

The Messenger

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

September 2020

Inside This Issue

Bookstore	8
Church School/Youth	11
Education and Fellowship.....	3
Koinonia.....	3
Missions and Outreach	7
Our Life Together	2
Parish News and Events.....	4
Philoptochos.....	6
Parish-Night Week.....	3
Worship Schedule	3

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 John Kostas

The Lord of the Living and the Dead

by Fr. John Kostas

If you were asked to say off the top of your head what word was the opposite of 'living' you most likely would immediately say 'dead.' Any ideas more contrary than these are hard to imagine – the precious gift of life, and death, the last enemy of humankind.

Yet St. Paul thought differently. Death and life are not opposite, but united in the Lord Jesus Christ. *'We live for Christ, and we die in Christ, so, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's'* (Rom. 14:8).

When we are present at the Divine Liturgy, we are not merely with the living, but with the saints. *We are united in the Lord!* When we feel cut off from the world by cares and troubles, we are still joined in a community of prayer and concern. *We are united in the Lord!* When we behold a loved one in a casket, seemingly so far from our reality, we are not separated from them. *We are united in the Lord!*

This does not mean that we do not mourn when we lose someone, for they have indeed fallen asleep and no longer in our presence. But St. Paul tells not to grieve *'as others do who have no hope'* (I Thes. 4:13). It is those without hope who see death as the opposite of life. Hope is the bridge that carries us from this life to the next.

Actually, the true opposites are not life and death. Rather on the one side there is 'mere' life, the daily round of existence and earthly cravings, of uncertainty, insecurity and anxiety. The opposite is the transfigured life available through Jesus Christ: *'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly'* (Jn. 10:10). But another way, the true opposites are a despairing and declining death-in-life, and a hopeful life-in-death that we might call by the same word *grace*.

Such abundant life is available to all who die to themselves and live to God. Those who do so can join with St. Paul in this certainty, the certainty that the Christ is the Lord of both the living and the dead (Rm. 14:9).

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)

Our Life Together

Baptisms

Alessandra

Parents: George & Ydrey

Hangistamoulos

July 25

Deaths

Christina Houck

August 1, 2020

Lillian Gilson

August 5, 2020

John Efstathiou

August 13, 2020

May their memories be eternal.

Thank You

Thank you to all who mail in your weekly offerings these days. We especially enjoy the kind notes that are oftentimes included in the envelopes. It brightens our day!

Share YourShelf

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

Sunday, September 6

Canned fruit and vegetables

Sunday, September 13

Cereals – hot and cold

Sunday, September 20

Canned meals – large cans

Sunday, September 27

Hygiene items

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. —*Matthew 5:16*

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

Randy Twito

Company Matching Funds

Many of our parishioners work for companies that provide matching funds for contributions to non-profits. This is a wonderful way to increase our stewardship and income, but we need your help. The checks we receive do not indicate the name of the donor so we cannot properly account for these funds. Should you work for an organization that offers this benefit, and have designated St. Mary's as the beneficiary, please contact the Church Office. This will allow our staff to acknowledge the contribution and appropriately record the donation on our financial statements.

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

Friday, September 11
7:00 a.m., on Zoom

Note date change due to Labor Day weekend

Senior Citizens

No September gathering.
Monthly gatherings are cancelled until further notice.

All other gatherings are cancelled until further notice.

New Bible Study on Zoom

A new Bible study will be offered via Zoom on Monday evenings, 7:30 p.m., beginning September 14. Join Fr. Jason as we explore the Holy Scriptures. This new Bible Study is open to all adults. To join the Zoom Bible Study, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/y3tolssb>

Meeting ID: 838 4110 4908

Passcode: 660926

Or dial in: 312.626.6799

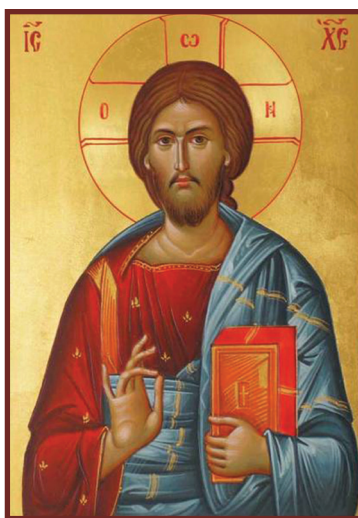
Koinonia

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

Biblical Reflections

Father John's "Biblical Reflections" are now available on the St. Mary's website.

