

The Messenger

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

January 2021

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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



A Message from Father George

Father George Dokos, Proistamenos

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The beauty of our faith is that all of life is sanctified, every aspect of it. As Orthodox Christians who have been united to Jesus Christ in Baptism, there is no realm of our existence that He is not invited into. We call upon the Lord for every occasion and at all times, and this also applies to when we welcome a New Year.

On January 1 we bring in the New Year with Divine Liturgy (since we celebrate both St. Basil the Great and the Circumcision of Christ that day), and we invoke God through prayer with the following words:

“O Lord our God, who have placed times and seasons under your own authority; who, in Your infinite compassion and goodness, have counted us worthy to enter a New Year of Your loving kindness, bless it and keep us in peace. Loose, remit, and forgive any sins that we have committed during the year that is past, and keep us free from sin in the New Year. Enlighten us with the light of Your truth and Your divine commandments. Establish in our souls Your holy will, and guide us to every work that is good and pleasing to You. Guard well our holy Church with Your divine grace. Remember, Lord, our nation; train up the youth; protect the elderly; encourage the faint-hearted; gather the scattered; bring back those who have gone astray, and reunite them to your holy Church. Overshadow our Land with Your might, and grant it gentle rain and abundance of the fruits of the earth. Speak of goodness in the hearts of our rulers; support and strengthen them, together with our armed forces by land, sea, and air. Let Your kingdom come upon us, O Lord; the kingdom of love, goodness, peace, and righteousness; and make us worthy to praise and glorify, with one mouth and one heart, Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

As we enter into 2021, may God hear the voice of our petition and hearken unto our prayer. May He bless the New Year, assist us by His divine grace to live according to His life-giving commandments, protect us, our parish, and our country, and fill us with love and peace. May our Lord Jesus Christ reside in our heart and accompany us throughout the coming year.

I wish you all of God's rich blessings this New Year!

With love in Christ,
+Fr. George

Our Life Together

Baptisms

Erika, Angelina, and Valerie Young

Saturday, November 14

Ayana

Parents: Alex and Candice Michael

Sunday, November 15



Deaths

Katina Janavaras

November 23, 2020

Zoe Kakos

December 2, 2020

Bill K. Nicklow

December 6, 2020

May their memories be eternal.



Share YourShelf

January's recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is Joyce Uptown Food Shelf.

Sunday, January 3 • Canned fruits and vegetables

Sunday, January 10 • Cereal (both hot and cold)

Sunday, January 17 • Canned meals - large cans

Sunday, January 24 • Coffee and tea

Sunday, January 31 • Hygiene items (*toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc.*)

And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." —*Matthew 25:40*

Memorial Prayers

Sunday, January 17

Felicia Aguilar (*10 years*),
niece of Nick Barakos

Gerasimos Barakos (*15 years*)
father of Nick Barakos



Congratulations!

Congratulations to *Jeremy Barakos* who graduated in December 2020 from the University of St. Thomas with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry, and is American Chemical Society (ACS) certified in chemistry with a minor in Theology.



Thank You

Through the generosity of so many parishioners, we exceeded our goal for this year's Angel Tree collection. A hearty thank you to all who will be making this Christmas a bit brighter for a child whose parent is incarcerated, and because of everyone's generosity, 106 more children received gifts this Christmas!



St. Mary's Church Staff

Priest

Fr. George Dokos

Associate Priest

Fr. Jason Houck

Attached Priest

Fr. John Kostas

Deacon

Deacon Paul Kalina

Administrator

Julie Moricz

Parishioner Support Communications

David Mertesdorf

Ministry Support

Doria Saros

Youth Director

Jonathan Klein

Church School Director

Dena Tortorelis

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. Hoeft

Nicholas Legeros

Dean Psychogios

Andrew Theodotou

Luke Twito

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

Fridays, January 8 and 22
7:00 a.m., on Zoom

All other gatherings are cancelled until further notice.

Koinonia

All Koinonia gatherings are suspended for the time being. We will keep you posted as to when gatherings can safely resume.



