

# The Messenger

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

## March 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 George

*Father George Dokos, Proistamenos*

"Prayer, fasting, and charity: these three are one,  
and they give life to one another."

*-St. Peter Chrysologos*

"Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God?  
Give it two wings: fasting and charity."

*-St. Augustine*

Beloved brothers and sisters,

We have arrived at the gates of the Great Fast and the holy season of Lent is upon us. Personally, I look forward to this grace-filled time in the life of the Church because it is exactly that: a period full of God's assistance and consolation; a sacred time of re-orienting ourselves towards the Coming Kingdom; a season of self-discipline and worship for the good of our own soul and the souls of those around us.

However, it is too easy to get caught up with external observances and forget the true meanings of things. It is too easy to mechanically go through the motions of religious observances without the proper spirit. St. Maximos the Confessor said it best: "The demons do not hate self-restraint, fasting, charity, hospitality, the singing of psalms, spiritual reading, stillness, so long as the aim and purpose of a person are tilted in the demons' direction." Woah, that's a sobering thought. If, in the end of the day, our ascetic strivings are "tilted" in the wrong direction, tilted towards any other purpose than the love of God and neighbor, it is all in vain. For example, if someone fasts in order to lose weight rather than to quench the passions, it is spiritually fruitless. If someone does a good deed in order to be recognized and receive praise from men, it is sinful pride.

For this reason, then, it is common among the Fathers to say that fasting, charity, and prayer must be intertwined and practiced together, just as our Lord Jesus spoke about them in the Sermon on the Mount (read carefully Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7). It was also a practice from the earliest times of the Church to use the money saved during fasting periods (due to less expenditures on food) for charity and distribution to the poor: "What you deprive yourself by fasting add to your almsgiving," preached St. Augustine.

*—article continues on page 2.*

**Daylight Saving Time goes into effect on Sunday, March 8.  
Set your clocks ahead one hour before retiring Saturday night.**

# Our Life Together

## Baptism

Quinn

Parents: Ross & Karen McHugh  
February 1, 2020

## Deaths

Sula Peppas

January 30, 2020

Georgia Kokinis

February 5, 2020

(funeral and burial in Chicago)

Mother of Bettina Hanna

Georgia Papagiannopoulos

February 9, 2020

May their memories be eternal.



## FOCUS House

### Double your impact!

Donate family size or larger jars of jam during March for FOCUS House.

FOCUS makes 250+ sandwiches per week for their lunch program. All donations help.

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

So, I propose such a challenging concept to all of you: fast during this Great Lent, and prayerfully set aside the money you save on account of buying less food and not eating out as often for acts of charity. With such an enlightened attitude we will partake of the spiritual fruit of this holy season and increase our love towards God and neighbor, and our prayers will rise up on the wings of fasting and charity.

With love in Christ,

+Fr. George

## Share YourShelf

March's recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is FOCUS Minnesota.

### Sunday, March 1

Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat®

### Sunday, March 8

Baby formula

### Sunday, March 15

Hygiene items

(e.g. toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, etc.)

### Sunday, March 22

Canned meat

(e.g. tuna / chicken)

### Sunday, March 29

Peanut butter, jelly

Please consider making a monetary donation. Through a partnership with the Food Group, the food shelves we support are able to 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.

*God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. —Hebrews 6:10*

## St. Mary's Church Staff

### Priest

Fr. George Dokos

### Associate Priest

Fr. Jason Houck

### Attached Priest

Fr. John Kostas

### Emeriti

Fr. Anthony Coniaris

### 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. Hoeft

Nicholas Legeros

Dean Psychogios

Andrew Theodotou

Randy Twito

# Education • Fellowship • Worship

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## Fellowship and Study Groups

**Adult Senior Bible Study**  
*On winter break*

**Intercessory Prayer**  
Wednesdays, March 4 and 18  
10:30 a.m., Nave Chapel

**Men's Fellowship**  
Friday, March 6  
7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

**Evening Men's Fellowship**  
Tuesday, March 24  
7:00 p.m.  
Andrew & Nancy LeRoy's home  
8505 Angus Avenue South  
Inver Grove, MN 55077-3805  
RSVP: andrew.leroy@gmail.com

**Saturday Bible Study**  
Every Saturday  
9:00 a.m., Fireside Room  
*No session on March 7*

**Senior Citizens**  
First meeting of the spring:  
Tuesday, April 21  
*-please note date change due to during Holy Week*  
12:00 noon, Terrace Room

**Women's Bible Study**  
Wednesdays, March 4 and 18  
11:00 a.m., Fireside Room

**Koinonia**  
**Edina Koinonia**  
*No gathering during Great Lent.*

**Lake Calhoun Koinonia**  
*No gathering during Great Lent.*

**Northeast Metro Koinonia**  
*Date and time to be announced.*

**West Metro Koinonia**  
Sunday, March 15, 5:00 p.m.  
Gus & Cristina Nicklow's home  
952.476.7624



**MEOCCA Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers**  
**Sundays, 4:00 p.m.**

**March 8**  
St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral  
1701 Fifth Street NE  
Minneapolis

**March 15**  
St. George Greek Orthodox Church  
1111 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul

**March 22**  
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church  
1250 Oakdale Avenue  
West Saint Paul

**March 29**  
St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church  
125 Congress Street East  
Saint Paul

**April 5**  
St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church  
3450 Irving Avenue South  
Minneapolis

**April 12**  
**Bridegroom Matins**  
St. Herman Church  
5355 - 38th Avenue South  
Minneapolis

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

## Weekday Schedule

**Saturday, March 7**  
*Third Saturday of Souls*  
Orthros – 8:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy – 9:00 a.m.

