

# The Messenger

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

## July 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



METROPOLIS  
OF CHICAGO

## A Message from Father George

Father George Dokos, Proistamenos

*"Let us not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some."*

*-Hebrews 10:24*

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Did you know that 40% of all we do is by habit? And of course, there are both good and bad habits that we should be aware of in our lives. Think about it for a minute. We all have our morning habits (getting up, washing, brushing our teeth, having some coffee and breakfast). Most of us can go on autopilot when driving to work or to school. Some have developed the habit of an exercise regimen. And there are habits such as nail biting, swearing, smoking, and snacking that are not beneficial to us, to name just a few.

Well, holy Scripture has something to teach us about habits. For example, Jesus had the habit of regular prayer, as we read in the Gospel of Luke: "And Jesus came out, and went, as was His habit, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed Him. And when He came to the place He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed" (Luke 22:39-41).

In his letter to the Hebrews, St. Paul speaks about the good habit of gathering together in church: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and to do good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day of the Lord drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24).

Beloved, we need to look at these examples from the word of God and understand that it is far too easy to fall out of practice and forget the good habits that we may have developed. In the past year we became accustomed to staying home, not gathering together in church, not coming together for the ministries of our parish, and not volunteering. Well, all that is past now, and we need to resume our life of virtue and holiness within Christ's Church, "stirring up one another to love and to do good works, not neglecting to meet together."

Let these words of the divine Apostle ring out in your ears, for it is through coming together that we express our love for one another, motivate each other, and encourage our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in the faith. It is as St. Photios the Great said: "The comfort of the church assembly becomes a way to be quickly and eagerly renewed."

Wishing you a blessed July, I look forward to our renewal as a parish family as we continue to assemble in the fellowship of love and good works.

With love in Christ,

+Fr. George

# Our Life Together

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## Births

*Calliope Robyn*

Parents: George Wilson &  
Antigoni Sander  
November 2, 2020

*Julian Edward*

Parents: Trevor Arnold &  
Megan Caldbeck  
January 28, 2021

*Katrina*

Parents: Parker & Anastacia Mullins  
May 19, 2021

*Alayna Patricia*

Parents: Jason & Vasiliki Willis  
May 22, 2021

*Julian George*

Parents: Andrew & Megan Twito  
May 30, 2021

*Markos Anastasios*

Parents: Angelo & Jennifer  
Demetriades  
May 31, 2021

## Marriage

*Paisios (Blake) Devereux to*

*Mary (Valerie) White*  
May 29, 2021

## Congratulations

We extend our congratulations to Luke and Mary Kay Twito who celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 6. *May God grant them many years!*

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Lisa Rose completed a Master of Science degree in Reading from MSU, Mankato in December 2020.

Nina Lind received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business in Marketing and Business Analytics from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota in May 2021.

## Memorial Prayers

**Sunday, July 11**

*Socrates (37 years) and  
Evangeline (3 years) Stoyanoglow  
parents of Elaine Theis*

**Sunday, July 25**

*David Dragotis (8 years)  
husband of Cheryl Dragotis  
Missy Dragotis (34 years)*

## Thank You

Mary Muzetras and her family wish to thank all those who generously contributed to Chris' memorial fund. We commissioned Nick Legeros to create a sculpture depicting Mark 10:14-16, "He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these...'" It is now located in the first Sunday School hallway.

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Thank you dear friends and church family for all your prayers and well wishes.

I am healing well and looking forward to returning to the fold soon.

Love in Christ,  
Mary Kafkas

## Share YourShelf

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

**Sunday, July 4**

Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat®

**Sunday, July 11**

Rice

**Sunday, July 18**

Hygiene items  
(e.g. toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc.)

**Sunday, July 25**

Canned meat

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another."  
—Charles Dickens

## 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**

Naira Istephanous

**Vice President**

William M. Hoeft

**Secretary**

Paul Hastings

**Treasurer**

Thomas Hainlin

**Assistant Treasurer**

Michael Rakes

**Members**

John Beauchamp  
Daniel Buss  
Ina Dunham  
Nicholas Legeros  
Dean Psychogios  
Maria Smith  
Andrew Twito