Introduction to Orthodox Christianity Course

Our MEOCCA sponsored, 12-week, Winter 2021 cooperative catechism course, "Introduction to Orthodox Christianity" will begin Monday, January 11, 7:00-9:00 p.m. The class is open to all; people interested in learning more about Orthodox Christianity, inquirers, catechumens, and current Orthodox Christians we welcome! The course is an excellent opportunity to deepen the knowledge of the Orthodox Christian Faith. Classes will be held virtually via Zoom to begin the semester. Register online at <https://forms.gle/mrMdtTKJcSkPfjrw8> or www.meocca.org. Feel free to join for an individual session as well!

Blessing of the River

The Minnesota Eastern Orthodox Christian Clergy Association (www.meocca.org), will hold the annual Theophany/Epiphany Blessing of the Waters service on the Mississippi River on Saturday, January 9, 2021, at 12:00 noon, at Hidden Falls Park, 1313 Hidden Falls Drive, St. Paul. The half-hour service is free and open to the public. The service will end with the local priests immersing a gold cross in the Mississippi River, symbolizing Jesus Christ's baptism in the River Jordan 2,000 years ago.



Photos from a previous river blessing.



Weekend Schedule

Saturday

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.
Saturday Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday (live-streamed)

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

Weekday Schedule

Friday, January 1

Circumcision of Christ
Saint Basil the Great
New Year's Day

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

Tuesday, January 5

Eve of Theophany
Royal Hours – 9:00 a.m.
Vespers Divine Liturgy and
Great Blessing of Water

– 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 6

Holy Theophany
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing
of Water – 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 7

Synaxis of John the Baptist
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, January 9

Blessing of Water
Hidden Falls Park, St. Paul
12:00 noon

Wednesday, January 13

St. Maximos of Mount Athos
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Monday, January 18

Saints Athanasios and Cyril
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Monday, January 25

Saint Gregory the Theologian
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Parish News & Events

Situational Awareness and Personal Safety Training

January 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Am I always mindful of my surroundings and personal safety...

- Once I step outside my home?
- Before I open my car door at Target?
- When I'm texting a friend as I walk to my next class?

The first step in maintaining personal safety is to be **aware** of your surroundings! Situational Awareness is the first and most important self-defense strategy. Please join us for this **free** and potentially life-saving seminar!

Join us on Sunday, January 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m. via Zoom. It is hosted by St. Mary's parishioners, Peter and Libby Cheolis. This extremely valuable training is for all:

- High schoolers
- College-aged students
- Singles
- Couples
- Parents
- Retirees

Please note that this seminar focuses **ONLY** on Situational Awareness and Personal Safety. It will not include any weapons-related training. Pete and Libby Cheolis are the owners of MindSight Firearms Training.

To register for the seminar, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/SMGOCSituationalTraining>

Parish Council Elections Update

Congratulations to our parishioners who were elected to the 2021 Parish Council: Daniel Buss, Ina Dunham, Maria Smith, Andrew Twito. Thank you to all who ran for office.

Thank you, also, to those whose term expires at the end of 2020: Joseph DiGiovanni, Dean Murdakes, Andrew Theodotou, Luke Twito.

House Blessings

During January and February, our clergy will be available for house blessings. To schedule a blessing, please send an e-mail request to: stmarysgoc@stmarysgoc.org or call the Office, 612.825.9595.

CrossRoad Summer Institute

CrossRoad is a ten-day academic summer institute that prepares high school juniors and seniors to make big life decisions and invites them to connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Participants from all over the country come together to experience daily worship, take theology classes from some of the best professors in the country, visit local parishes, serve their neighbor, tour the city, and spend a day at the beach.

Historically, CrossRoad has been hosted solely on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross. Since 2018, we have expanded to Chicago and host a third session on the campus of North Park University in Chicago!

There are three CrossRoad sessions:

Session 1: June 12-June 22

Session 2: June 29-July 9

Session 3: July 19-July 29

Tuition fee for the 2021 CrossRoad Summer Institute is \$900 for the ten-day session. This tuition fee represents less than 35% of the \$2,500 actual cost to support each participant. In addition, travel arrangements to and from Hellenic College (Session 1 & Session 2) or North Park University (Session 3) are also the responsibility of the participant.