Go to www.stmarysgoc.org and under the tab, "Our Parish," you'll find the link to the reflections page. Why not share them with friends?



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

Tuesday, September 1

Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year

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

Tuesday, September 8

Nativity of the Theotokos

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

Sunday, September 13

Eve of Holy Cross

Great Vespers – 4:00 p.m.

Monday, September 14

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

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

Thursday, September 17

Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope, and Love

Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Parish-Night Week: The Church Facing the World 2020-2021

This year, we are turning our Parish Night into Parish-Night Week! During the week, the HOPE/JOY (kindergarten-grade 5) will be meeting virtually on Tuesday from 6:30-7:15 p.m., the adults and Senior GOYAn (grades 9-12) will be meeting virtually on Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 p.m., and the Junior GOYAn (grades 6-8) will be meeting virtually on Thursday from 7:00-8:00 p.m. The adults and Senior GOYAn group will have a guest speaker for each session. At least from September through December, Parish-Night Week will all take place on Zoom. Be sure to watch your e-mails to register or to get the link. We are looking forward to a great year!

- September 29-October 1:

Metropolitan Nathanael presents on "The Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today's World"

- October 20-22: Fr. Jacob Zaki - *"Islam, between Then and Now - What Do I Need to Know?"*
- November 17-19: Deacon Philip Wagner - *"Prisoners Outside of Prisons: Still Paying the Price"*
- December 15-17: Fr. George Parsenios - *"The Nativity and the Biblical Narratives"*

Parish News & Events

On August 2, the Metropolis of Chicago updated their guidelines for Non-Liturgical Activities. Currently they allow groups to meet, provided you meet outside, and follow all of the state and municipality directives.

While we all look forward to a time when we can gather together for fellowship, we encourage you to review this updated guidelines. Parishioners requesting to host a meeting or other function must first contact the Church Office. There are several forms which must be completed and then reviewed by our parish Covid-19 Safety Committee. Once paperwork has been submitted and reviewed, the Committee will forward your request to the Metropolis of Chicago for approval and signature. Once formal approval has been granted, you may begin planning and advertising your event.

Reuniting our People with their Parish Homes ***Non-Liturgical Programs – Outdoor Parish Life Activities***

Level 3 cleaning, sanitation, personal protection equipment, education, and training protocols remain in effect and apply to the non-liturgical parish life activities. Each parish should develop its own plan for non-liturgical Parish Life activities, in compliance with local orders, laws and ordinances. All programs must abide by the CDC's social distancing standards and any other safety directives of the Metropolis of Chicago.

When planning outdoor, open-air, non-liturgical Parish Life activities, consider:

- All youth and young adult programs must be conducted in compliance with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Policies for the Safety of Youth and Children.
- All gatherings must comply with the social distancing, face covering, and participant limits as prescribed by applicable governing authority.
- Consider limiting programs to maximum 1-2 hours, reducing the need for restroom breaks and desire for drinks & snacks.
- If food and beverage are offered, consider individual water bottles and individual, pre-packaged snacks. Food and drink should be placed on a table, distanced so that a guest may pick up food and drink, without physical contact with other guests or host. Foods such as bowls of pretzels, or trays of sandwiches or cookies, self-service drinks from common vessel, and self-service buffet are prohibited.
- Contact activities are discouraged.

- ▶ Basketball drills are permitted, but basketball games are discouraged.
- ▶ Games like charades are permitted, but boardgames are discouraged.
- Consider whether the activity will conflict with other liturgical or non-liturgical activities at the parish campus.
- Consider whether there will be sufficient time and resources available to clean and sanitize the areas affected by the non-liturgical activity.
- Establish who will attend the event. Consider a reservation system.
- Establish a check-in system for attendance tracking, hand sanitation, face covering, and other personal protection equipment.
- Establish a restroom policy to avoid group gathering.
- Non-liturgical activities require different supplies. Review the program and determine cleaning, sanitation, and program supplies.