# Education • Fellowship • Worship

## Fellowship and Study Groups

### Men's Fellowship

Friday, July 9

7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

In-person with Zoom option

Exodus Study

Friday, July 23

7:00 a.m., Zoom only

Psalms Study

### Saturday Bible Study

Every Saturday

9:00 a.m., Fireside Room

### Senior Citizens

Tuesday, July 13

12:00 Noon, Great Hall

## Weekend Schedule

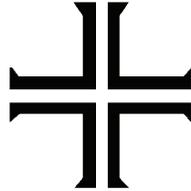
### Saturday

Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

### Sunday (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.



## Weekday Schedule

### Monday, July 12

*Saint Paisios the Athonite*

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

### Tuesday, July 20

*Elias the Prophet*

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

### Monday, July 26

*Saint Paraskevi*

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

### Tuesday, July 27

*Saint Panteleimon*

Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

# Family Camp 2021

## Save the Date!

October 8-10 • Camp Courage

*Yes, we are planning Family Camp this year and we can't wait!*

Our speaker will be Bishop Anthony Michaels  
*Auxiliary of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest  
for the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.*

Our Topic will be “And He Shall Come Again”

We'll reflect, with Bishop Anthony, on the good news of “the end times”  
in the Bible and our Orthodox Tradition.

*Registration information and other details will be made available later this summer.*

# Parish News & Events

## Saint Mary's at the Twins Game

**Sunday, July 25**

Grab your glove and come on out to see the Twins play the Angels on Sunday, July 25, at 1:10 p.m.! St. Mary's will provide a bus to and from Target Field, departing from St. Mary's at 12:00. The tickets are reserved for \$20, which include a hot dog and a soda. We will purchase the tickets so we all can sit near each other, but you are responsible to reimburse us for the ticket(s). This event is open to all parishioners! To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Jon Klein ([jon@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:jon@stmarysgoc.org)) by **Sunday, June 27!**

## YAL BBQ

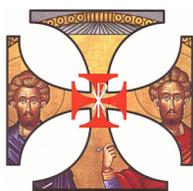
**Thursday, July 15**

The Young Adult League (YAL) will gather at St. Mary's on Thursday, July 15, 6:30-9:00 p.m., for food, fellowship, and fun. Join us in the Terrace Room and outdoor terrace. A social time begins at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be served about 7:00 p.m., followed by some games.

Please RSVP to Theo Boosalis, [tnboosalis@novacancy.net](mailto:tnboosalis@novacancy.net)

The Church Office will be closed Monday, July 5, in observance of the Independence Day holiday. The office will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 6.

# Philoptochos



## Philoptochos Board Election

### New Board Elected

At our recent Spring Finale, elections were held for the 2021-2023 Philoptochos Board. The following women will serve for the coming term, and we are grateful

for their commitment to the organization: Sandra Anderson, Jennifer Coin, Mary Ellis, Cathy Forchas, Lisa Gallmeyer, Paulette Hastings, Jayne Klatt, Connie Kouzes, Annette Legeros, Donna Psihos, Alexis Rouches, Carol Smith, Andrea Tiggas, Dena Tortorelis, and Kathleen Wendland. Once the board is ratified by the National Philoptochos, board members will take the oath of office and officers will be elected.

## Women's Book Club Discussion

Our August book is "Wounded by Love" by Elder Prophyrios. Discussion dates and times will be determined. Books can be purchased in the Bookstore and the church office. Please make checks payable to St. Mary's Bookstore. Watch for more information in the weekly bulletin and other church communications.

## Days for Girls Day of Service

**Tuesday, July 13**

Join us in the Terrace Room on Tuesday, July 13, between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. for any portion of the day to make reusable menstruation kits for girls and women. The following donations are welcome: gallon freezer Ziplocs (no slide closer), girls underwear size 12 or larger, travel size soap, dark washcloths, quilting cotton fabric.

## Festival Baking Is Underway

Philoptochos will be baking melomakarona and kouloria later this summer. Watch the Sunday bulletin for details and your e-mail for the Signup Genius link.

## Thank You...

...to Stephanie George, Sofia Johnson, Tina Menter, and Melpo Murdakes who have provided leadership and talent to Philoptochos as board members. We are grateful for their service to people in need for the past two years or more.

...to the team that carried bake sale supplies from storage under the altar to the nursery: Cathy Forchas, Elena, Sean, Marina and Zoe Gabor, Paulette Hastings, Erline Holman, and Annette Legeros.

...to the team that deep cleaned the Philoptochos kitchen closet: Cathy Forchas, Paulette Hastings, Erline Holman, Sofia Johnson, Connie Kouzes, Annette Legeros, Tina Menter, and Photine Saar.