That stated, it is our CrossRoad policy that no accepted participant requesting financial aid will be turned away. For this reason, limited funds are available to assist participants who are unable to pay the full tuition fee.

For more information and to register, go to the CrossRoad's website:

<https://www.crossroadinstitute.org/>

Philoptochos



Happy New Year! The new calendar year means that it's time for the annual Philoptochos Membership Drive to begin. Each woman in the parish will receive a letter in the mail explaining our philanthropic mission and an invitation to join. Please watch for it and read more below.

January 10 is Vasilopita Sunday

The annual Vasilopita (Sweet Bread) Sale has been approved, so we're excited to implement this fundraiser for St. Basil Academy! Here's what you need to know:

- The Sweet Bread will be provided by a bakery rather than baked at St. Mary's. At the time of this publication, vendors were still being vetted.
- Purchases can be made ahead of time or on Vasilopita Sunday, January 10, if we're not sold out. Watch for preorder information in Philoptochos eNewsletter, Fr. George's weekly emails, and the bulletin.
- Cost will be around \$15. The price will be finalized when the bakery is chosen.
- Vasilopita will be available for pick-up on Sunday, January 10, in the Sunday School Hallway, Preschool 4 Year Old Classroom.
- To give a donation outside of a vasilopita purchase, checks payable to Philoptochos with St. Basil in the memo line can be sent to church. An online gift may be an option – watch for more on this.
- The National Philoptochos Society purchased the estate that became St. Basil Academy in 1944, and has responded to the needs of the Academy and its children for more than 70 years. Located in Garrison, NY, St. Basil Academy is a home for children in need. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood.

If you have any questions, contact a committee member: Toni Bazakos, Paulette Hastings, Annette Legeros, Tina Menter, and Andrea Tiggas.

NEW!

Greek Zumba Every Third Tuesday of the Month!

By request of participants, Kally Youngdahl will now offer a monthly Greek Zumba class on Zoom! Mark your calendars for 5:00-6:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month (January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, and May 18) and get ready to enjoy Greek music and exercise with your friends! Link will be provided.

NEW!

Quilt Tops for People in Need!

Philoptochos has joined the quilting women of Gethsemane Lutheran Church to create quilts for someone in need. How can you participate?

1. Pick up a quilt top kit. Each kit has a sewing machine needle, instructions and the correct number of quilt squares to make a 60"x80" top. This is easy sewing – straight lines only – plus some ironing. And, you can do it safely in your own home.
2. Donate old blankets, sheets, bedspreads and draperies. The quilters of Gethsemene will use them for filling and backing the quilts.

Bins have been placed in the main entry of St. Mary's south parking lot, one for contact-less kit pick-up and another for donation drop-off. If you have any questions, please contact Sofia Johnson, 952.500.2991.

Philoptochos Meeting via Zoom

January 226

Plan to attend the January 26 Philoptochos meeting at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Grab your favorite beverage and join us, as we need to approve our 2021 budget and discuss what Philoptochos will look like in the coming months. Zoom link will be provided closer to the meeting date.

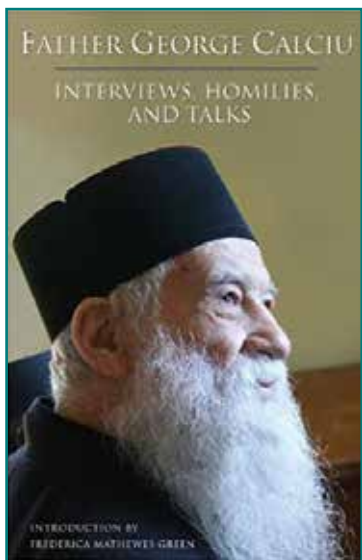
Membership Drive

January-March

Membership is open to anybody in the church, age 18+. Dues are a free will offering with the first \$22 of your gift going to Metropolis and National Philoptochos and anything above that staying in our own chapter. Ladies, watch for your letter in the mail describing our philanthropic activities and how you can join.

