could not have done this without the faithfulness and generosity of each of you!

Offering Income as of 12/31/19	2019 YTD Actual	2019 Annual Budget	Variance from Budget
Total Payments Received	\$1,053,184	\$1,068,143	(\$14,595)

Offering Income as of 12/31/19	2019 Actual Total	2018 Actual Total	Increase/ (Decrease) vs. Last Year
Total Payments Received	\$1,053,184	\$978,400	\$74,784

We pray that 2020 brings His continued blessings to you and to our parish, and we look forward to sharing even more worship, spiritual growth, service and fellowship opportunities with you in the coming year.

Stewardship 2020: A Time for Every Purpose under Heaven

As you know, Stewardship packets for 2020 were mailed out to each of you in November.

So far, we have already received completed pledge forms from 156 parish households with commitments totaling \$351,336. This is a great start so early in the year!

Also, 45 members have completed and submitted Time and Talent forms expressing their interest in participating in one or more of our ministries.

Please prayerfully consider how you would like to contribute to St. Mary's with your time, talent and treasure in 2020 and return your completed pledge and time/talent forms to the office. We hope to increase our number of pledged members each year in order to plan more efficiently for our budgeted items. If you have contributed but not pledged in the past,

please consider making a pledge for 2020! Also, remember that you can pledge and contribute online.

Winter "Parea" Potlucks

Are you ready to kick those winter doldrums? In the spirit of continued in-reach, the Stewardship Committee is looking for additional hosts for our Winter Parea Potlucks, to be held during the next couple of months. If you would like to host 8-10 fellow parishioners at your home (you provide the home, others provide the food) for an afternoon or evening of fun and fellowship, please e-mail david@stmarysgoc.org or call the office at 612.825.9595. Hosts will be finalized by the end of January and sign-ups for guests will begin very soon as well.

Thank You to Members Who Served on the Stewardship Committee in 2019

We want to acknowledge and thank the following members that served on the Stewardship Committee in 2019 and made it such a successful year:

- Father George Dokos
- Cooper Buss
- Jessica Buss
- Dean George
- Jimmy Geogleris
- Naira Istephanous
- Annette Legeros
- Cristina Nicklow

You all played a critical role on the Committee during the past year, and your expertise, creative ideas, hard work and commitment were very much appreciated. We couldn't have done it without you!

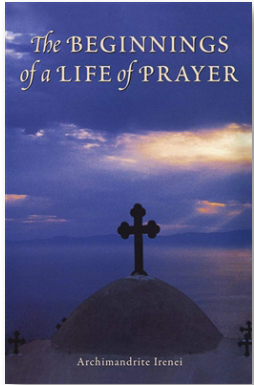
With gratitude,

Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina and Athena Mihas



In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly



[O]ne of the principle aspects of the spiritual life, to which we are introduced by the Triodion as a whole, but in particular by this initial period of Lent, [is] the subject of prayer.

Do we really know what prayer is and do we know how to pray? From when we were little children

we learned to pray, but has our prayer advanced as it ought to have? Prayer is advancement of the soul towards God, the purpose being to reach Him and be united with Him.

—Archimandrite Aimilianos*

In light of the wisdom within these words of Archimandrite Aimilianos, the Triodion offers us a grace filled opportunity to grow in the life of prayer. *The Beginnings of a Life of Prayer* by Bishop Irenei is a guide for anyone truly seeking to live and grow in prayer. Focused with a gentle firmness, Bishop Irenei invites the reader to first “take stock of our struggle.” It is vital to seek first the Kingdom of God. That must necessarily be the only goal for one truly seeking a life of prayer. In chapters titled “The Call of Christ Toward Self-Examination,” “Attending to Our Struggles,” and “The Transformative Power of the Attentive Heart,” Bishop Irenei writes as a spiritual father guiding the reader in assessing their life and directing them in/to the life of Christ. He writes:

Christ calls the Christian to take stock of his condition daily. The contest of Christian life is waged every day, at every moment. When the contours of this contest are known, that daily assessment becomes a life-giving ascetical work, for it opens the heart to the true workings of the Giver of Life....

By knowing the contours of one’s life, sinful as it is, one can engage fully in the work of attaining the Kingdom through the defeat of the passions, overcoming the strength of the foe through the incomparable power of Jesus Christ. The life

now lived can be offered more wholly to the Lord, Who will make our lives His own. Self-will can be gradually overcome, so that we begin more fully to live that reality of identity in Christ which His own prayer proclaims: that we cry, “Our Father,” as, by nature, only His Son can do. This is what it means for man to live *Life in Christ*.