# Missions & Outreach

by William Fazio

## Take Heart

It is truly a blessing to see our church opening up again. Thank you for the kindness and love you have continued to show St. Mary's and the various Ministries we support throughout the pandemic. This month Aida Samir, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Take Heart, visited to thank us for the tremendous support we provided last year and to update us on their mission. Since Take Heart partners with local leaders, they were able to go virtual during COVID and continue the Lord's good work. Some highlights include spiritually encouraging 31,000 Christians, funding 260 local projects, supporting 1,000 youth through virtual services, providing 7,750 families with hygiene supplies, and 7,000 children Christmas gifts.



*Pictured from left to right are Larry Dunham, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair, Aida Samir, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Take Heart, and Father Jason Houck, Associate Priest, holding a beautiful gift from Take Heart made by Christians in Egypt as part of a long term income generating project.*

We are fortunate to live in a country where freedom of religion is ingrained in our daily lives. For many of us, myself included, being unable to attend church and worship in person with our brothers and sisters in Christ was unfathomable before the onset of COVID last year. This is however not the case for Christians everywhere in the world. In some countries Christians live in fear each and every day, afraid to even leave their houses. This is why Take Heart focuses their efforts on helping the most persecuted Christians, bringing God's light, bringing His true love and compassion. This year Take Heart is expanding to Nigeria and starting a pilot program school for Christian children who otherwise would not have any access to education. While that may sound expensive, the



actual cost may surprise you. It only costs \$8 per month for Take Heart to support a child at this school, less than the cost of many Starbucks drinks.

## Harvest Pack

Thank you to everyone who helped pack meals for Harvest Pack last year during our events hosted at St. Mary's! According to Harvest Pack, COVID-19 is expected to double the number of people experiencing food crises. Harvest Pack's oatmeal provides a quick healthy balanced breakfast and is easy to pack in large quantities. In just a couple of hours during our last event, we packed over 10,000 meals! Way to go St. Mary's! These meals have been distributed to several local food shelves including FOCUS, Joyce, and CES. While this may sound like a lot; CES for example can easily go through a box of 40 in one day. Looking for a way to help people in need? Be on the lookout for a Harvest Pack event at St. Mary's in the coming months. Participating in meal packing events is a great way for us to give back to our community and help provide food for the hungry.



# Stewardship

*They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.*

Mark 12:44

Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates made history when they launched the Giving Pledge, promising to donate half of their money. As of 2018, this meant giving away 92 billion dollars. The pledge made psychologist Paul Piff curious to study giving patterns. Through a research test, he discovered that the poor were inclined to give 44 percent more of what they had than wealthy people. Those who've felt their own poverty are often moved to greater generosity.

Jesus knew this. Visiting the temple, He watched the crowds drop gifts into the treasury (Mark 12:41). The rich tossed in wads of cash, but a poor widow pulled out her last two copper coins, worth maybe a penny, and placed them into the basket. One can picture Jesus standing up, delighted and astounded. Immediately, He gathered His disciples, making sure they didn't miss this dazzling act. "This poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others," Jesus exclaimed (v. 43). The disciples looked at each other, bewildered, hoping someone could explain what Jesus was talking about. So, He made it plain: those

bringing huge gifts "gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything" (v. 44).

The celebration of generosity shared by Jesus in Mark 12:43-44—especially the idea of giving out of one's poverty—is also reflected in the apostle Paul's account of the churches of Macedonia. During a severe trial, "their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Corinthians 8:2). They gave "even beyond their ability" (v. 3) because they regarded it "the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people" (v. 4). The secret to the Macedonians' generosity was that "they gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then also to us" (v. 5). In other words, their prior allegiance to Jesus was expressed in their commitment to the welfare of others.

Ultimately, generosity can't be forced because it's a dynamic of the heart. So, Paul says, "each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (9:7).

## Stewardship Campaign 2021

*"...the greatest of these is love."*

I Corinthians 13:13

Thank you for your participation in our 2021 Stewardship Campaign and your on-going support of St. Mary's through your gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Your contributions make it possible for St. Mary's to continue providing all its ministries and to cover operating costs of the church, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are so blessed to have your generous support!