Chairs	Face covering
Gloves	Disinfecting Spray
Hand Sanitizer	Disinfecting Wipes
Paper Towels	Trash Bin
Trash Bags	Water Bottles
Marker (identify bottles)	

A New Icon

by Dena Tortorelis

From the many generous donations in memory of our dear mother and yiayia, Stamata Angelos, an icon was written from Iveron Monastery on Mount Athos of the Panagia Portaitissa. The icon arrived from Greece on August 1 and is a reproduction of the famous icon at the Monastery



The icon Panagia Portaitissa (“She who resides by the door” or “Keeper of the gate”) is a wonder-working icon of the Theotokos that was, according to tradition, painted by the Apostle and Evangelist Saint Luke.

During the ninth century, this icon was the personal property of a devout widow from Nicea in Asia Minor, who kept it and honored it in her private chapel. It was during the reign of the iconoclast Byzantine emperor Theophilus that soldiers came to the house of the widow. One of the soldiers struck the icon with his sword, and immediately blood began to flow from the gashed cheek of the Virgin. Shaken by this miracle, the soldier instantly repented, renounced the iconoclast heresy, and entered a monastery. On his advice, the widow concealed the icon in order to avert its further desecration.

After praying for guidance before the icon, the widow put the Holy Image into the sea. The icon did not sink and stood upright on the water and began to drift towards the west.

Many years later, the icon made its appearance on the Holy Mountain. The Mother of God appeared to one of the monks, St. Gabriel, in a vision and directed him to convey to the abbot and brothers of the monastery that she wished them to have her icon as their help and salvation. She told Gabriel to approach the icon on the waters without fear and take it with his hands. Obedient to the words of the Mother of God, according to Athonite tradition, Gabriel “walked upon the waters as though upon dry land,” took up the icon and brought it back to the shore. The icon was then brought into the monastery and placed in the altar.

Nevertheless, after its reception and installation in the church, the icon repeatedly disappeared and was found above the gate of the monastery on the inside. In a dream, the Blessed Virgin told St. Gabriel that this was the place which she herself had chosen, so that she could protect the monks and not be protected by them. Thus the icon has taken the name of “Portaitissa” and to this day its presence in the monastery and on the Holy Mountain is regarded as a guarantee of the protection of Athonite monasticism by the Theotokos.

The miracles performed by the Portaitissa are unnumbered, and are celebrated especially on August 15 and Monday of Bright Week.

Introduction to Orthodox Christianity

The 12-week “Introduction to Orthodox Christianity” course begins Tuesday, September 15, 2020, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., and open to anyone interested in learning more about Eastern Orthodoxy Christianity. The class seeks to introduce people to the Orthodox Christian faith as well as enhance the knowledge of current Orthodox Christians of their faith. There is no charge for the course. This fall, classes will be offered via Zoom until further notice. An invitation to join will be sent to those who complete and submit the online registration form: <https://forms.gle/JuYZfmJGMWEUPpfE6>. A free copy of one of the course books will be offered to non-Orthodox participants.

For more information, please contact the Catechism Coordinator, Fr. Perry, at 651.222.6220 or info@stgeorgegoc.org. The course is sponsored by Minnesota Eastern Orthodox Christian Clergy Association (MEOCCA) www.meocca.org

Weekly topics:

September 15: Introduction

September 22: God - Holy Trinity

September 29: Mankind—Creation, The Fall, The Messiah

October 6: Christ I - Incarnation, Theotokos and Saints

October 13: Christ II - His Work and Teachings

October 20: Church I - Birth, Mission, Structure

October 27: Church II - Councils, Creeds, Bible, Tradition

November 3: Sacraments I - Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, Unction

November 10: Sacraments II - Eucharist, Liturgy, Worship, Prayer

November 17: Sacraments III- Marriage and Monasticism

November 24: The Goal - Second Coming and Living the Christian Life

December 1: Conclusion - Review and Q&A

Philoptochos



We're happy to share that several September events are happening through Philoptochos! Please join in as you're able.

SAVE THE DATE: September Philoptochos Meeting on the 22nd!

Join your Philoptochos sisters at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, for our kick-off meeting for the new church year! At the time of this writing, the meeting will be on-line using Zoom. If this changes, we'll let you know! There are several items of business to attend to, so please plan to join us.

New Selection for Women's Book Club

The next book for the Women's Book Club is *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia, New Martyr of the Communist Yoke* and copies are available in the church office for \$30. All are welcome to join the Women's Book Club!