**Tuesday, March 24**  
*Eve of Annunciation*  
Great Vespers – 6:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, March 25**  
*The Annunciation*  
Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.



**Lenten Schedule**  
**Mondays (beginning March 2)**  
6:00 p.m. - Great Compline  
**Wednesdays (beginning March 4)**  
4:00 - Holy Confession  
5:45 p.m. - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts  
7:00 p.m. - Lenten Dinner  
7:30 p.m. - Youth Groups and Activities  
7:30 p.m. - Choir Rehearsal

**Fridays (beginning March 6)**  
4:00 - Holy Confession  
6:00 - Salutations to the Theotokos  
(*Akathist Hymn*)

# Pastoral Guidelines: Fasting

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Just as there are times for feasting, there are also times set aside for fasting. During these periods, certain foods are prohibited. These are, in order of frequency of prohibition, meat (including poultry), dairy products, fish, olive oil and wine. Fruits, vegetables, grains and shellfish are permitted throughout the year. Of course, the Orthodox Church never reduces the practice of fasting to a legalistic observance of dietary rules. Fasting, that is not accompanied by intensified prayer and acts of charity, inevitably becomes a source of pride. The Church also recognizes that not everyone can fast to the same degree, and assumes that individual Christians will observe the fast prescribed for them by their Spiritual Fathers.

The following are fasting days and seasons:

1. All Wednesdays and Fridays, except for those noted below;
2. Day before Feast of Theophany (January 5);
3. Cheesefare Week (the last week before the Great Lent, during which meat and fish are prohibited, but dairy products are permitted even on Wednesday and Friday);
4. Great Lent (from Clean Monday through the Friday before Lazarus Saturday, olive oil and wine are permitted on weekends);
5. Great and Holy Week (note that Great and Holy Saturday is a day of strict fasting, during which faithful abstain from olive oil and wine),
6. Holy Apostles' Fast (from the Monday after All Saints' Day through June 28, inclusive);
7. Fast for the Dormition of the Mother of God (August 1-14, excluding August 6, on which fish, wine and olive oil are permitted);
8. Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Aug. 29),
9. Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14);
10. Nativity Lent (November 15-December 24, although fish, wine and olive oil are permitted, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, until December 17).

The following are fasting days on which fish, wine and olive oil are permitted:

1. The Feast of the Annunciation (March 25, unless it falls outside the Great Lent, in which case all foods are permitted);
2. Palm Sunday;
3. The Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6);
4. The Feast of the Entry into the Temple of the Mother of God (November 21).

On the following days, all foods are permitted:

1. The first week of the Triodion, from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee through the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, including Wednesday and Friday;
2. Diakainisimos (or Bright) Week, following the Sunday of Pascha,
3. The week following Pentecost; and
4. From the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord (December 25) through January 4.

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## Guidelines for the Observance of Great Lent *March 2-April 11, 2020 • Holy Week: April 11-18, 2020*

The guidelines for the observance of Great Lent, the 40-day period of preparation for Easter, include increased prayer, more intense fasting, and almsgiving to the poor and needy. Preparation for and reception of the Sacrament of Holy Confession is also strongly advised. The rules of the traditional physical fast are:

Saturday and Sunday we abstain from meat and meat products, dairy products, and fish.

Monday through Friday we abstain from meat and meat products, dairy products, fish, olive oil, and wine.

As always, the fast is modified or eliminated in the case of young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and infirm. Please feel free to consult a priest about your observance of this period if you have any questions or concerns. The preparation is definitely worthwhile when we willingly enter into it for the glory of God and the benefit of others around us.

# Parish News & Events

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## Lenten Coffee Hour Hosts

We are blessed with so many individuals and families who host coffee hour throughout the year. This time of fellowship and refreshment is truly an extension of our experience within the Divine Liturgy. March 2 marks the beginning of Great and Holy Lent. If you are sponsoring a coffee hour during this month, please ensure you include a fasting option for those parishioners abstaining from meat, meat products, dairy, and fish during this time.

Suggested fasting items include:

- whole or sliced fresh fruit
- bagels
- pretzels
- nut butters
- vegan cookies – including Belvita Breakfast Biscuits, Trader Joe's animal crackers, and Nature's Path sandwich cookies.
- fresh vegetables and hummus
- juice, lemonade, and punch

May our journey to Christ's Resurrection be enhanced by our fellowship with one another.

## Greek Independence Day Program

Plans are underway for a Greek Independence Day event, with a program, sponsored by AHEPA on Sunday, March 22, 2020, in the Great Hall after Liturgy. Details will be published in the Sunday bulletins shortly.

## Senior Citizens' Theater Outing

The Senior Citizens' Club is planning a gathering at the Artistry Theater in Bloomington to see the musical matinee performance of "Mame" on Saturday, May 9. Tickets for the show are \$20.00 for Senior Citizen Club members who have paid their 2020 dues and \$40.00 for non-members. Look for Joan Calott on Sundays to purchase your tickets. Deadline to purchase tickets is April 15.