**REMINDER:** 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 in 2021.

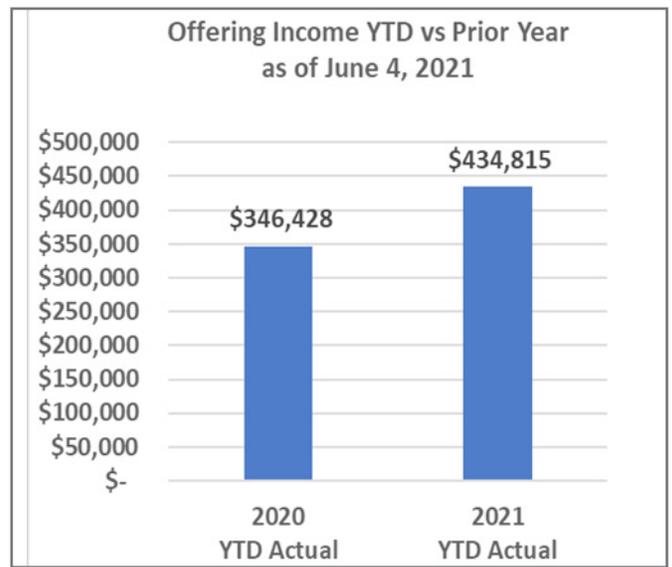
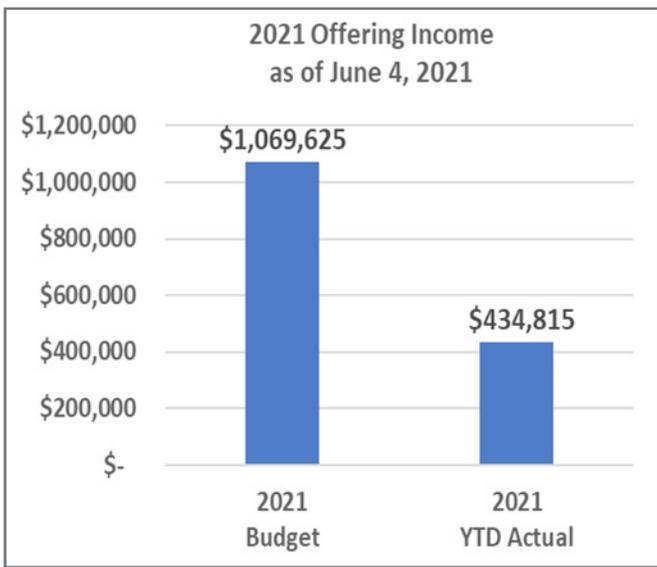
### Offering Income Update as of June 4, 2021

- As of June 4, 2021, we have received \$434,815 in offering income for 2021.
- Additional needed by the end of the year to meet our budgeted goal is \$634,810.

- We are ahead of last year at this time by \$88,397 in offering income.

Offering Income as of June 4, 2021	2021 YTD Actual	2020 YTD Actual	Increase or (Decrease) vs. Prior Year
Payments Received	\$434,815	\$346,428	\$88,387
Average per Week	\$19,764	\$15,747	\$4,018
Average per Month	\$88,645	\$68,236	\$17,410

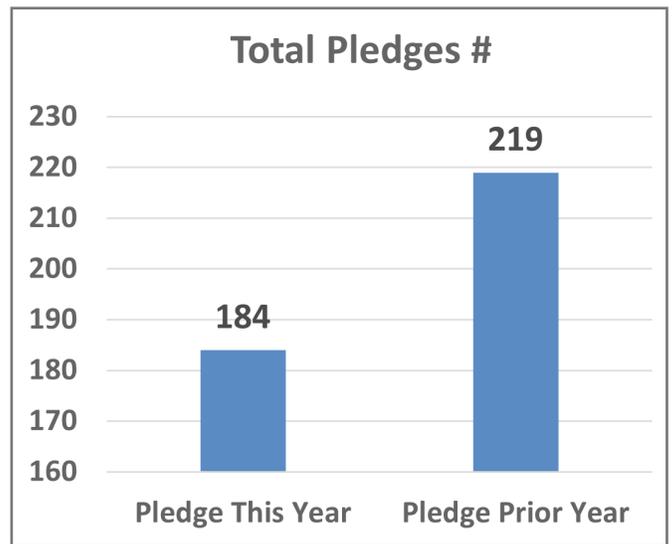
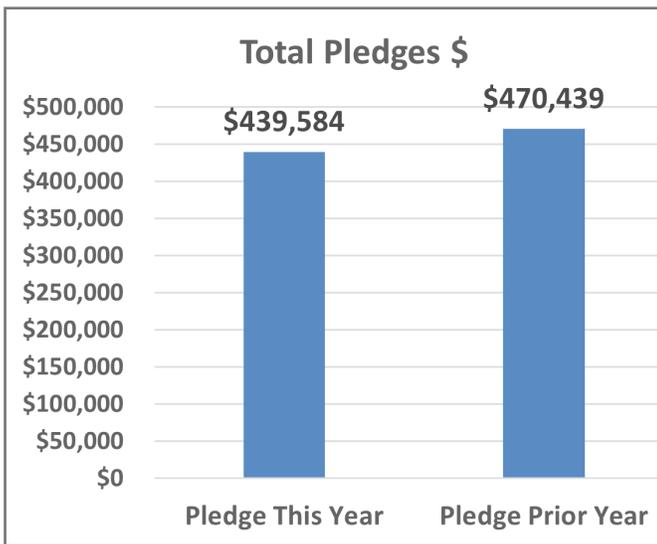
Offering Income as of June 4, 2021	2021 YTD Actual	2021 Annual Budget	Additional Needed by December 31
Payments Received	\$434,815	\$1,069,625	\$634,810