During the second part of the book, Bishop Irenei elucidates, “The beginnings of prayer reside in the desire of the heart to know God.” (59) Prayer requires our work and our effort, “yet it is fundamentally a gift of God.... Dwell on what it means, then, for prayer to come to man as a gift of God’s love. He gives man an aim, and the means to attain it.... *Human life is to be a life of prayer.*”

Inspired by the tradition of a genre of writing found in the Fathers known as a “century” (a collection of one hundred short reflections), Bishop Irenei has used this method as a tool for guidance, writing “A Century on Prayer and Watchfulness” and “A Second Century on Prayer: On the Preparation of the Mind and Heart.” These centuries are permeated with wisdom for anyone genuinely seeking to live a life of prayer. Concluding the book is “A Postscript: Prayer and The Cross,” in which Bishop Irenei explains that our prayer must be “given shape by the Cross.” Amen.

*Quote from “A Catechism on Prayer,” in *Spiritual Instruction and Discourses 1: The Authentic Seal* by Archimandrite Aimilianos, Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Simonos Petras. Ormylia Publishing.

Children & Youth

Our Children and Youth Mission Statement

To cultivate a safe and welcoming environment for kids by nurturing healthy relationships within the church family. We will teach the youth by building a strong foundation of knowledge, and together, we will experience the Orthodox tradition by following the four circles of youth ministry: **Liturgia** (Worship), **Diakonia** (Service), **Martyria** (Witness), and **Koinonia** (Fellowship), leading our youth to develop, by their own free will, a personal relationship with God and to pursue union with Him.

Parish Night - for Everyone!

This month's theme: Forgiveness As a Way of Life

- ▶ Wednesday, February 19

We start with prayer in the nave from 6:15-6:30, eat dinner from 6:30-7:00, lesson from 7:00-7:45 (break out into different groups: HOPE/JOY, Junior GOYA, Senior GOYA, and adults), and wrap up from 7:45-8:00. All are welcome to attend!

Faith Group

0-5 Year Olds and Parents

- ▶ Wednesday, February 5, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Great Hall and Terrace Room
- ▶ Thursday, February 20, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Great Hall and Terrace Room

HOPE and JOY

Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Saturday, February 15, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Feed My Starving Children, Chanhassen
Participants must RSVP to Jon@stmarysgoc.org by February 10. This can be a family event, parents/guardians must stay with their child. Jon has reserved 40 spots, so this is on a first come, first serve basis.
- ▶ Wednesday, February 19
HOPE and JOY at Parish Night – see above.

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, February 19
Junior GOYA at Parish Night – see above.
- ▶ Friday, February 21, 6:00 p.m.-
Saturday, February 22, 9:00 a.m.
Junior GOYA Lock-in
We will be playing games, watching a movie, and enjoying being in each other's company.

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, February 12, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA Service Project at Church
Please RSVP by February 10 to this doodle:
<https://doodle.com/poll/ga6suwekuyk4k369>

- ▶ Wednesday, February 19

Senior GOYA at Parish Night – see above.

Basketball

All practices are in the Great Hall

Saturday, February 1

12:30-2:30 p.m.

JOY basketball practice

Sunday, February 2

12:45-2:00 p.m.

Girls' GOYA basketball practice

2:00-3:30 p.m.

Boys' GOYA basketball practice

Friday-Sunday, February 7-9

Basketball Tournament hosted by St. George GOC

December Recap

We had a very busy December with our youth groups! The HOPE/JOY youth group and their families went to The Glenn in Hopkins and caroled to some of the residents. We had a great turnout and we even had some of our parishioners who live there attend! The Junior GOYAnS had their Christmas party in the youth room where we decorated Christmas cookies, played Holiday Charades, and enjoyed our fellowship with one another. The Senior GOYAnS had a lock-in with IV On-the-Go, where some of the Ionian Village staff came and facilitated various games and activities for the Pan-Orthodox youth in the Twin Cities area. The Junior and Senior GOYAnS also spent some of their winter break tubing down Buck Hill. See the photos on next page.

Youth Feedback

If you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding our youth program(s) please let us know. We have a new formal feedback process. Go to our St Mary's home page-Click on "Youth," then "Youth Program Feedback" Your comments will be forwarded to a member of the Parish Council and will be reviewed for follow up.



Junior GOYA Christmas party



GOYAns at Buck Hill



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram: **St_Marys_GOYA**

Church School News

Godparent Sunday

February 2

Invite your Nouna/Nouno (Godparents) or a special person to sit with you during liturgy. We will reaffirm our vows and receive Holy Communion together as you did on your baptismal day. Also invite your special person to visit your classroom with you to see what you are learning.

Formal hard copy invitations will be given out in class for the children to mail out or you can download them from an e-mail to be sent out.

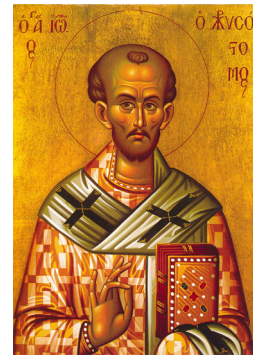
Stewardship Challenge

We continue our Stewardship Challenge...so keep bringing in offerings, non-perishables, and acts of good deeds. The winners and the date for pizza parties (one for each age group for the class who brings in the most!) will be announced after final tally on February 9.