## Senior Citizens Resume Meetings

Saint Mary's Senior Citizens' Club will resume monthly meetings in April. The first meeting will be one week later than usual due to Holy Week. The season begins on Tuesday, April 21, at 12:00 noon, in the Terrace Room. The program for the day is still being planned, but should be interesting! All St. Mary's seniors are invited to join the club.

## Lent and Holy Week Help

We are looking for volunteers for Great Lent and especially Holy Week. There is something for everyone to help with at various times throughout the season. Please contact *Margie Makredes*, 651.334.6935, to chat about the many opportunities, great and small... and sign-up to help!

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## New Bible Studies

### *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, meeting every other week. 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 at 7:15 p.m. and conclude by 8:45 at the Christopoulos home: 5312 Highwood Drive West, Edina 55436.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Patty Christopoulos at [patty@light-n-life.com](mailto:patty@light-n-life.com) or 952.200.9566

### *For Young Men in Their 20-30s*

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

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## The Ministry of Iconography

Iconographer Debra Korluka will be offering iconography classes again this winter.

### *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 at [akorluka@aol.com](mailto:akorluka@aol.com) or by calling 612.889.5868.

## Additional Photo Sessions

Did the weather prevent you from having your directory photo taken? Were you out of town when the photographers were at St. Mary's? You now have a second chance to get your photo taken and be a part of our 2020 parish photo directory. Photography sessions have been scheduled for:

- Friday, March 20, 1:00-8:50 p.m.
- Saturday, March 21, 10:00 a.m.-3:50 p.m.

Please call the Church Office to schedule an appointment.

## 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](mailto:doria@stmarysgoc.org).

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

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# Celebrate the Season with More Green Initiatives

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Kermit the Frog, one of the Muppet characters, is remembered for his theme song – “It’s Not Easy Being Green,” but the office staff is hard at work so our parishioners can realize how easy it is to be GREEN at St. Mary’s.

Have you noticed the upgrades in the Great Hall and other locations? Were you aware that all our plates, cups, and eating utensils are now compostable? When working in the kitchen did you know that your food waste can be composted?

It’s never too late to jump on the environmental bandwagon and help St. Mary’s reduce its waste. As the snow begins to melt and the green of nature buds forth, remember to “THINK GREEN” and do your part!

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# Church Cancellations

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Spring may be just around the corner, but March can be one of our snowiest months! As a result, we want to ensure all our parishioners stay safe and don’t attempt to travel during icy or severe conditions. Here’s how we plan to keep you informed.

- Cancellations of events, activities, and services will be announced a minimum of two hours prior to the start time.
- We will update our website and office voice mail announcing the cancellation as another opportunity for you to be notified.

- All individual group leaders (choir, church school, senior citizens, etc.) must notify the church office of the decision to cancel so we can make the necessary updates.
- The Parish Council President must also be notified of any cancellations, and no cancellations will occur without the blessing of our priests.

While we plan on always having scheduled services, no one should travel to church if road conditions in your area are dangerous. Please remain at home, giving thanks to God that at least a priest and chanter are leading the services praying for all of us.

# Philoptochos



This month we're delighted to provide two reflections on Philoptochos, one offered from someone new to St. Mary's and the other from a longtime member. They provide a lovely backdrop to why Philoptochos

exists. After reading, if you haven't yet joined us as a member and want to, please stop by our table any Sunday through March 22. We'll have information, forms, and more. Everyone is welcome to join as a member or associate member (if Orthodox or married to an Orthodox, women and men).

## Reflections on Philoptochos

Coming to St. Mary's from a fairly small parish was a bit overwhelming at first, but I knew the best way to meet people was to get involved. I chose to join Philoptochos and quickly found a group of exceedingly kind and welcoming women who fulfill the Philoptochos mission by joyfully serving the church and community. I've been able to participate in a few activities since joining and have had so much fun getting to know some of the ladies while being inspired by their hard work and dedication to serve the Lord.

I would encourage anyone who's thinking of getting involved to take a look at Philoptochos. I feel blessed to be a part of this organization and am looking forward to taking advantage of more of the many opportunities it offers to serve the poor and be involved in the life of the Church.

*Sarah Schwark*

*At St. Mary's for 18 months*

*Previously at Assumption GOC, Madison*

Kudos to whoever is responsible for this pearl of wisdom, "It is better to give than to receive."

I was a homemaker with two daughters in school all day and so I had the time, the energy, and the desire to do something helpful outside of my home. I turned to my church for the answers. Sure enough there was a vehicle for my pursuits and it was called *Philoptochos*, which means *friend of the poor*.

In the Gospel, numerous times, Jesus instructs His followers to help the poor. I became involved in Philoptochos and in the sixties was elected president.

Today as a centenarian I look back on those years as the happiest and most productive of my lifetime, not only fulfilling the mission prescribed by our

Lord and Savior but basking in the pleasure of the warm hearted friends I made and the knowledge of helping a cause to the best of my ability.

*Joan Spell*

*Celebrating her 102nd birthday this month*

## Philoptochos Helps at Lenten Retreat

**March 6-7**

On both Friday evening and Saturday of the Parish Lenten Retreat, Philoptochos is helping host parishioners and guests at St. Mary's. Please stop by our table to offer assistance. See retreat details elsewhere in this Messenger.

## Spring Fillo Sale

**March 8-22**

Get ready for your spring and summer baking! We're taking orders for fresh fillo on Sundays from March 8-22. Please stop by our table to order and pay (\$4/pound) for yours. Expected delivery is April 5. Chair: Andrea Tiggas.