**It is not too late to complete a pledge form and time and talent form!**

If you have not done so already for 2021, please 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.
- As of June 7, 2021, we had received 184 pledge forms for 2021.
- In 2019, we received 219 completed pledges form.



**For more information, contact:**

- Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina at: [ackalina@yahoo.com](mailto:ackalina@yahoo.com)
- Athena Mihas at: [athenamihhas@gmail.com](mailto:athenamihhas@gmail.com)
- David at St. Mary's Office: [david@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:david@stmarysgoc.org) or 612-825-9595

**Stewardship 2021 Calendar of Events**

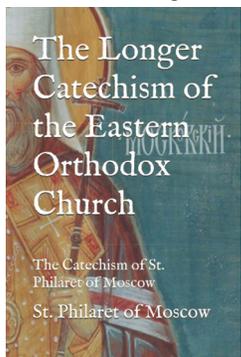
- Stewardship Testimonial Speaker  
Sunday, October 24, 2021
- Stewardship Testimonial Speaker  
Sunday, October 31, 2021
- Stewardship Testimonial Speaker  
Sunday, November 7, 2021
- Stewardship Sunday  
Sunday, November 7, 2021
- Ministry Fair  
Sunday, November 7, 2021
- Stewardship Appreciation Glendi (party)  
Saturday, November 13, 2021

# In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly

[bookstore@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:bookstore@stmarysgoc.org)

St. Philaret of Moscow (December 26, 1782 - November 19, 1867) is called the Chrysostom of the Church in Russia, and with good reason. He was known for his scholarship, oratory, and administrative abilities and is considered the leading Russian Churchman of the 19th century. He was chosen to be a Bishop in 1817, then an Archbishop, rising to the rank of Metropolitan in 1821. As a Metropolitan, St. Philaret took it as his duty to educate and enlighten his flock about the Church's teachings and traditions. He preached and wrote out of the depths of his understanding and appreciation for Scripture and the Holy Fathers. He directed the translation of the Bible from Slavonic into modern Russian and in 1823 published a Catechism of the Eastern Orthodox Church. This catechism has been used for almost 200 years in the Russian Orthodox Church, but is little known in English although it was originally translated into English and published in 1845 and 1877.



Last year, St. Theophan the Recluse Press published *The Longer Catechism of the Eastern Orthodox Church: The Catechism of St. Philaret of Moscow*. St. Philaret wrote a shorter and a longer catechism—both are included in this book. The Shorter Catechism includes sections on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. The Longer Catechism is divided

into three parts: "On Faith," focusing on the Creed, "On Hope," focusing on the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, and "On Love," focusing on the Ten Commandments. Remarkably simple and straightforward, the catechisms are suited for anyone new to Orthodoxy, and yet they are written so they offer those who have been Orthodox for any length of time new awareness of and appreciation for the depth and breadth of the Orthodox faith. St. Philaret's writing on the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, and the Ten Commandments offers the reader great opportunities for examining one's conscience in the light of Scripture and the Church Fathers. In other words, this is a Catechism that the attentive reader will never outgrow or know completely—because, like Scripture, it offers something new with each reading. In addition to the two catechisms, a sermon titled "On the Cross," written by St. Philaret for Good Friday, is included in this book. Here the comparison of St. Philaret with St. John Chrysostom is especially evident—St. Philaret's sermon could well be compared with the Catechetical (Resurrection) Homily by St. John Chrysostom.