Operation Classroom

Operation Classroom is an initiative of the National Philoptochos to assist and offer support to teachers and students in underserved or underfunded schools and provide resources that would not be available through the local school district. President Maria Logus challenged all chapters to adopt a school in their community.

In our Summer 2020 Outreach Survey, connecting with a neighborhood school had the most support from the 61 people who responded, so the Philoptochos Board agreed to reach out to a neighborhood school. Initial connections have been made. Jayne Klatt and Paulette Hastings are co-chairing this program. Watch for ways to get involved!

Big Greek Give Back

As was announced in the August Town Meeting, St. Mary's got city approval (and is now approved by Metropolitan Nathanael) to provide a free meal through local food shelves, delivered to emergency personnel (police/fire/EMT) and St. Mary's VIPs, and as take-out for the ECCO neighborhood.

While Philoptochos doesn't have a specific role,

we encourage all our members to watch for ways to support this community effort. Possibilities include helping deliver meals, having a food drive in your neighborhood to support the larger food drive at St. Mary's, and providing financial support to the food drive. Watch for more information in future communications.

Thank You

...To all who helped with the August 15 Dormition Celebration: Presvytera Christa Dokos, Cathy and Don Forchas, Maria Kalina, Annette Legeros, Melpo Murdakes, Popie Rakes, Cathy Selin, Andrea Tiggas, and Mary Kay Twito. Thanks also to Terry Leckas for providing the cupcakes.

...Angela Koumontzis, for serving as the first administrator of the Women's Book Club. We are thankful for all her work and wish her well in her return to Arizona. We are thankful also to Katherine Boosalis, Alexandria Kalina, and Cindy Karos, who will work together to maintain communications and discussions as the Book Club continues.

Missions & Outreach

It is a good day. It is especially good when you can help someone in need. With humility and gratitude, we choose to practice our faith in this shelter-at-home and wear-a-mask time. As we watch events unfold, it is easy to think about dark events. But if you are patient you read on to find the good news. You will find out about all the reaching out to one another in good will in many positive stories about faith communities, corporations and foundations that continue to make donations.

For instance, Thrivent Financial allows each employee to choose a non-profit or charity to receive a donation of \$250.00. The employee can name a nonprofit and further specify "for oatmeal meals," or, Second Harvest, "cereal for food shelves." Closer to home, ask any of St. Mary's parish leadership and ministries volunteers and they will be happy to describe the generosity that is so common at St. Mary's. You will be surprised.

Here are a couple more reports from food shelves that receive food from St. Mary's:



It was a good day when three boxes of oatmeal meals were delivered to **Joyce Uptown Food Shelf**, delivered to Simpson House, and

delivered to FOCUS House. CES will be picking up a van full of meals. "Thank You" for helping to put together 26,240 meals this past June 28.



It is a good day for **FOCUS House**. FOCUS House will once again be collecting coats for the Onamia

Indian Reservation. This collection is for women and children who live in the colder part of Minnesota. If you have extra not-needed-coats, please think about bringing them to St. Mary's to help the Native American children. There will be a collection container located in the hallway at St. Mary's or you can bring to FOCUS House at 550 Rice Street, St. Paul. This coat drive ends October 11.



And...it is also a good day for **Take Heart** when you can take a few moments to say a prayer for the persecuted Christians especially in Syria, Egypt,

and Iraq. As Take Heart partners with local churches and organizations, your fervent prayers for protection, education, and the opportunity to once again work are fervently needed.



Spreading the Word

Help us share St. Mary's with others!

Help us share our wonderful community with others! The Missions and Outreach Committee would like you to submit a short video promoting our parish to outsiders. Your video should be less than 10 seconds saying "I love St. Mary's because of... (*fill in the blank*)."

You might say "my worship experience," or "our high school ministry" or "the sense of community" or "the Bible Studies" or "how I feel loved" or "how we help the poor" or "the ancient beliefs" etc., etc., etc. Please only state one thing and do not use any acronyms or foreign words that an outsider would not understand. The video is intended for non-Orthodox seekers who might be interested in our community. The videos will be made into one large video, cutting from one person to another, providing a mosaic of our community and its wonderful activities for people to see. The video will be placed on-line. Please submit your video to Fr. Jason, frjason@stmarysgoc.org, via www.wetransfer.com. Wetransfer is a free, simple to use website to transfer larger files. Please contact Fr. Jason if you have any questions.