## Host Meal after Presanctified Liturgy

**Wednesday, March 11**

Philoptochos is hosting the second Lenten meal following the 5:45 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy. We are organizing a planning team and will need others to help from the time of set-up in the late afternoon through clean-up. The recipient of free will donations will be announced soon.

## Sacred Baking Workshops

**Begin March 28**

Two sacred baking workshops are planned, and all parishioners are invited to come and learn these Orthodox traditions.

- Saturday, March 28, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
*Prosforo (Communion Bread)*
- Friday, June 5, 6:00-9:00 p.m.  
*Sitari (memorial wheat)*

These are hands-on workshops led by Sacred Baking chair Toni Bazakos. Please stop by the Philoptochos table on Sundays to register.

## Philoptochos Meeting

**Sunday, March 29, 11:30 a.m.**

Come together with your church sisters for fellowship at our March meeting in the Terrace Room. Program details will be announced in Sunday bulletins and via emails.

### Coming in April...

- Sunday, April 5  
*Host dinner reception following MEOCCA Vespers*
- Saturday, April 11  
*Lazarus Saturday Family Retreat*
- Friday, April 17  
*Adorn Kouvouklion (Christ's Tomb), bag eggs, plate koulouria*
- Saturday, April 18  
*Decorate after first Resurrection Liturgy*
- Saturday, April 25  
*Pan-Orthodox Tea at St. George Greek*
- No Board or General Philoptochos meetings in April

### Thank You...

...to all who made Sweet Sunday a success: chairs Cathy Forchas and Paulette Hastings, the many people who brought sweets and prepared, implemented and cleaned at the event, and to all who generously donated a total of \$965 for Assistance League Assault Survivor Kits.

...to Nikki Beauchamp and Dena Tortorelis for leading our February meeting program *Spring Clean to Redeem*.

...to Alexandria Kalina for leading the February Book Club Discussion.

## Vacation Church School

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### Put on the Full Armor of God

Save the dates ~ June 8-12, 2020

*Calling all good, able-bodied Christian soldiers!  
We need YOU for a week-long training program.  
You will learn skills and gain knowledge necessary  
to fight for our Lord!*

*VCS is for kids three-years old (toilet trained)  
to grade six in the fall.*



## Summer Camp

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The 2020 Summer Camp dates are Saturday, July 4-Friday, July 10.

Summer Camp registration will begin in April. The registration fee will be announced soon.

Please watch the Camp web site, [www.stmaryscamp.com](http://www.stmaryscamp.com), for updates.

A Summer Camp Q & A will be held on Sunday March 8, 11:45 a.m., in the Fireside Room. Please come with questions. If March 8 does not work for you, please contact Doria at church (612.825.9595) to set up a time to meet privately.



# Mission & Outreach

## A parent with her children before, during, and after “March for Life 2020”

### Lord, Hear Our Prayer

*Thoughts from Erika Young*

Here are my family's thoughts on the March for Life 2020, which we attended for the first time with other parishioners of St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church:

As a homeschooling mother, I strive to teach a bit more than math and literature to my two girls (aged 9 and 13): we often have freewheeling, lively discussions about critical thinking, moral matters, politics, government, and law.

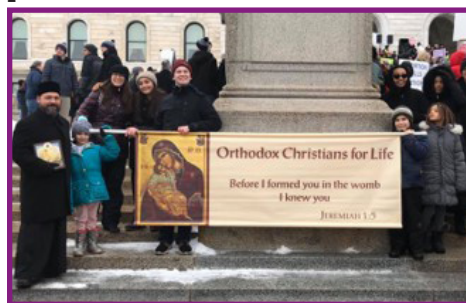


I am often impressed with the depth of convictions that my children are able to express, and I thank God that I have the opportunity to so intimately talk to my children on an almost-daily basis. We have discussed abortion in an age-appropriate manner for some time now, and when my girls set aside a part of money they have earned or have been given for charity, they usually ask me to forward it on to some organization that supports women who have made the decision to keep a child in a difficult circumstance and may need some assistance.

Something that has stuck with me is that my children were absolutely horrified upon learning that abortion was a “thing” that people do, much less advocate or celebrate, despite me taking care to use non-inflammatory language to describe the horrific act. When looking at it through a more innocent child's eyes, without the burden of years of secular propaganda about “choice” and “freedom”, the truth becomes plain: this is a tragic discounting of the precious human life that God “formed...from the womb” (Isaiah 44) and a heartbreaking violation of the place where a child should be most safe while here on earth.

I explained to the girls that there is a march where

we can join with others to pray to stop abortion as well as to demonstrate to lawmakers that many of us do not agree with the current laws allowing this practice and would like to see them overturned.



We entered the Cathedral of St. Paul and were overwhelmed with both its beauty and the number of people it contained. I spoke briefly with the girls about how many people came out on this blustery day to pray for the lives of those most innocent. We prayed earnestly that God, in His mercy, would hear our cries and those of the lives that have been lost. Lord have mercy.

While on the march to the Capitol, spirits were high and we took turns holding the banner for St. Mary's. It was an incredible blessing to see so many young people, especially teenagers and young adults who seemed to be focused and passionate about their attendance. The girls and I discussed the signs that we saw people holding and what they meant, as well as how brave one must be to stand in front of so many people and admit that you'd had an abortion and regretted it (which several speakers did). It was a good reminder for me to recall and explain to the girls what being the “first among sinners” means for each of us, and also to be mindful of our own actions in our attempts to avoid sinning, enabled by the grace of God.