Another book by St. Philaret was also published in 2020—*Sermons on the Spiritual Life*. In the foreword to this book, Fr. Josiah Trenham explains:

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century spiritually thirsty men and women traveled from great distances throughout the world to Moscow to hear the Word of God from the Saint's lips. The Complete Sermons of St. Philaret in multiple volumes have nourished Slavic believers for the last 150 years, but English speakers have been almost deprived of his God-inspired teachings. (vii)

This book is the first step in remedying this lack for English speakers. In an inspired introduction to these sermons, Archimandrite Zacharias writes:

St. Philaret of Moscow lived in the presence of God continually, and, coming out in order to speak with people, he would inform their hearts with grace.... When we read his words, we learn how to present ourselves before God and our prayer gains wings.... The word of Saint Philaret inspired and provoked contrition in the hearts of his listeners so they could be consoled and edified by the word of God.... Saint Philaret was a sign of God for his generation, providing a word for his contemporaries and an answer to all their existential problems.... He had a mind as deep as the Scriptures and possessed rare knowledge of the Mystery of Christ. He was the bearer of the spirit of Holy Scripture itself and the Orthodox tradition, using Scripture to interpret Scripture. His word inspires and quickens the gift of every Christian... (xii-xiv)

*Sermons on the Spiritual Life* includes 21 sermons by St. Philaret, all of which are replete with spiritual nourishment and guidance. In one of his sermons, titled "On Pious Zeal," he says:

Man does not see the heart of his neighbor. However, he is not content with appearances and the superficial alone. He tries by signs to guess whether or not an action is performed with eagerness. And when he finds such zeal, he highly prizes the action and is much consoled. Therefore, can God, the Knower of hearts, ever be content with only the visible and superficial manifestation of piety and virtue when he does not see in a man's heart the corresponding pious zeal? "Give me your heart," says His Wisdom to man. (25)

St. Philaret truly gave his heart to God, and in these two books—*Sermons on the Spiritual Life* and *The Longer Catechism of the Eastern Orthodox Church*—the reader is given a glimpse into his heart, filled with the grace of God.

# Children & Youth

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## 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.

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### Faith Group

#### 0-5 Year Olds and Parents

- ▶ Thursday, July 15, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon  
Como Zoo  
Meet at the Como Zoo in front of the main entrance for a day at the Zoo and Conservatory.  
Please RSVP to Fr. Jason, [frjason@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:frjason@stmarysgoc.org) or 612.401.0660
- ▶ Thursday, August 19, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon  
Minnehaha Falls Gathering and Mini Hike  
Meet at the Falls Overlook  
Please RSVP to Fr. Jason, [frjason@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:frjason@stmarysgoc.org) or 612.401.0660

### Saint Mary's at the Twins Game

- ▶ Sunday, July 25  
See the article on page 4 of this issue.

### May Recap

What another event filled month! At the Junior GOYA meeting, we discussed the feast of the Life-Giving Spring and enjoyed fellowship with one another. The Senior GOYAns met and prayed the Akathist of Thanksgiving in the nave, followed by the classic game, Scattergories! We closed the month with our HOPE/JOY kiddos learning about Saints Constantine and Helen, and played a game of 4 corners!

### Youth Feedback

If you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding our youth program(s) please let us know. To access our 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.

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## July 3-10 — St. Mary's Summer Camp at Camp Courage

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

# On the Sacramental Mystery of the Divine Eucharist

by St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain

## 3. The benefit enjoyed by the person receiving the gift.

Consider, brother, the benefit you enjoy from this gift of the Eucharist, which is called Communion, as we have previously said, to show us that it makes all of the good things, especially the kingdom of Jesus Christ, common to our soul. For this reason St. Isidore Pelousiotes says: "The reception of the divine Mysteries is called Communion on account of the union with Christ it grants us, and because it causes us to become communicants of His kingdom." Wherefore, that infinite sum and collection of blessings and glory which Jesus gathered into Himself by His life and His death, He gives to us totally and completely in this great Mystery, by means of which the Lord seeks to renew in each person individually the effects and that benefit which His divine passion brought to all the world. By this Mystery, He not only shows that He does not think it a great thing that He labored and suffered one time, with just one body, for our salvation, but shows how He again desires to suffer for us. For this reason He wishes to multiply the very same body innumerable times sacramentally for it to be present at each altar, and to receive in that body all of the sufferings sacramentally in order to innumerable multiply in this manner our own benefit: "In every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering" (Malachi 1:11).