In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly

At St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, we know Father George Dokos as our Proistamenos. To the broader Orthodox world, Father George is known for his translations of writings of the Saints, especially the writings of St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite (1749-1809). Of St. Nikodemos' works, Father George has translated and published *Exomologetarian: A Manual of Confession, Concerning Frequent Communion of the Immaculate Mysteries of Christ*, and *Prayers to Our Lord Jesus Christ and A Safeguard for the Soul*. He has also translated the writings of an anonymous priest-monk of Mount Athos titled *The Watchful Mind: Teachings on the Prayer of the Heart*. In late July, Father George's most recent book *Made for Union: The Sacramental Spirituality of St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain* was published by Newrome Press.

Made for Union is about the theology of St. Nikodemos, specifically his teaching about the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, and Confession. One could say that *Made for Union* is a catechism of the sacramental life for one to understand Orthodoxy through the lens of St. Nikodemos, who was himself steeped in the Church Fathers. Father George writes in his introduction:

St. Nikodemos pioneered a revival in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church and was "actively involved in a return to a Eucharistic-centered spirituality" (Archbishop Chrysostomos, *A Guide to Orthodox Psychotherapy*, 93). His word is still of great value today and can contribute to the "rational worship" (Romans 12:1) of the faithful (xxi).

The Very Reverend Archimandrite Maximos Constas wrote a beautiful and edifying Foreword to *Made for Union*:

In a series of richly and meticulously documented chapters, Fr. Dokos details St. Nikodemos' sacramental spirituality, providing us with a detailed presentation of the sacramental foundations of

the saint's thought and theology. After an introduction covering the saint's life and work, the book begins with a general overview of St. Nikodemos' ecclesiology, in which the Church is the locus of the new life in Christ. This is followed by chapters on Baptism, Chrism, Eucharist, and Confession and Repentance. Fr. Dokos possesses a virtually unparalleled familiarity with St. Nikodemos' writings, which he has studied both deeply and widely, bringing the full range of the saint's teaching to bear on the subject (xv).

In the Conclusion of *Made for Union*, Father George writes:

The purpose of this summatory study has been to overview the works of St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and to describe his teachings regarding how a sacramental life of worship in the Church is the axis of a truly spiritual life in Christ... [H]is teachings emphasize the spiritual life of the Christian as a member of the Body of Christ within the tangible reality of the Church. The spiritual man is the man who is ruled by the Spirit of Christ and who seeks union with God. The goal of the spiritual life is deification in Christ, accomplished not as an individualistic moral effort but in communion with the ecclesial and worshipping body of the Church. This is why for St. Nikodemos, attending church is not simply obedience to some impersonal law or the fulfillment of some moral obligation. Rather, ecclesial life is the center and heart of the Christian's life because Christ is the center of his life. It is during the sacred services of the Church that proper worship and thanks are offered to the Holy Trinity.

It is not that St. Nikodemos scorns personal prayer, for he strongly encourages all people to especially repeat the Jesus Prayer in their heart ceaselessly and to pray at all times—whether at work, at home, or at school. But the Saint does stress the fact that the house of God is a place where the grace of God dwells in a special way. It is there that the prayers and petitions of the entire

ecclesial body come together and are united in harmony to have a special force. Furthermore, participation in the services of the Church in the sacred temple provides the Christian with knowledge and instruction in the Christian manner of life. There he is endowed with divine strength and grace to continue in his spiritual life (195-196).

This book is extraordinary in many ways, including its presentation. Newrome Press is known for its outstandingly well-crafted books, but *Made for Union* surpasses anything they have produced to date. The actual book is so beautiful that it really has to be seen to be appreciated. While one should not judge a book by its cover, the cover of *Made for Union* does give a preview of the superb content of its pages. The illustrations at the beginning of each chapter also give an elegant preview of the subject of that chapter. A gift of grace while also being a work of art, this book invites the reader to thoughtful consideration and quiet meditation on the spiritual messages that fill it.

Father George has graciously answered questions we asked him about his new book, St. Nikodemos, his translating, and more regarding his writing.

How and when were you first introduced to St. Nikodemos?