Women's Book Club

The current Women's Book Club book, which can be purchased in the church office, is Interviews,



Homilies and Talks by Fr. George Calciu. St. Herman Press describes the book and author as such:

Father George Calciu (1925–2006) was one of the great confessors of Christianity in the twentieth century. Having survived the diabolic prison experiments of Communist Romania, Fr. George went on to become an apostle to

spiritual seekers in Romania and, eventually, throughout the world. He was able to speak authoritatively of God's love and forgiveness because

of his own experience of God's mercy. As a priest in America, Fr. George maintained a strict ascetic life of fasting and prayer, while at the same time pastoring his flock as a joyful and loving father.

Here we present a collection of his interviews, homilies, and talks. In them he shares his thoughts on his imprisonment, how to pray, his own experience of God's Uncreated Light, and the Orthodox Christian's battle against temptations in America. Included in this volume are the "Seven Homilies to the Youth" that he gave in Bucharest in 1978. These homilies, in which he fearlessly called Romanian youth to turn from atheism and materialism to Christ, led to his second imprisonment by the Communist regime. Here, as in his other writings and talks, the common thread of God's mercy and forgiveness is woven into the fabric of man's need for repentance and union with his Creator.

You can buy the book in the church office. Discussion will be in February.

Thank You...

To all who donated winter wear to Operation Classroom | Jefferson Community School, and to those who organized and delivered the jackets, hats and mittens: Paulette Hastings, Jayne Klatt, Connie Kouzes, Angie Maragos, and Cathy Selin. Operation Classroom is part of a national initiative, and we will have more projects to come!

Parish-Night Week

The Church Facing the World



We continue our virtual Parish-Night Week through the spring of 2021. Our meeting schedule is:

HOPE/JOY (kindergarten-grade 5): Tuesday from 6:30-7:15 p.m.

Adults and Senior GOYAns (grades 9-12): Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Junior GOYAns (grades 6-8): Thursday from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

As we get closer to Parish Night, an email will be sent with a link to register for the Adult/Senior GOYA session. Please register on our website for the meeting at least two days prior to the Parish Night event. After you register, you will receive an email with the Zoom Meeting link. If you need assistance, contact Jon Klein. The youth meeting link will be emailed out to the parents/guardians as the event draws closer.

The 2021 dates are:

January 19-21 • February 16-18 • May 18-20

Details are on our website under "Our Parish."

Mission & Outreach

It's a Wonderful Life

This 1946 movie that shows how we can feel a loss of hope during times of deep hurt in our life, but yet, come to see that each of us can help one another in prayer and gratitude. We are doing wonderful things to help others. Gratitude is something we have and not what we expect from others.

Our happy ending is having the vaccine coming, looking forward to not having to wear a mask, helping others by giving of time or donations.

Share the Harvest

Thank you!

St. Mary's fourth Harvest Pack event exceeded our goal of 15,000 meals with 16,640 meals. Harvest Pack distributes nutritious meals to local food shelves in our neighborhood and metropolitan area. Families, children and others



now in a struggle to get back on their feet are so grateful for the food that we contribute to help out. Simpson House, FOCUS, Joyce Food Shelf and Community Emergency Services will offer our contribution to those who

are food insecure.

Take a peek at a couple dozen photos of the St. Mary's Harvest Pack event that are posted on the Harvest Pack Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/harvestpackmn/>. Our many volunteers are offering their time to serve our community.

March for Life

January 22, 2021

MCCL (Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life), March for Life is Friday, January 22, 12:00 noon at the State Capitol steps and grounds in St. Paul. This is an annual reminder that over 60 million unborn tiny human lives have been lost. This caring reminder brings to light thoughts about respect and protection for all the 'unborn children and their mothers'. Last year the crowd was made up of mostly younger people and great many had signs: "I Regret Lost Fatherhood," "I Regret My Abortion," "Protect Life." Even though cold out, this gathering is very touching. The accompanying photo is from the MCCL website.



Note: This year there will not be a bus. Be sure to wear your mask at this outdoor event.

Stewardship

by Athena Mihas

Saint Mary's Stewardship Testimonial

Parishioner, Melpomeni Murdakes, shared the following powerful testimonial with us on Sunday, November 15, 2020, following the Liturgy:

Imagine the stillness of the sanctuary in the early hours of a cold March morning – this is the first of three scenes that came to mind in contemplating the experience of stewardship at St. Mary's.