When we got home, I asked the girls to write a paper about how they felt about the march we had attended, as well as how they felt about abortion. My younger daughter headed her essay with big letters pleading “PLEASE DO NOT KILL YOUR BABY AND ALWAYS PRAY” which, though simplistic, was heartfelt. She went on to talk about how sad it made her when she saw babies to think that someone wouldn't want it, and that God would help people if they wanted to do the right thing and that they should pray for help and go to church. My eldest wrote a

thoughtful essay which included thoughts on the problem of complicating what might be one sin with another, and that we can't cover up sins from God or ourselves. She also talked about how we all need to support those who are in difficult situations and not judge others, but we should be brave enough to speak up for the right things.

After they read their papers to me, we talked about the need to not only attend marches like this in solidarity with others who see abortion for the regrettable decision that it is, but to work throughout the year to end this practice, to donate time and



assistance to those who need help with their pregnancies, and to pray for all of those who have been impacted by an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. May the

Lord Jesus Christ help us to live these convictions throughout our lives with love, compassion, and humility.

*Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.*

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## Advice for the Liturgy

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If you watched the Super Bowl from its opening kick-off to the end of the game, but if you chronically arrive late for the opening doxology of "Blessed is the Kingdom" at the Liturgy, then it may be time to show the same commitment to the Liturgy and arrive at the beginning. That opening doxology opens us up to a reality hardly matched by an opening kick-off.

If you spent time watching all of the pre-game hype and analysis, all meant to prepare you for the game, but if you have never given much thought to arriving before the Liturgy for the reading of the Orthros; then I would suggest arriving in church

before the actual Liturgy begins in time for the pre-Eucharist chanting of Orthros. This way you are able to settle in and calm down a bit in preparation for the Liturgy that will shortly unfold in all of its majesty.

If you have been engaged in some of the (endless) post-game analysis since last Sunday; or watched "highlights" of the game, or recall some of the more significant and game-changing plays of the game, but if you struggle by mid-week to remember what the Gospel was at last Sunday's Liturgy, then I would suggest engaging in some post-Liturgy analysis of the Gospel that you heard on any given Sunday with family and/or friends (or within your own mind and heart). Such "analysis" can eventually become genuine meditation or even contemplation...

We are slowly drawing near to the Church's own "Super Sunday" which is, of course, Pascha. Let our preparation and desire for that day far surpass any of our other passions or commitments, for the Lord taught us, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

-Fr. Steven Kostoff

*Fr. Kostoff is the pastor of Christ the Savior / Holy Spirit Church in Norwood, Ohio 45212-4007*



# Stewardship

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by Athena Mihas

**Saint Mary's Stewardship Testimonial**  
Parishioner, Cooper Buss, shared the following powerful testimonial with us in November, following the Liturgy:

## **Why do we give money to the Church?**

*Because scripture and Church tradition tell us to tithe (give 10% of our income to the Church):*

*Genesis 14:19-20*

*And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" **And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.***

*See also Proverbs 3:9-10 and 2 Chronicles 31:4-5*

*St. John Chrysostom says:*

***"Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs."***

*Overall, to us this means that we should give aggressively both to the Church and to the poor and prayerfully seek to maximize our giving.*

*God designed math to make tithing super easy. We have no computational excuse not to tithe! It is the easiest math problem to calculate. 10% = move the decimal one place to the left.*

*A wise man once told me that charity is not what God wants from us, but what God wants for us. In liturgy, we sing quoting Psalm 33, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." I think a lot of things in life are like that. God intends massive spiritual blessings upon you, but you have to try a new behavior, so you will see that it is good in a way that you would not from the outside looking in.*

*If you have not already, try tithing. Try giving the Church 10%. I believe you will see that it is what God wants for you, not from you. And you will feel that it is good.*

## **Why do we give our time to the Church?**

*The famous church father Yoda says: Do or do not, there is no WHY.*

*I am pretty sure I am off base there in at least two ways!*

*But I think, in terms of why Jess and I give our time to the Church, there really is no WHY. There is no logical reason I can give you. We just started doing it, and it feels right.*

*Jess and I look forward to playing games with kids at Parish Night. We love participating in our monthly Stewardship meetings. And I get so much joy from ushering!*

*I love what the Outreach Committee has been doing, putting opportunities to serve in the weekly church emails. Open those emails! Do you know that the Church can see who doesn't open them? Take 10 seconds each week to open that email, scroll down, and skim the opportunities to serve. One day, God might move your heart, and something will jump out to you. Try it and you will see that it is good.*

*We all have a common excuse. I am too busy already. My life is too full of other things. Kids, family, friends, chores, work, sports, Netflix, shopping, whatever is on your cell phone.*

*There is a mystery here I want to share with you.*

*Jess and I feel the same way. We are too busy to spend more time at Church.*

*BUT we've found that every time we cut something else out of our lives, something non-essential, and replace it with a Church thing...We feel less busy.*

*I think this is because when we give our lives to the Church, we gain our lives back.*

*I am finding more and more frequently that the Liturgy says it best:*

*We must set aside all cares of life, and then we will mystically represent the Cherubim and receive the King of all, the life-giving Trinity.*

## **2020 Stewardship Update**

Thank you for your on-going support of St. Mary's through your gifts of time, talent and treasure.