Oratorical Festival

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical and Art Festival is coming March 15. Start thinking about writing a speech or poem for 7th-12th grade students. Start creating an art project for K-6th grade. If you need help with ideas or writing contact Dena Tortorelis. Please see the Festival article below for additional details.

Regular church school class every Sunday in February.



2020 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

It's time for our youth to use their voices (and their pens and paint brushes)!

Our 2020 Oratorical Festival will be held Sunday, March 15, and we hope to have great participation from our parish youth in one of a number of categories: Speech, Essay, Iconography, Poetry and Vocal Solo for both Junior Division (7-9th grade) and Senior Division (10-12th grade).

The topics are available on the Metropolis of

Chicago website at:

www.Chicago.goarch.org/oratorical-festival

and Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina will be handing out the speaking topics in Sunday School.

For those who move on to the Metropolis Festival, it will be held on Saturday, April 25, at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Glenview, Illinois.

If you have any questions contact Dka. Alexandria or the church office.

Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

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And now I give you a new commandment:
love one another.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

—John 13:34

**St. Mary's
Greek Orthodox Church**

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Publication Deadlines

The Messenger—
First Sunday of each month.

Sunday Bulletin—
Preceding Thursday,
12:00 Noon

February 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 9:00am-Bible Study 12:30pm-JOY Basketball 5:00pm-Great Vespers 6:00pm-Pan-Orthodox Dance Party
2 Presentation of Our Lord Godparents' Sunday Sweet Sunday "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School after Liturgy-Sweet Sunday 12:45pm-Girls' GOYA Bball 2:00pm-Boys' GOYA Bball	3 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	4 6:00pm-Open Gym	5 9:30am-FAITH Playgroup 10:30am-Intercessory Prayer 11:00am-Women's Bible Study 6:00pm-Small Blessing of Water 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	6 Saint Photios 6:00pm-Evening Divine Liturgy	7 7:00am-Men's Fellowship <i>Basketball Tournament</i>	8 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers <i>Basketball Tournament</i>
9 Publican and Pharisee Triodion Begins 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School 11:30am-Philoptochos Board 11:45am-Coffee Talk <i>Basketball Tournament</i>	10 Saint Haralambos 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	11 12:00noon-Senior Citizens 6:00pm-Open Gym 6:15pm-Parish Council	12 6:15pm-Senior GOYA 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	13	14	15 9:00am-Bible Study 11:30am-HOPE/JOY Event 5:00pm-Great Vespers
16 The Prodigal Son 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School 11:30am-Philoptochos Meeting 11:45am-Mission/Outreach 5:00pm-Western Koinoinia	17 Presidents' Day <i>Church and Office Closed</i> 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	18 6:00pm-Open Gym	19 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing 10:30am-Intercessory Prayer 11:00am-Women's Bible Study 6:15pm-Parish Night 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	20 9:30am-FAITH Playgroup 6:30pm-Stewardship Com.	21 <i>Junior GOYA Lock-in</i>	22 First Saturday of Souls 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
23 Judgment (Meatfare) Sunday 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School 11:45am-General Assembly 5:00pm-Lake Calhoun Koinoinia	24 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	25 6:00pm-Open Gym	26 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	27 7:00pm-Edina Koinoinia	28	29 Second Saturday of Souls 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers

Missed Your Complimentary Lifetouch Family Photo Session?

If your family was not able to take their picture during the scheduled dates in January, we have two additional opportunities to ensure you are part of the Photo Directory.

OPTION ONE – Lifetouch offers a Visitor Program which allows an opportunity to take your family photo in a nearby location. You can follow the simple steps below to have your photo included in our St. Mary's directory

To schedule your photography session call:

1.866.756.0281

between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CST

1. Provide the St. Mary's ACCOUNT NUMBER #196062
2. Schedule your photography session by calling 1.866.756.0281
Lifetouch Customer Service will find a date, time and location that works best for you and your family.
3. Record your photography session information:

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____

Directory image background _____ *vertical or horizontal*

4. Record your session number from your receipt: _____

After your photography session, contact Lifetouch at 1.866.756.0281 – they will need your session number to ensure your photograph is included in the St. Mary's Directory.

OPTION TWO – You may submit your own family photo by following the simple directions below.

1. Find a personal photo 1MB in size and submit it electronically to stmarysgoc@stmarysgoc.org
2. Indicate the first and last name of each person included in your family photo
3. Submit \$10.00 (checks payable to St. Mary's) for each photo submission (payment must be received prior to February 14)
4. If your picture was taken by a professional photography company (other than Lifetouch or Olan Mills), you must contact the church office for a Photo Release Form
5. You may also submit your photo from a previous directory produced in the last 3-years. This alternative is also assessed a \$10.00 fee made payable to St. Mary's

Whichever option you choose, ALL PHOTOS must be submitted or taken by Friday, February 14, 2020. We will be sending our information for production on February 21.