The Lord could have given us His grace and benefited us by means of His creations, as He does in the other Mysteries. But in this Mystery He is found essentially, and wishes to give it to us and benefit us with His own hand, illumining our intellect, warming our heart, mortifying our passions, strengthening our weaknesses, preserving our health, and restoring our senses to their proper order. These benefits are most clearly described for us by the eloquent mouths of the theologians, two of which are sufficient to bear witness to these. Gregory the Theologian says: "When the most sacred body of Christ is received and eaten in a proper manner, it becomes a weapon against those who war against us, it returns those to God who had left Him, it strengthens the weak, it causes those who are healthy to be glad, it heals sicknesses, it preserves health. Through it we become meek and more willing to accept correction, more long-suffering in our pains, more fervent in our love, more detailed in our knowledge, more willing to do obedience, keener in the workings of the charismata." And Cyril of Alexandria says: "Christ pacifies and calms the fierce war of the flesh, ignites piety towards God, and deadens the passions." And I will say something greater still. Just as grubs and silk worms leave seeds in the trees, or in the earth, and they remain there during the winter, and then the gentle spring comes and opens the seed and it comes alive, in the same way, the Lord, being united to us in this world through Communion, leaves seeds

of immortality in our heavy and earthly body. By means of these implanted seeds the body will be resurrected at the end of the world unto eternal life, just as the Lord described it: "And I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54). O my God, may Thy Holy Name be glorified countless times, for Thou made such a great provision in order to benefit us by this Mystery!

So my beloved brother, what do you say now after hearing these things? If the Lord of all gave you every good thing through His body and blood, what thing is there that you cannot give Him any longer? If the Lord benefited you so much with this Mystery, do you still have such a heart so as to wrong Him with more sins? Woe to you! If the Lord were to but a single time give this most greatly beneficial Mystery to one of the highest spirits of heaven (in the same way as we receive it), that spirit would not think it sufficient thanks to be destroyed and return to nothingness out of love for its God. But you, the rotten worm, who have received so many times that heavenly gift, you who have confessed and rejected your sins prior to receiving Communion, straightway after communing revert back to your old ways like a dog returns to its own vomit, and you plot treacherously against your God with new sins! O what thanklessness! Is this how you express your love? Is this the thanks you ought to show to your Benefactor? Is this the benefit you receive from the Mystery? You ought to be embarrassed, brother, of your wretchedness, and you should be ashamed that you have taken such little fruit and benefit from that divine and most beneficial Table, constantly desiring the hedonistic pleasures of the flesh and the goods which the world can give you: "Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel" (Ezekiel 36:32). Be resolved to prepare yourself the next time with greater care and earnestness, so that you may receive Communion having confessed fervently, with contrition, having fulfilled your ascetical rule, with fasting and watching over your thoughts (as much as possible), "with the fear of God, with faith, and with love," just as the priest calls out to you. This way you will serve the Lord and take greater benefit and fruit from the divine Mysteries. This is because, according to the greater or lesser preparation a man does, so he receives greater or lesser grace from the divine Mysteries.

It is obvious that the more frequently you do such a preparation and commune frequently, the more frequently your soul receives benefit from the Mysteries, receiving them unto the healing of soul and body, unto the remission of sins, unto the further reception of His divine grace, unto the mortification of the passions, unto the keeping of the commandments of Christ. For this reason, the divine Apostles in their Canons, and the divine Fathers in their liturgies and teachings, all together with one voice urge all Christians – both monastics and laypeople – who do not

have an impediment from their Spiritual Father, to prepare themselves in the manner we just described, and frequently partake of the divine Mysteries. For as long as they put it off and do not receive Communion, the more they are ruled by the passions and sins. Last of all, thank the Lord Who has endured your great thanklessness for so long, and beseech Him to overpower it by His grace from now on. And thank Him because He subjected Himself to such baseness (if I may use this expression) in order to become food for you, and wrought such a great wonder for your own benefit, and Who now works this wonder of turning you entirely into Himself and into His love, deeming you worthy to frequently receive in a fitting manner His own holiness, His own purity, His own beauty, so that you also may become completely holy, completely pure, completely beautiful in soul and body (for, in a natural manner, man becomes what he eats, and for this reason it is the opinion of historians that the rabbits which dwell in the high mountains are completely white, for they do not eat anything else but the white snow), so that becoming these things you may hear from the Bridegroom Christ those words of the Song: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" (Song of Solomon 4:7).