- The budgeted goal for 2020 Financial Stewardship giving is \$1,069,426.
- As of January 31, 2020, \$60,170 in Stewardship contributions have been received.

- This is \$47,541 less than we had received last year at this time.
- The main reason for the decrease compared to last year is mainly due to one large payment received in January 2019 that is typically received in December.

Offering Income as of 01/31/20	2020 YTD Actual	2020 Annual Budget	Remaining Funds Needed by Year-End
Total Payments Received	\$30,170	\$1,069,426	\$1,009,256

Offering Income as of 01/31/20	Last Year YTD Actual	2020 YTD Actual	Increase/ (Decrease) vs. Last Year
Total Payments Received	\$107,711	\$60,170	(\$47,541)

### Winter “Parea” Potlucks!

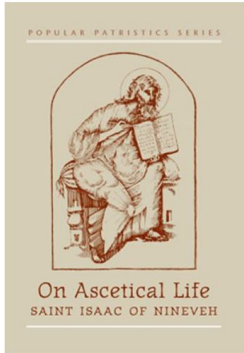
As you read this message, the Winter “Parea” Potlucks are taking place. We have eight families that generously offered to host a potluck gathering at their homes during the month of February. We want to thank all hosts that were willing to open up their homes and invited fellow parishioners to join them for dinner and fellowship. Next month we will report the highlights of the potluck gatherings.



# In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly

*Begin valiantly every work of virtue;  
“do not approach it with a double heart.” (Sir. 1:28)  
In the course of your journey,  
do not doubt in your heart the hope of God’s grace...  
—Saint Isaac of Nineveh*



The word “ascetic” derives from the Greek verb *ασκεῖν*, meaning “to exercise, to endeavor, to do one’s best.” Great Lent is the season in the liturgical year when we are especially invited and encouraged to live ascetically—endeavoring to do one’s best in the light of Christ—particularly through prayer and fasting. Two books that explain and provide great wisdom and guidance for the ascetic life are *On Ascetical Life* by Saint Isaac of Nineveh (also known as Saint Isaac the Syrian) and *Way of the Ascetics* by Tito Colliander.

*On Ascetical Life* by Saint Isaac the Syrian, Archbishop of Nineveh (ca. 660-680), is a volume in the

Popular Patristic Series published by St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press. After a helpful introduction to Saint Isaac, his thought, and his context in history, this book contains the first six ascetical discourses of the dozens he wrote. Each discourse is presented in short passages numbered to enable the reader to better understand and appreciate each thought byte. Saint Isaac explains what the ascetic life is and how it is lived, offering wisdom for the reader throughout.

The beginning of the [ascetic] way of life consists in applying the mind to the words of God and in exercising patience. For the draught which comes from the words of God helps toward the perfection which is in the latter. Likewise, indeed, the increase of growth in the fulfillment of patience gives place to a greater need for the words of God. (25-26)

Tito Colliander (1904-1989), in his book *Way of the Ascetics*, wrote as a layman seeking to live

an ascetic life. Steeped in the ascetical discourses of Saint Isaac the Syrian and other writings of the Church Fathers, Colliander applied the wisdom he gleaned and gathered from these sources to elucidate and explain the ascetic way and how it is lived day by day. For example, in the chapter titled “On Obedience,” Colliander writes,

The greatest offering we can present to the Lord is our self. We cannot do this without giving up our own will. We learn to do this through obedience, and obedience we learn through practice. The best form of practice is that provided by the Church in her prescribed fast days and seasons.

Besides fasting we have other teachers to whom we can show obedience. They meet us at every step in our daily life, if only we recognize their voices. Your wife wants you to take your raincoat with you: do as she wishes, to practice obedience. [...] Wordlessly the infant asks for care and companionship: do as it wishes as far as you can, and thus practice obedience. A novice in a cloister could not find more opportunity for obedience than you in your own home. And likewise at your job and in your dealings with your neighbour. [...]

Thus, make it a habit to rejoice when an opportunity for obedience offers. It is quite unnecessary to seek one, for you may easily fall into a studied servility that leads you astray into self-righteous virtue. You may depend upon it that you are sent just as many opportunities for obedience as you need, and the very kind that are most suitable for you. But if you notice that you have let an opportunity slip by, reproach yourself; you have been like a sailor who has let a favorable wind go by unused. (43-45)

This is just one example of how Colliander examines aspects of the ascetic life, looking at them closely with the lens of faith lived by practicing the virtues in all circumstances and in all ways.

*On Ascetical Life* and *Way of the Ascetics* are short books of just over 100 pages each and both are filled with wisdom for the reader who truly wants to endeavor to do their best—seeking and striving to follow Christ always.