In those wee hours, blessed to be a part of the Gospel reading vigil for Fr. Anthony, I reflected on his incredible legacy of stewardship and its impact on the St. Mary's community.

Fr. Anthony had a tremendous gift for sharing the word of God and making it accessible through his writings, preaching, and teaching. Through more than 75 books and pamphlets, countless sermons, and Bible studies, Fr. Anthony invited us to share God's love. Whether we grew up in Orthodoxy or discovered it as a seeker, he opened doors of understanding that welcomed us. As a faithful steward of his gifts, Fr. Anthony sought ways to offer them through establishing Light & Life and supporting other writers. He extended the invitation to share God's love throughout his life.

What a witness for this St. Mary's community. Stewardship as an invitation to share God's love.

In the second scene, the sun is bright on a crisp October afternoon and many are gathered to participate in the bestowing of the Bronze Cross of Servant Leadership on our own Paulette Hastings. His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael stands in the sunlight, resting his hand upon Paulette and offering a prayer of thanksgiving for the abundant gifts she has offered through her service at St. Mary's.

One of the many ways Paulette's gifts were offered reveals its value every Pascha. In preparing the church on the Saturday of Lazarus, we gather as a community to clean the sanctuary. What could be perceived as an obligation became an opportunity through her unique plan. Breaking down all of the tasks into small steps that even the youngest among

us could do, she created invitations for us to share God's love through caring for His house. From polishing the pews to cleaning the windows, each step showed us how to offer something in preparation for Pascha.

Looking around at those gathered on that October afternoon, the models of service were all around. From leaders of Philoptochos and the Parish Council, Church School teachers and volunteers, to members of Mission and Outreach, choir, and Prison Ministry, everyone represented the example set by Fr. Anthony – offering their stewardship as an invitation to share God's love. Most recently, this manifested in the Big Greek Give Back. When concerns over how we could host our usual festival gave way to love for those around us in need, our festival became an outreach of stewardship, an invitation to share God's love. Two thousand meals were prepared for and delivered to first responders, shelters, and our neighbors. Thousands of pounds of food and tens of thousands of dollars were given to local food banks to stock their shelves. As good and faithful stewards, St. Mary's invited the community to share God's love.

And what of the third scene ~ well, along with many other events, it couldn't happen this year. You see, this one is more personal. When I last spoke on stewardship almost twenty years ago, I shared a story of my father who had recently passed away. This time, I'll share one of my mother. You see, every year when we offer flowers for the women of the parish on Mother's Day, though it is in remembrance of my mother, it is also as an expression of thanks for the invitation to share God's love extended to my mother by this parish.

Looking out, I see among you families who have been a part of St. Mary's for generations to the newly baptized Erica and her family. In between are parishioners who come from other Orthodox parishes and other faiths all seeking to grow closer to Christ. In this community, we are called to discover our gifts and offer them in service to God and others.

For my mother, at age 70, she left the only home

she had known, her beloved sister and friends, to move to Minneapolis. While she had always been active in our Annunciation parish, the welcome extended to her, by our family and friends certainly, and by this community as a whole, offered her something more.

From Bible studies to senior ministries and festival preparations, she became connected to this community. Baking, gathering, and serving with Crisoula Regas, Angie Speliopoulos, and Joanne Basil. She found not only her para and a place to worship, but a community with whom to live out her faith in a very active, very real way.

Of the four parishes I have been blessed to be a part of, St. Mary's truly exemplifies the act of living our faith through the stewardship of our gifts. All of our gifts, of time, talent, and treasure, are offered as an invitation to share God's love.

—Melpomeni Murdakes

Stewardship Offering Update As of December 7, 2020

Thank you for your on-going support of St. Mary's through your gifts of time, talent and treasure. As of December 7, 2020, we have received \$829,713 in offering income. We are getting closer to reaching our goal of \$1,069,426 with a few weeks remaining in the year.