You must resolutely do the following for God. You must remember the passion of your Redeemer Jesus Christ. You must always thank God for His blessings, humble yourself and obey His law and His commandments. You must reverence the All-holy Mother of God and all of His Saints. You must attend and visit the Churches of Christ. You must stand with fear and piety during the dread sacrifice of the Liturgy. But above all, you must set your gaze upon these two things which will help you the most of all to remain in a good state. One is to frequently partake of the divine Mysteries with the proper preparation of confession, contrition, fulfilling your rule, and fasting as much as you are able. The other is prayer.

Concerning the role of the divine Mysteries, we have only this to say to you here. Just as God planted the tree of life in the earthly Paradise, so He also planted another incomparably more precious tree of life in the Paradise of the Church, which is the Mystery of the divine Eucharist. But just as Adam, in order to sustain the life of his body, did not just eat rarely and sometimes of the fruit of that tree of life, but it was necessary for him to frequently partake of it in order to live, so it is for you, brother, in order to sustain the spiritual life. It is not sufficient for you rarely to approach every two or three months to receive the Master Christ. Rather, you must approach frequently (according to the strength of your spiritual state and the advice of your Spiritual Father). And I assure you that through your own experience you will come to understand just how wondrous the effects of divine Communion are when you frequently commune with the necessary preparation and piety. Bees live longer than any of the flies, wasps, or so-called insects, because they feed on honey daily. The rabbits that live in the high mountains of the Alps are white because they are almost always standing in the snow and continuously eat it, as we mentioned previously in the Meditation on the divine Eucharist. Many birds of the eastern islands of the Molukka Sea do not stink when they die, neither do their bodies rot, because they eat the savory and fragrant fruits of the region. For this reason, because the devil knows all too well these good things which we receive from frequent Communion, that hater of good diligently attempts to block us from this food of Paradise in order to deprive us of all of these good things and in this manner make us weak, so as to conquer us without a fight, just as Holofernes attempted to defeat the city of Bethulia, the fatherland of the wise Judith, without any struggle, by cutting off the water mains which brought water into the city from the outside, and thus prevent the city from being irrigated any longer by the springs around it.

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## Photos of a couple recent events at St. Mary's

*Courtesy of John Kafkas*



The Hellenic Post 129 American Legion and Auxiliary hosted the coffee hour after Liturgy on Sunday, May 30, in celebration of Memorial Day.



Saint Mary's Senior Citizens Club reconvened after a nearly 15 month hiatus. All were certainly glad to be back!

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**Happy  
Independence  
Day!**

**St. Mary's  
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**Publication Deadlines**  
**The Messenger**—  
First Sunday of each month.

**Sunday Bulletin**—  
Preceding Thursday,  
12:00 Noon

# July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
<b>4 Second Sunday of Matthew Independence Day "The Messenger" Deadline</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	5 <i>Church and Office Closed</i>	6	7	8	9 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	10 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
<b>Summer Camp at Camp Courage</b>						
<b>11 Third Sunday of Matthew Saint Euphemia</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	<b>12 Saint Paisios the Athonite</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	<b>13</b> 9:00am-Days for Girls 12:00noon-Senior Citizens 6:15pm-Parish Council	<b>14 Saint Nikodemos</b>	<b>15</b> 10:00am-FAITH Play Group 6:30pm-YAL BBQ	16	17 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers 5:00pm-Healing House Dinner
<b>18 Sunday of the Holy Fathers</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:30am-Missions/Outreach	19 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	<b>20 Elias the Prophet</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	21 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing	<b>22</b> 6:30pm-Stewardship Com.	23 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	24 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
<b>25 Fifth Sunday of Matthew</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 1:10pm-Twins play the Angels	<b>26 Saint Paraskevi</b> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	<b>27 Saint Panteleimon</b> 6:00pm-Evening Divine Liturgy	28	29	30	31 9:00am-Bible Study 10:00am-Dance Practice 5:00pm-Great Vespers