# 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.

### Faith Group

#### 0-5 Year Olds and Parents

- ▶ Wednesday, March 4, 9:30-11:00 a.m.  
Great Hall and Terrace Room
- ▶ Thursday, March 19, 9:30-11:00 a.m.  
Great Hall and Terrace Room

### HOPE and JOY

#### Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Friday, March 27-Saturday, March 28  
6:00 p.m.-9:00 a.m.  
JOY Lock-in (grades 3-5)  
*We will be playing games, watching a movie, and enjoying being in each other's company.*

### Junior GOYA

#### Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, March 11, 7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Junior GOYA Mini-meeting  
*Following the Presanctified Liturgy, join us where we will be discussing as a group different scenarios of questions that you may be asked in school and in today's world on what it means to be an Orthodox Christian.*
- ▶ Wednesday, March 11, 7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Junior GOYA Mini-meeting  
*Following the Divine Liturgy, join us where we will be discussing as a group different scenarios of questions that you may be asked in school and in today's world on what it means to be an Orthodox Christian.*

### Senior GOYA

#### Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, March 4, 4:30-8:30 p.m.  
Senior GOYA hosting meal following Presanctified Liturgy  
*The Senior GOYAns will be setting up, preparing and cleaning up the meal following the Presanctified Liturgy.*

- ▶ Friday, March 6, 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Salutations to the Theotokos (in the Nave)  
*Senior GOYAns are welcome to attend the Salutations to the Theotokos and listen to Fr. Maximos Constas preach following the service. A meal will be served in the Terrace Room following the service and sermon. All are welcome to attend!*
- ▶ Friday, March 13-Sunday, March 15  
FOCUS YES Service Weekend  
*Youth Equipped to Serve (YES) is FOCUS North America's youth servant leadership program for 9th-12th graders. Their mission statement is: Seeking to love Christ and each other, YES creates opportunities for participants to engage with the poverty of their city, equipping them to become servant leaders in their own communities. Cost is \$125 per person and covers all the weekend's expenses. St. Mary's GOC will subsidize some of the cost. For more information, visit <https://yesnorthamerica.org/> and to sign-up contact [Jon@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:Jon@stmarysgoc.org)*
- ▶ Wednesday, March 18, 7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Senior GOYA Mini-meeting  
*Following the Presanctified Liturgy, join us where we will be discussing as a group different scenarios of questions that you may be asked in school and in today's world on what it means to be an Orthodox Christian.*

### Lenten Confession Schedule

Confession begins following the Liturgy, typically around 7:00 p.m.

- ▶ Wednesday, March 4 – Grades 7 and 8
- ▶ Wednesday, March 11 – Grades 11 and 12
- ▶ Wednesday, March 18 – Grades 5 and 6
- ▶ Wednesday, March 25 – Grades 3 and 4
- ▶ Wednesday, April 1 – Grade 2
- ▶ Wednesday, April 8 – Grades 9 and 10



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram: **St\_Marys\_GOYA**

## 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.

## January Recap

We rang in the New Year with some fun activities at St. Mary's! We had a great turnout with the HOPE/JOY group as they bowled at Bowlero! The Junior and Senior GOYAns also attended St. Mary's Pan-Orthodox Winter Camp at Camp St. Croix! It was a beautiful weekend with lots of highs, including capture the white flag in the snow and at night (which was fairly difficult) and other fun activities. A low, however, was having to walk outside to go to the bathroom at the bath house. Overall, it was a wonderful weekend!

*Photos can be viewed in the print edition.*

# Church School News & Information

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## Sunday, March 8 – No Class

Please be on time for Liturgy and join in the Great Entrance procession with an icon you bring from home. There will be extra icons to hold if you forget yours.

## Sunday, March 15 – St. John Chrysostom Oratorical and Art Festival

Regular class for grades nursery through grade 6. Grades 7-12 stay in church to listen to the speeches (or to give your speech).

Topics for speeches can be found at <https://www.goarch.org/-/2020-st-john-chrysostom-oratorical-festival-topics> or talk to Diaconissa Alexandria Kalina for more information, help with your project, or to register. Children may also submit an essay or poem.

Elementary Division topics are as follows:

Art Project topics – draw, paint, or create with any medium (clay, wooden sticks, cardboard, dry noodles, mosaic tiles, legos, etc) an art project to on the following topics.

Kindergarten – "The Cross"

Grade 1 – The Church

Grade 2 – Holy Communion

Grade 3 – One of the Sacraments

Grade 4 – My Patron Saint

Grade 5 – One of the Parables, or "I Am Blessed"

Grade 6 – One of Jesus' "I Ams"

Projects need to be completed and in the Great Hall by 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 15. If completed before that, bring to the Resource Room at the end of the preschool hallway with your name, grade, and title displayed.

The students will stand by their projects during social hour to display and discuss their projects.

## Looking Ahead for Volunteers

Help needed for the children's Good Friday Retreat on April 17, 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., for:

- Check-in
- Group leaders
- Group supervisors/leading for each station
- Crafts
- Gym/game leader and helper
- Prepare, serve, and clean-up of snacks/lunch

Contact Dena Tortorelis to sign-up:

[dtortorelis@comcast.net](mailto:dtortorelis@comcast.net) or 651.334.1842

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## The Prayer of St. Ephraim



O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.

*(Prostration)*

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to your servant.

*(Prostration)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed are you unto ages of ages.