I had heard his name mentioned in Seminary but never got to know him or his encyclopedic writings. Then, as I started planning to go to the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki for my doctoral work, I began reading about various ecclesiastical writers. I came across the book by the late Dr. Constantine Cavarnos on St. Nikodemos in his *Modern Orthodox Saints* series, and as I learned about the Saint and the volume and breadth of his work, I knew I needed to study him.

How has St. Nikodemos influenced you?

He has influenced me greatly! And my second child is even named after him 😊. What struck me was his Christian upbringing, his love for the Church, his intellectual aptitude, his love and care for his fellow oppressed Orthodox faithful under the Ottoman yoke, and his love for the Jesus Prayer and the Church Fathers. Reading St. Nikodemos is like taking in the entire 1800-year Patristic tradition that preceded him. He is the gateway to the Fathers.

Why did you decide to translate St. Nikodemos' writings? How did you choose the writings to translate? Please explain your process of translating.

This is a big question. Well, it's actually three. So, first off, I decided to translate St. Nikodemos because I was asked to. And I was asked to translate a specific text, his *Exomologetarion*, or *Manual of Confession*. Then, as I was reading his writings concerning the Sacraments I began translating some other texts, such as *Concerning Frequent Communion* and his personal defense against his accusers, *Confession of Faith*. It just went on from there. My process is that I need a quiet block of eight hours to get into a rhythm, and as I read, I translate, go over it again, and retranslate as necessary. It's pretty straightforward.

How did *Made for Union* come to be?

It is essentially my doctoral thesis. As I read through the many works of St. Nikodemos one thing that repeatedly jumped out at me was that he was constantly referring to the Christian life within the worshipping community. He wrote about Liturgy, the Sacraments, the hymns used in the divine services (he himself au-

thored and composed one hundred services to various Saints), and I wanted to explore his thoughts in these areas. *Made for Union* is therefore the distillation of St. Nikodemos' teachings concerning our life in Christ within the worshipping community.

A major—if not the major—focus for St. Nikodemos is the centrality of the Divine Liturgy and the vital importance that the faithful both attend and partake of the Eucharist frequently. With this awareness, what has it been like for you during the lockdown and now with the concerns and the current restrictions limiting attendance at the Liturgies?

The closing of our church to the faithful was the most painful thing I have ever experienced. I will never do it again. The fact that the very lifeblood of our existence – the most holy Eucharist – was unavailable to the members of the Body of Christ is absolutely unthinkable. It really is death. And so I am extremely grateful that the people of God can now once again return home and be fed by the Mystical Food that Christ offers only in the Divine Liturgy.

If you could invite St. Nikodemos to give an Advent or Lenten retreat at St. Mary's, what would you ask him to speak about? In other words, of the vast wisdom and insight St. Nikodemos was blessed with, what would you like him to share with the people here now?

This one I have never thought about. Fascinating question. Right now, I would have him speak about the New Martyrs that gave their lives for Christ under the Ottoman yoke. He wrote an entire book on them, the *Neon Martyrologion*, and his introduction is so beautifully moving and powerful that it brings you to tears. The zeal, steadfastness, and courage of these men, women, and children can only inspire today's Christians, especially in our current atmosphere.

What is/are the next writing(s) of St. Nikodemos you would like to translate?

Before I die, my prayer is to translate his *Heortodromion, or Festal Guide*. It is a 1,200-page commentary on the Sung Canons of the major Feast Days (Pascha, Christmas, Annunciation, Holy Week, etc.). This work is so rich and theologically packed that it is what I consider to be St. Nikodemos' *magnum opus*. God willing and by the Saint's grace, may this come to pass.

How do you combine being an academic and an author and the Proistamenos of St. Mary's? How do you find time to study and write with all your pastoral concerns, not to mention having time with your family?

It's difficult. No question. But I am blessed with a very understanding and encouraging wife, plus fellow clergy, a wonderful church staff, and incredible volunteers who work very hard to keep up with and enhance all the fantastic ministries we do at St. Mary's and keep us moving forward.

The footnotes in *Made for Union* edify and elucidate. Many of them involved extensive research and further translating for you. Please tell about your footnote process.

I'm a footnote guy. I can't help it. St. Nikodemos is the same way, so I found a companion in this, too. I enjoy reading and including footnotes because I think they both supplement the main body of the text and also add parallel thoughts, or even just some very interesting stories or facts that don't quite fit into the main text.