Offering Income as of 12/07/2020	2020 YTD Actual	2020 Annual Budget	Remaining Funds Needed by 12/31/20
Total Payments Received to Date	\$829,713	\$1,069,426	\$239,713

Offering Gift payments received so far this year are less than last year at this time by \$34,527:

Offering Income as of 12/07/2020	Last Year YTD Actual	2020 YTD Actual	Increase or (Decrease) vs. Last Year
Total Payments Received to Date	\$864,260	\$829,713	(\$34,527)

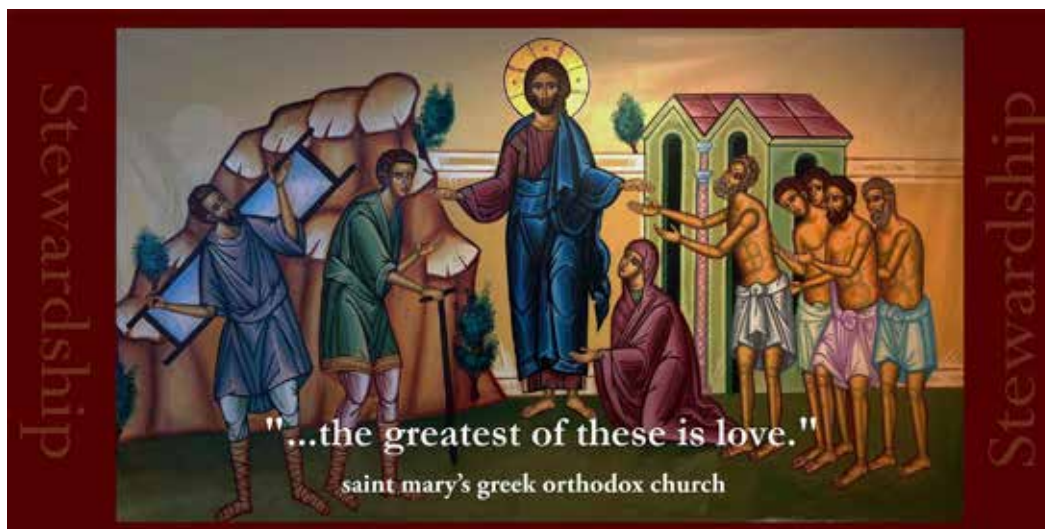
Thank you for your participation in our 2020 Stewardship Campaign and helping us to reach our goal this year. Your contributions make it possible for St. Mary's to continue providing all its ministries and to cover operating costs of the church.

Stewardship Campaign 2021

Stewardship packets for 2021 were mailed in November! Please prayerfully consider how you would like to contribute to St. Mary's with your time, talent and treasure and return your completed pledge and time/talent forms to the office. We hope to increase our number of pledged members in 2021, 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 2021. Also, remember that you can pledge and contribute online.

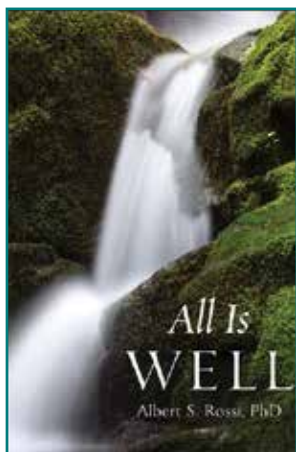
For more information, contact:

- Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina at: 952.913.7540 or ackalina@yahoo.com
- Athena Mihas at: 612.387.3890 or athenamihas@gmail.com



In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly



All Is Well by Dr. Albert Rossi is a new book recently released by Ancient Faith Publishing. Dr. Rossi—known to many at St. Mary’s because his book *Becoming a Healing Presence* has been used as a resource for both the prison and visitation ministries—is a clinical psychologist long immersed in the Orthodox Church. He wrote *All*

Is Well from the perspective he has now as a man in his eighties, looking back and reflecting on his life and experiences. He presents the perspective he had on many aspects of and situations in his life at the time they were occurring, and the perspective he has been gifted with to see them from God’s perspective in the light of Christ.

Two people greatly influenced this book: Dr. Rossi’s wife and Fr. Thomas Hopko. Dr. Rossi’s wife died of cancer when their children were still living at home, but her spirit lives on with and in him—inspiring and guiding him. Fr. Thomas Hopko was a close friend for many decades and Dr. Rossi writes that his “acquaintance and teaching have been an enduring influence on my life...” (120)

“All is well” is something Fr. Hopko would often say, and Dr. Rossi finds himself “saying “all is well” on a regular basis.” (13) This book, aptly described as a spiritual autobiography, shows what “all is well” looks like when recognized and realized. Dr. Rossi explains:

I will expound on what this statement means to me. Most broadly, to say that all is well is to say that all in my life is sufficient. And that is saying a lot.