*(Prostration)*

### 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



# March 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>1 Forgiveness Sunday</b>  <b>Cheesefare</b>  <b>"The Messenger" Deadline</b>                      8:30am-Orthros                      9:30am-Divine Liturgy                      Church School                      Chant Group Rehearsals                      4:00pm-Forgiveness Vespers</p>	<p><b>2 Clean Monday</b>  <b>First Day of Great Lent</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline                      7:00pm-Greek Dance Practice</p>	<p><b>3</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline                      7:00pm-Open Gym</p>	<p><b>4</b>                      9:30am-FAITH Playgroup                      10:30am-Intercessory Prayer                      11:00am-Women's Bible Study                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      5:45pm-Presanctified Liturgy                      Confession: Grades 7 &amp; 8                      7:00pm-Dinner                      Open Gym                      7:30pm-Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>5</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline</p>	<p><b>6</b>                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      6:00pm-Salutations                      Dinner follows Salutations</p>	<p><b>7 Third Saturday of Souls</b>                      8:00am-Orthros                      9:00am-Divine Liturgy                      Lenten Retreat                      5:00pm-Great Vespers</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Set your clocks <u>ahead</u> one hour tonight.</i></p>
<p><b>8 Sunday of Orthodoxy</b>  <b>Daylight Saving Time begins</b>                      8:30am-Orthros                      9:30am-Divine Liturgy  <i>No Church School</i>                      Chant Group Rehearsals                      11:30am-Summer Camp Q&amp;A                      11:45am-Coffee Talk                      4:00pm-Lenten Vespers  <i>St. Mary's Cathedral</i></p>	<p><b>9</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline</p>	<p><b>10</b>                      6:15pm-Parish Council                      7:00pm-Open Gym                      7:15pm-Young Women's Bible Study at Christopulos home</p>	<p><b>11</b>                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      5:45pm-Presanctified Liturgy                      Confession: Grades 11 &amp; 12                      7:00pm-Dinner                      Junior GOYA Meeting                      Open Gym                      7:30pm-Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b>                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      6:00pm-Salutations  <i>Sr. GOYA FOCUS YES</i></p>	<p><b>14</b>                      9:00am-Bible Study                      5:00pm-Great Vespers  <i>Sr. GOYA FOCUS YES</i></p>
<p><b>15 St. Gregory Palamas</b>                      8:30am-Orthros                      9:30am-Divine Liturgy                      Oratorical Festival                      Church School / Rehearsals after Liturgy-Philoptochos Bd.                      11:45am-Missions/Outreach                      5:00pm-Western Koinonia                      4:00pm-Lenten Vespers  <i>St. George GOC</i></p>	<p><b>16</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline                      7:00pm-Greek Dance Practice</p>	<p><b>17</b>                      7:00pm-Open Gym</p>	<p><b>18</b>                      9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing                      10:30am-Intercessory Prayer                      11:00am-Women's Bible Study                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      5:45pm-Presanctified Liturgy                      Confession: Grades 5 &amp; 6                      7:00pm-Dinner                      Senior GOYA Meeting                      Open Gym                      7:30pm-Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>19</b>                      9:30am-FAITH Playgroup                      6:30pm-Stewardship Com.</p>	<p><b>20</b>                      1-8pm-Photo Session                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      6:00pm-Salutations</p>	<p><b>21</b>                      9:00am-Bible Study                      10am-4pm-Photo Session                      5:00pm-Great Vespers  <i>Healing House Dinner</i></p>
<p><b>22 Sunday of the Holy Cross</b>                      8:30am-Orthros                      9:30am-Divine Liturgy                      Church School                      after Liturgy-Annunciation/ Independence Day Luncheon                      4:00pm-Lenten Vespers  <i>St. George Antiochian</i></p>	<p><b>23</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline</p>	<p><b>24</b>                      6:00pm-Great Vespers                      7:00pm-Evening Men's Fellowship                      7:00pm-Open Gym                      7:15pm-Young Women's Bible Study at Christopulos home</p>	<p><b>25 Annunciation</b>                      4:00pm-Holy Confession  <b>6:00pm</b>-Evening Divine Liturgy                      Confession: Grades 3 &amp; 4                      7:00pm-Dinner                      Junior GOYA                      Open Gym                      7:30pm-Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b>                      4:00pm-Holy Confession                      6:00pm-Salutations                      JOY Lock-in</p>	<p><b>28</b>                      9:00am-Bible Study                      10:00am-Prosforo Workshop                      5:00pm-Great Vespers                      JOY Lock-in</p>
<p><b>29 St. John Climacus</b>                      8:30am-Orthros                      9:30am-Divine Liturgy                      Church School                      Chant Group Rehearsals after Liturgy-Philoptochos                      General Meeting                      4:00pm-Lenten Vespers  <i>St. Elizabeth Church</i></p>	<p><b>30</b>                      6:00pm-Great Compline</p>	<p><b>31</b>                      7:00pm-Open Gym</p>				

# Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra: *The Life and Spiritual Teachings of a Modern Elder*

Saint Mary's Lenten Retreat

Friday and Saturday, March 6 and 7, 2020

The Very Reverend Archimandrite Dr. Maximos Conostas  
*Guest Speaker*

Friday, March 6

6:00 p.m. - Salutations to the Theotokos

Father Conostas will deliver the sermon.

Dinner will follow at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 7: Third Saturday of Souls

8:00 a.m. - Orthros; 9:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

Breakfast and presentations follow Liturgy



Lunch will be served at noon, please RSVP to the Church Office

The retreat will conclude by 2:30 p.m.



Father Maximos Conostas is Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Mass. He holds a Ph.D. in Patristics and Historical Theology from the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C.

For many years he was a professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School, after which he became a monk at the Holy Monastery of Simonopetra (Mt. Athos, Greece).

His work focuses on the patristic and Byzantine theological tradition, the patristic interpretation of Scripture, the Philokalia and Orthodox spirituality, and the theological study of Byzantine art, icons and iconography.



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