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.

Dear Parents and Guardians of St. Mary's Youth,

I am excited to say that we have the blessing from the Metropolis to meet in person. However, there are extra precautions that we must take. Until further notice, our youth activities will be outdoors or on Zoom. We will only be using indoor space in case of inclement weather during our meeting time. When we meet in person, everyone is required to wear a mask. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in our meeting location and upon entering, everyone will be asked to sanitize their hands. Throughout our meeting time, we will ask the kids to remain socially distant and avoid touching others (e.g.: hugging, hi-fiving, etc.). Finally, for our in-person events, the youth must register ahead of time since we have limited space due to the capacity restrictions given by the state. The registration link will be sent out prior to the event.

I am looking forward to the opportunity of meeting back in person with the kids!

In Christ,

Jon Klein

HOPE and JOY

Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Saturday, September 19; 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.
HOPE and JOY Kickoff in the Courtyard!
- ▶ Tuesday, September 29, 6:30-7:15 p.m.
Parish Night Week
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, September 16, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA Kickoff in the Courtyard!
- ▶ Thursday, October 1, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Parish Night Week
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, September 23, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA Kickoff in the Courtyard!
- ▶ Wednesday, September 30, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Parish Night Week
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.

Church School News

I'm sure you are wondering what church school will look like and how we will safely instruct our children. Fr. George and I have been working hard on our plans to start the school year on September 20! His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael has said there is to be no in-person gatherings except for liturgical services until further notice. With that order our plan is:

- Each child will get a packet which will include their workbook as well as supplies for the lessons from the beginning of the year through Christmas
- Each class, 4 year olds through 11/12th grades, will have a weekly virtual zoom class sometime during the week, rather than following Liturgy
- The devil has worked very hard to keep us away from church, each other, and to shake our faith. We need to work harder to keep our children walking in His light and continue teaching them!

Packets will be available to pick up in the narthex, then we will have a drive-by (drive-through) pick-up at church planned for early September for those unable to pick up the packets before then.

If you'd like to help with this project please contact Dena Tortorelis churchschool@stmarysgoc.org.



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram: **St_Marys_GOYA**

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Your birth, O Theotokos, brought joy to the whole world, for from you dawned the sun of righteousness, Christ our God. Freeing us from the curse, He gave us His blessings. Abolishing death, He granted us eternal life.

The Nativity of the Theotokos – September 8

**St. Mary's
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Publication Deadlines

The Messenger—
First Sunday of each month.

Sunday Bulletin—
Preceding Thursday,
12:00 Noon

September 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	2 6:00pm-Small Blessing of Water	3	4	5 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
Big Greek Give Back Food Collection – 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.						
6 Thirteenth Sunday of Matthew “The Messenger” Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:00am-4:00pm <i>Big Greek Give Back Food Collection</i>	7 Labor Day <i>Church and Office closed</i>	8 Nativity of the Theotokos 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:15pm-Parish Council	9	10	11 7:00am-Men’s Fellowship	12 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy <i>Big Greek Give Back</i> 5:00pm-Great Vespers
Big Greek Give Back Food Collection – 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.						
13 Sunday before Holy Cross 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 4:00pm-Great Vespers	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 7:30pm-Zoom Bible Study	15	16 9:00am-“The Messenger” Mailing 7:00pm-Junior GOYA Kickoff in Courtyard	17 Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope, and Love 6:00pm-Evening Divine Liturgy 7:15pm-Stewardship Com.	18	19 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 12noon-1:00pm-HOPE/JOY Kickoff in Courtyard 5:00pm-Great Vespers
20 Sunday after Holy Cross 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>First Day of Church School</i>	21 7:30pm-Zoom Bible Study	22 6:30pm-Philoptochos Meeting	23 7:00pm-Senior GOYA Kickoff in Courtyard	24	25	26 Falling Asleep of St. John the Theologian 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
27 First Sunday of Luke 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	28	29 6:30pm-Parish-Night Week <i>HOPE/JOY</i>	30 7:00pm-Parish-Night Week <i>Adults and Senior GOYAns</i>	October 1 7:00pm-Parish-Night Week <i>Junior GOYAns</i>		