Father Hopko often quoted Julian of Norwich, who said, “All shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” He would use a passage from Romans to strengthen his case that all is well... “And we know that all things work together for

good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose” (Rom. 8:28). This is the truth.... Father Hopko would also go on to quote one of his very favorite Saints, St. Therese of Lisieux. She says, “Whatever be the character of life or it’s unexpected events—to the heart that lives, *all is well.*” (13-14)

Through frank and sometimes disarmingly honest stories from his life, Dr. Rossi shares with his readers how the divine perspective is revealed through living and looking at life experiences in the light of Christ.

[A]s children of Adam and Eve, each of us has two basic selves inside, a light self and a dark self. The light side of us is the light of Christ that we can accept or blow out, at least from our point of view. In truth, Christ never leaves us, but sets us free to leave Him if we choose. I love our culture and love our world. I’m not unworldly except in the sense of the Gospel command that we are to be in the world, but not of it. We are to be fully invested in our family, neighborhood, national and international politics, and the planet, but with the mind of Christ—a mind that is alert, joy-filled, and loving. We are not to be obsessed with the anxiety that’s also inside all of us as children of Adam and Eve. The world consists in ugliness, and the world consists in beauty. Without denying the ugliness, we are to keep our mind on the beauty, as best we can. (16)

This is what Dr. Rossi does in this book—beautifully.

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.

HOPE and JOY

Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Tuesday, January 19, 6:30-7:15 p.m.
Parish-Night Week
Offering the Gospel
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.
- ▶ Sunday, January 24, 10:45 (after Communion)-11:30 a.m.
HOPE and JOY in the Great Hall
Watch Jon's e-mails to sign-up.

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, January 6, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA in the Great Hall
Watch Jon's e-mails to sign-up.
- ▶ Thursday, January 21, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Parish-Night Week
Offering the Gospel
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, January 13, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA in the Great Hall
Watch Jon's e-mails to sign-up.
- ▶ Wednesday, January 20, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Parish-Night Week: Senior GOYA and Adults
Fr. Tom Tsagalakis presents on Christian Marriage in a Secular World
Register for meeting:
<https://tinyurl.com/JanuaryPNRegistration>

In-Person Youth Activities

It is important for us to follow social distancing measures throughout our in-person activities. Below are the safety precautions:

- Masks must be worn properly by everyone for the duration of the event
- Practice social distancing (at least 6 feet apart from each other)
- Avoid touching each other
- Sanitize hands frequently. Everyone will be required to sanitize your hands when you arrive

and encouraged throughout the evening.

Please note that while the Church has taken steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19, it cannot guarantee safety. Attending this activity may increase your child's risk of contracting the disease. By attending these events for which you are making a reservation, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and assume the risk of becoming ill. Further, you agree to release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless the Church, its employees, agents, and representatives, of and from all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating to COVID-19. You understand and agree that this release includes any claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of the Church, its employees, agents, and representatives.

When should I stay home? For the well-being of others, you should stay home if you are displaying COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Click this link if you need help discerning whether you are sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>.

November Recap

We continue to meet once in person and once on Zoom. Even with the cold weather, we have been able to utilize the large space in the Great Hall for our youth group activities! The Junior GOYAnS put together care bags to keep in their car as they drive around to hand out to the homeless. The Senior GOYAnS met with Matushka Vera Proctor of FOCUS on Zoom and discussed ways they are carrying out their mission during this time. They also kicked off a canned food drive that goes until Christmas. The items collected will go to FOCUS! The HOPE/JOY kids met after Liturgy and discussed the Nativity Fast, as well as played games.



Follow the GOYAnS on Instagram: **St_Marys_GOYA**

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*The Clergy and Staff
of
Saint Mary's
wish everyone a
safe, healthy, and happy
New Year!*

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

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